

## MISLABELED GARMENTS AND WHAT TO DO (57)

This article was motivated from a phone that I received from a reader. She purchased a micro-polyester suit with a label that stated “Dryclean using petroleum solvent only”. She had a problem finding a drycleaner who uses this solvent. This label was used in spite of the fact that the item could have been hand washed or drycleaned with any other solvent. The care labeling law enacted in 1972 provided that all garments manufactured carry a sewn in care instructions on cleaning the garment. This law was in the interest of the consumer and the drycleaner in handling their garment. Unfortunately there are many manufacturers who do not test their garments, mislabel their garments as well as put in ambiguous labels. As a garment analyst I worked with the Federal Trade Commission by notifying them of mislabeled garments. Although the Federal Trade Commission brought action against some manufacturers the number was very small compared to the number of violations. At the present time there are still a large number of mislabeled garments, possibly reaching 40%. Sometimes the manufacturer will label garments and not give the best way of cleaning. Manufacturers will also label garments in a way that misleads consumers and coaxes them to accept defects in the garment. The following is several examples of mislabeled garments that I have encountered.

- (1) Garment-a dress made of silk, polyester, nylon and metallic yarns.  
Problem-The dryclean only label does not limit heat. Many metallic yarns are coated with plastic. They will shrink when steamed and subjected to a high temperature pressing.
- (2) Garment-blue beaded blouse-  
Problem-Hand wash or dry spot clean, use Zurcian method-The FTC has ruled that the Zurcian cleaning label can not be used.
- (3) Garment-green polyester gown  
Problem-The label says “Spot clean only, Do not dryclean. Do not wash”. The garment however can be wetcleaned.
- (4) Raw silk beaded suits  
Problem-The label reads “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 these characteristics are defects in spite of the labeling.

- (5) Black beaded and sequined trimmed blouse (Acetate and Rayon)  
Problem-The label states “Handwashable”.

In my opinion the garment could shrink in hand washing due to the rayon

(2)

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### **CONSUMERS RESPONSE TO MISLABELED GARMENTS**

**Garments with mislabeling and ambiguous labels should be brought back to the store of purchase for a refund.**