

Recent FTC Workshop Confirms Apparel Industry and Consumers Really Care about Care Instructions!

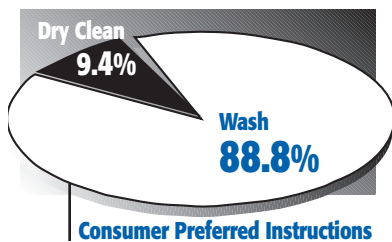
Important Research Presented... Broad Range of Issues Discussed...

Washington, DC – An FTC sponsored workshop devoted to care rule changes brought many of the country's recognized experts in the field together to discuss the consideration of four specific changes/ additions to the Trade Regulation Rule on Care Labeling of Textile Wearing Apparel and Certain Piece Goods, 16 CFR Part 423. The transcript confirms a genuine desire to provide consumers with the care instructions they need.

The main areas covered were as follows:

1... To require that an item that can be safely home laundered must be labeled with washing instructions.

This is a change from the current requirement that *either* a washing OR a dry cleaning instruction must be provided. If approved, this modification would require that a garment labeled "Dry Clean" also



include home laundering instructions. Garments labeled "Dry Clean Only" will not be affected since these garments already require documentation that the garment would be harmed if laundered. At the

workshop empirical data was presented supporting the proposal. Consumers have demonstrated a strong preference for home laundering over dry cleaning whenever possible. They prefer the convenience and economy of home laundering. Over half of the respondents in the study had even laundered an item labeled "Dry Clean" and 62% said that they were satisfied with the results. Several environmental groups also supported the proposal as a means of reducing the incidence of dry cleaning and the use of associated chemicals.

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2... To allow an instruction for "Wet Dry cleaning".

This new technology employs computer- controlled washers and dryers to regulate precisely the mechanical action, fluid levels, temperatures and other factors. There was a general agreement concerning the efficacy of the process and the environmental benefits it poses over the use of less environmentally friendly dry cleaning chemicals. However, because it is such a new technology, there is a little established protocol for quantifying the efficacy of the process. The lack of these protocols prohibits the manufacturers of apparel from establishing the "reasonable basis" documentation required by the

Rule. The Commission also requested comments on the need for fiber identification on garments labeled for this process to assist the operator in minimizing damage and maximizing results. The Commission delayed further action until the industry develops the testing and evaluation protocols necessary. They will revisit the issue this summer.

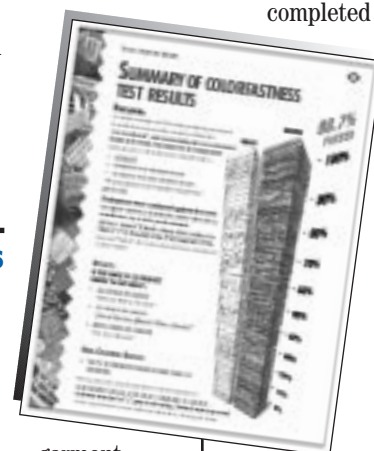
3... To clarify what constitutes a "reasonable basis".

Each care instruction provided to the consumer must be supported by a reasonable basis of evidence that the instruction is accurate. Specifically, a reasonable basis consists of reliable evidence that:

- 1) *the garment (including each component part) was not harmed when cleaned as recommended.*
- 2) *the garment (including any component part) was harmed when cleaned with a process warned against.*
- 3) *the garment or a reasonable sample was actually tested; or the technical literature, past experience or industry expertise support each instruction provided.*

The commission proposes to amend the reasonable basis definition to clarify that *the reliable evidence must apply to the complete garment* as well as to

the component parts. For example, there are incidences where the components may test satisfactorily for a particular cleaning method, but when brought together in a completed



garment may bleed across adjacent colors. Or, possibly, components test well but the thread used in assembly might shrink or discolor.

Documents such as "Summary of Colorfastness Test Results" prepared by Textile Industry Affairs can support "a reasonable basis of evidence" for care instructions.

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4... To harmonize water temperatures with AATCC standards.

This change would simply redefine the temperatures associated with cold, warm and hot wash water descriptors to bring them into agreement with the testing protocols established by AATCC. The new upper ranges would be:
Cold = 30C / 86F,
Warm = 44C / 111F
Hot = 52C / 125F.

The Commission also proposed the introduction of a new temperature descriptor, "Very Hot" that would include temperatures to 63C/ 145F.

A Few Reminders...

- **The symbols approved for use in the U.S. are the ASTM symbols.**

They can be found on the Textile Industry Affairs web site, www.textileaffairs.com, or directly from ASTM.

Call ASTM at (610) 832-9500 and request the most recent Annual Book of ASTM Standards, Volume 07.02. The symbols are listed in the index as Standard D5489-96c under "Fabrics", sub-category "Guides for".

- **At present, there is no universal symbol system.** The ASTM symbols are accepted in NAFTA countries, ISO/GINETEX symbols are accepted in most of Europe and Asia, and Japan has their own symbol system. Negotiations are under way to harmonize the two major systems, ASTM and GINETEX, into a truly universal symbol system for care procedures.

- **You do not HAVE TO use symbols.** You may continue to use words with appropriate translations.

- **Symbols do not represent every possible instruction.** Those instructions that are not provided for in symbols must be provided in words.
- **Textile Industry Affairs (TIA) is always available to help you** with the transition to symbols, as well as answer to many other care instruction questions.

A CD is available for \$29 that includes all the approved USA/NAFTA symbols in BMP, EPS, TIF & PIC formats. Check out the latest information on the internet

at www.TextileAffairs.com, or call and request a complete packet. We also have a regional network of professional support representatives ready to assist you on care label issues.



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Home Laundry Facts

Did You Know?

1) **U.S. consumers perform over 660,000,000 wash loads every week!** In general, these wash loads are performed by women who do 88% of the home laundry. The types of washers used for all this home laundry may show some variance in the future as high efficiency front-loading washers enter the market.

2) **As a rule of thumb, manufacturers of washable apparel anticipate a life expectancy of 50 washings for their products.**

The time span covered by these 50 laundering varies widely from less than a year for products that get washed regularly like underwear and socks, to several years for items that are worn seasonally or only for special occasions. Many laboratories use testing protocols that mimic results for up to 50 washings to predict garment life cycle performance. Testing beyond 50 washing cycle is usually considered "stress" conditions.

3) **Consumers, on average, have 8 laundry products in the laundry room:** 3 types of detergent, 1 regular sodium hypochlorite bleach, 1 oxygen color- safe bleach, 2 fabric softeners (a liquid and dryer sheets), and 1 stain remover. Virtually every household has some type of detergent on hand (99%). 87% of households have a sodium hypochlorite bleach on hand and 76% have an oxygen, color- safe bleach.

4) **Colored items are the most frequent type of wash load** (36% of all loads) followed by whites (18%) and mixed colors loads (18%). All-colored loads are driving the increase in the overall number of wash loads. All/mostly cotton loads show a similar increase. Combined, the obvious driver for increased wash loads is colored cotton apparel. This reflects the rise in consumer demand for this type of apparel.

For free care label assistance contact:

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