

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES FOR TESTING TEXTILE COLORFASTNESS TO CHLORINE AND NON-CHLORINE (COLOR-SAFE) BLEACHES.

ALTERNATIVE TO 5A – ONE-MINUTE SPOT TEST

The appropriate protocol for testing colorfastness to chlorine bleach is AATCC 61-5A and 188. This procedure approximates colorfastness results after five wash/dry cycles in the presence of detergent and chlorine bleach. While very reliable, this procedure is time, labor and resource intensive.

A widely accepted reliable alternative to 5A is a one-minute spot test that simulates five home launderings. This test has been shown to be 95+% reliable and in no case gives false negatives.

SOLUTION: Combine one part Clorox® Ultra Liquid Bleach with five parts water

- PROCEDURE:**
- (1) Apply one drop of solution and allow it to saturate the fabric. If you are testing a garment, apply solution to a hidden part (inside seam, hemline or cuff). Be sure to test all colors and any decorative trim or ribbing. Blot if necessary to ensure penetration.
 - (2) Let the sample stand for one minute, then rinse and blot dry.
 - (3) Visually evaluate for color change.

EVALUATION: If there is no color change, or if the amount of change is acceptable, the bleach care instruction should be “Bleach When Needed”.

Colorfastness is not usually an issue with white fabric, but all white fabric known to have a chemical finish should be tested for potential yellowing by interaction with chlorine bleach. This bleach test can also be used as a screening for white fabric.

ALTERNATIVE TO AATCC PROTOCOL IS 172-1988, OR RA60-172.

Fabrics that prove unacceptable for laundering in chlorine bleach must be tested for colorfastness to non-chlorine bleach. The care-labeling rule is very specific. If a garment is safe in non-chlorine (color-safe) bleach, but not in chlorine bleach the label must say “Non-chlorine Bleach When Needed”, or words to that effect. The only way to determine if non-chlorine bleach is safe is to test for colorfastness.

The applicable AATCC protocol is 172-1988, or RA60-172. A reliable alternative has been developed for this procedure as well.

SOLUTION: Undiluted Liquid Clorox 2®.

- PROCEDURE:**
- (1) Place a drop of Clorox 2® on the colors to be tested. If you are testing a garment, apply solution to a hidden part (inside seam, hemline or cuff). Be sure to test all colors and any decorative trim or ribbing. Blot if necessary to ensure penetration.
 - (2) Let the sample stand for one minute.
 - (3) Rinse thoroughly and let the dampened area dry completely.

EVALUATION: Visually evaluate the test area(s). If there is no color change, or if the amount of color change is acceptable, the bleach care instruction should be “Non-Chlorine Bleach When Needed”, or words to that effect, i.e. “Only Non-Chlorine Bleach”.

An instruction “Do Not Chlorine Bleach” is not acceptable under the Rule because although it warns against chlorine bleach, it does not inform that non-chlorine bleach is acceptable.

When performing evaluations the most accurate instruction will result from comparing the tested sample to one laundered in detergent alone. This will ensure that the observed color change is attributable only to the bleach. The AATCC procedure for testing for colorfastness to laundering in detergent is AATCC 61 2A.

Complete Apparel/Textile Care Label and Symbol Information on the Internet! at www.TextileAffairs.org

Machine Wash, Warm
Non-chlorine Bleach
Iron, Steam or Dry, with Medium Heat
Tumble Dry, Low Heat

Guide to Common Care Symbols

Washing INSTRUCTIONS

	Machine Wash, Cold		Machine Wash, Cold Permanent Press		Machine Wash, Cold Gentle Cycle		Hand Wash
	Machine Wash, Warm		Machine Wash, Warm Permanent Press		Machine Wash, Warm Gentle Cycle		Do Not Wash
	Machine Wash, HOT		Machine Wash, HOT Permanent Press		Machine Wash, HOT Gentle Cycle		

Bleaching INSTRUCTIONS

	Bleach As Needed Any bleach, like Clorox®, may be safely used		Do Not Bleach No bleach product should be used including detergents with bleach <i>Special Warning: This symbol only applicable for less than 2% of all washables</i>
	Non-chlorine Bleach As Needed Use only a color-safe bleach, like Clorox 2®		

Drying INSTRUCTIONS

	Tumble Dry, No Heat		Tumble Dry, Permanent Press, No Heat		Tumble Dry, Gentle Cycle, No Heat		Do Not Tumble Dry
	Tumble Dry, Low Heat		Tumble Dry, Permanent Press, Low Heat		Tumble Dry, Gentle Cycle, Low Heat		Line Dry
	Tumble Dry, Medium		Tumble Dry, Permanent Press, Medium		Tumble Dry, Gentle Cycle, Medium		Drip Dry
	Tumble Dry, High						Dry Flat

Ironing INSTRUCTIONS

	Iron, Steam or Dry, with Low Heat		Do Not Iron with Steam
	Iron, Steam or Dry, with Medium Heat		Do Not Iron
	Iron, Steam or Dry, with High Heat		

Drycleaning INSTRUCTIONS

	Dryclean May appear with additional letters and/or lines Take this item to a professional drycleaner		Do Not Dryclean
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This chart illustrates care symbols accepted by the Federal Trade Commission. This chart is referenced from ASTM D5489-96c Commercial and Home Laundering and Drycleaning Symbols, which illustrates the symbols to use for laundering and drycleaning instructions.

