

Many people have a misunderstanding of what constitutes a quality garment. They are often willing to accept defects in garments and attribute it to the nature and characteristics of the fabric. Some people mistakenly associate price with quality. They believe the more that you pay for a garment the better wear and use you will receive. This is a misconceived notion. Many manufacturers and designers have a high priced garment based strictly on style, design and advertising costs. Some manufacturers produce garments with the price based on the 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 principle. Manufacturers know that 1/3 of the people will accept defects, 1/3 will bring it back to the store of purchase and 1/3 will blame their drycleaner. I have been analyzing and testing garments for 35 years and have analyzed several thousand garments a year for defects. I have also worked with the legal department of the Federal Trade Commission and notified them of unserviceable and mislabeled garments. The FTC has brought legal action against those manufacturers who have violated the labeling laws. A serviceable garment is one that will not pill, fade, shrink, stretch or pucker under conditions of normal wear and cleaning. By law it must carry an accurate labeling on proper care instructions. The following is a description of the more common fabric defects I have encountered. If any of these defects have shortened the use and the wear of your garment the garment should be brought back to the store of purchase.

- (1) **Pilling**-This occurs when short staple fibers break away from the yarn causing pills and balls. This can occur during wear or routine cleaning. On some fabrics pills can be removed while on other fabrics they cannot be removed.
- (2) **Dye Crocking**-This is dye or print loss caused by friction and abrasion. The surface dyes on a fabric rub off causing a light area. It is commonly found on cottons, jeans and even the most expensive designer denim.
- (3) **Fugitive Dye**-When you routinely wash or dryclean a garment and the dye dissolves or bleeds this defect is called fugitive dye.
- (4) **Fume Fading**-Some poorly dyed fabrics will fade and discolor while hanging in a closet. The gases in the air oxidize the dye causing some colors to turn red or purple.
- (5) **Fugitive Interfacing**-This is a backing fabric fused to the base fabric by resins, heat and pressure. If improperly fused the fabric will pucker and bubble. A fused fabric should last the life of the garment and puckering under normal use is considered a fabric defect.
- (6) **Shrinkage**-If fabrics are properly pre-shrunk it will not shrink under conditions of wear and routine cleaning. A serviceable pre-shrunk fabric restricts shrinkage to less than 2%. Over 2% affects the fit of the garment.
- (7) **Stretching**-Some knit fabrics not properly stabilized will stretch and distort.
- (8) **Unserviceable Trimming**-If the trimming is damaged during wear or cleaning the entire garment is deemed unserviceable. Manufacturers can

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apply trimmings that are serviceable but often use the wrong ornamentation.

(9) Mislabeling-If the garment is labeled Dry Clean or Wash and you follow the instructions the garment should come out without damage. Improper labeling is the responsibility of the manufacturer.

(10) Suede and Leather-The serviceability of a suede and leather is determined by the tanning processes used in manufacture. Many imported suedes and leathers are not tanned by the same standards as we have in this country.