

CARE LABELING-WASHING (11)

The consumer is often perplexed on how to wash garments that are labeled washable. Some garments labeled as washable may shrink, fade or bleed and the consumer may feel guilt that their washing procedure caused the problem. The Federal Trade Commission has put the burden of how to wash items on the manufacturer. The manufacturer must use the words “Do not”, “No”, “Only” when any part of the washing process will harm the garment. For example if a shirt is not colorfast it’s label should state “Wash with light colors or wash separately.” If a pair of pants will be harmed by ironing it’s label should state “Do not iron.”

WASHING

The label must state whether the product should be washed by hand or machine. The label must also state a water temperature that may be used. However if the regular use of hot water will not harm the product the label need not mention any water temperature. For example “Machine Wash” means hot up to 150oF. Warm 90oF-110oF or cold water can be used up to 85oF.

DRYING

The label must state whether the product should be dried by machine or by some other method. If machine drying is called for the label must also state a drying temperature that may be used. However, if the regular use of a high temperature will not harm the product the label need not mention any drying temperature. For example, tumble dry means that a high, medium or low temperature can be used.

IRONING

Ironing must be mentioned on a label only if it will be needed on a regular basis to preserve the appearance of the product. If ironing is mentioned the label must also state an ironing temperature that may be used. However, if the regular use of a hot iron will not harm the product the label need not mention any ironing temperature.

BLEACHING

If all commercially available bleaches can safely be used on a regular basis the label need not mention bleaching. If all commercially available bleaches would harm the product when used on a regular basis the label must say “No bleach” or “Do not Bleach”.

HAND WASH LABELS

Hand wash is a process by which soil may be manually removed from products or specimens through the use of water, detergent or soap and gentle squeezing action.

There is often confusion among consumers and even drycleaners over the term hand washing. As stated above hand washing means that the item cannot be mechanically agitated in the washing machine. It must be manually agitated which means a squeezing action using your hands. Many fabrics may shrink when mechanically agitated but is safe to manual agitation.

This information is obtained from the Federal Trade Commission's ruling on Care Labeling.