As a minimum, laundering instruction shall include, in order, four symbols: washing, bleaching, drying, and ironing; and drycleaning instructions shall include one symbol. Additional words may be used to clarify language-dependent instructions.

ABOUT TEXTILE INDUSTRY AFFAIRS

For over 30 years, Textile Industry Affairs has provided expert counsel and support to the textile and apparel industries on a full range of trade and consumer issues.

One major service initiative is TIA support of the FTC rule-making and regulatory compliance process.

TIA OFFERS THE TRADE AN ARRAY OF CAPABILITIES:

- resource for lectures, seminars and private consultation on regulatory compliance.
- effective communications with legal, design, marketing and senior management
- consumer and trade research development and analysis
- technical evaluations to produce the reliable evidence required to document care instructions

COMPLYING WITH FEDERAL BLEACH CARE LABELING REQUIREMENTS

IT'S THE LAW:

The Federal Trade Commission Trade Regulation Rule 16 CFR 423, as amended, provides regulations for the care labeling of textile wearing apparel. The Rule is enforced by the Bureau of Consumer Protection and is one of the most popular consumer Rules ever promulgated.

The Rule requires that all manufacturers and importers, or any person or organization that directs the manufacture or import, of textile wearing apparel must provide the consumer with accurate care instructions. Most Bed & Bath and Home Furnishings manufacturers provide care instructions even though their products are not included in the Rule. If they choose to provide them, the instructions must comply with the Rule.

Care instructions must include, at least, instructions for proper washing, bleaching, and drying. Ironing instructions must be included if necessary or recommended. If an article cannot be laundered, then dry cleaning instructions must be provided.

IT'S SMART MARKETING:

Consumers have developed a reliance on care label information. They have also expressed preferences for garments with certain types of information on the care label.

83% of consumers read care labels before making a purchase decision.

59% of consumers consider care information the most important information on a garment, after size.

73% of consumers say that a garment they can launder with some type of bleach is higher quality, a better value, more durable, and easier to care for than one that prohibits bleach use.

68% of consumers will even switch brands to get a bleachable garment.

IT'S EASY:

The Rule prescribes only three allowable bleach care instructions.

"Bleach When Needed" is the correct instruction if all commercially available bleaches, chlorine and non-chlorine, can be safely used on a regular basis. This is the appropriate instruction for most whites and pastels and is appropriate on over 45% of all washable apparel. The Rule also allows that if all commercially available bleaches can be safely used, the care label does not need to mention bleach; however, using the easy care instruction "Bleach When Needed" has been shown to be an effective marketing strategy.

"Non-chlorine Bleach When Needed" or "Color Safe Bleach Only" is the most common bleach instruction and is acceptable on virtually all machine-washable apparel. The Rule states that, "If the regular use of chlorine bleach would harm the product, but the regular use of non-chlorine bleach would not, the label must say 'Only Non-chlorine Bleach When Needed' or words to that effect, such as 'Color Safe Bleach Only'."

"Do Not Bleach" may only be used if all commercially available bleaches, chlorine and non-chlorine, would harm the product when used on a regular basis. This instruction is rarely applicable given more than 98% of all washable textile products are safe in some type of bleach. Also, consumers interpret "Do Not Bleach" products as lower quality, less durable, and not easy-care.

RELIABLE EVIDENCE:

The Rule also requires that you possess reliable evidence to document any instruction or warning given on a care label. Key elements of reliable evidence are that it is acceptable to the industry, is documented in writing, and is in your possession.

IMPROPER OR "LOW-LABELING":

"Low-labeling" is the use of unjustifiably cautious care instructions and is a violation of the Federal Care Label Rule. - If tests indicate a garment is safe and colorfast in chlorine bleach, it must be labeled "Bleach When Needed". If a garment is not safe in chlorine bleach, but is safe in color-safe bleach, it must be labeled "Non-chlorine Bleach Only" or "Color-Safe Bleach Only".

Call or email any time for information or assistance with labeling compliance.

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30 years of service to Apparel Professional
212-372-3252
Fax: 212-505-3300
Email: info@TextileAffairs.org
Internet: www.TextileAffairs.org

• facilitator in communicating with appropriate Federal agencies

The trade can now look to TIA for guidance on all facets of textile labeling including care, fiber content, country of origin and brand identification.