

When a garment is purchased the care labeling will often tell you how serviceable the garment is and how easily it can be cleaned. A dryclean label means the garment can be cleaned with any solvent, dried at 160°F and routinely steamed and pressed on a steam air finisher. Sometimes due to weak dyes and trimming the labeling may restrict what solvent can be used or state “Do not use.” Some examples of restrictive labeling are:

- (1) “Dryclean-Use petroleum solvents only”. This restricts the serviceability of the item since less than 40% of cleaners in Florida use petroleum solvent.
- (2) “Dryclean-Use fluorinated solvent only”. This makes the garment unserviceable since this solvent is not used anymore.
- (3) “Dryclean-Do not steam or press”. This means that you can clean it but will have to wear a wrinkled garment.
- (4) “Dryclean-Cool Dry”. This item would not be serviceable to the drycleaning process since drycleaning solvents need heat for proper drying.
- (5) “Dryclean-occasional slubs, weave shading and irregularities in hand woven fabrics should not be regarded as defects. These characteristics are not defects or misweaves”. In reality they are imperfections in the fabric and will often become more apparent after wear and cleaning.
- (6) “Dryclean exclusive of trimming”. This item cannot be cleaned since the trimming is often an integral part of the garment. E.g. beads, sequins, leather.
- (7) “Use the Zircion method of cleaning”. This label is illegal and the store of purchase should tell you how the garment should be cleaned.
- (8) “Do not dryclean, do not wash, spot clean only”. This garment is unserviceable because after normal wear and soiling the garment would have to be discarded.

IMPROPER CLEANING

In some cases liability for fabric failure falls on the drycleaner. Dryclean labels do not mean that item can be wetcleaned or washed. Garments labeled as washable can not be assumed to be drycleanable. Failure to follow the labeling falls on the person doing the cleaning.

IMPROPER LABELING

In my experience as a garment analyst I have found that as high as 40% of care labeling may be incorrect. This means the routine drycleaning process if followed should not result in shrinkage, color loss, puckering, pilling, or damage to beads and other ornamentation. Any damages occurring from improper labeling should be returned to store of purchase for a refund.