



Care Labels



Care instructions are small solutions to big problems. Care labels provide guidelines to consumers about apparel care, and the best cleaning procedures to be used for a particular combination of fabric, thread decoration and construction techniques. Following the instructions on the care labels is an assurance that the appearance and fit of the garment will be maintained after repeated cleaning treatments.

From a manufacturer's point of view, damage to garments from incorrect cleaning methods can lead to complaints; costly customer returns and a bad image. Whereas accurate and clearly written care labels can prevent customer dissatisfaction. From a consumer's point of view, accurate and clearly written care instructions serve as a cleaning guide and influence purchase. Garments with ease of care are often preferred over garments with complicated or difficult to understand care procedures.

Many different care labelling systems have evolved over the world. Some have been established as a governmental regulation, while others are international standards. Not all of them however, are mandatory.

This Bulletin Post is a comprehensive guide to the different care labelling systems, their usage and the newly developed Fabric Performance Codes.



Lesser Known Facts About Care Labels

- The country where the garment is sewn is the country of origin listed on the care label.
- Care labels must be permanently attached so that they are easily accessible to the consumer at the point of purchase. Generally, it is placed on the side or bottom.
- The manufacturer or importer who directs production is responsible for the accuracy of care instructions.
- A product may be imported without a care label, but it must be attached before the product is sold.

Care Labelling Systems

There are five care labelling systems which are generally used on care labels. These systems are:

1. The International Care Labelling System
2. The Japanese Care Labelling System
3. The Canadian Care Labelling System
4. The European Care Labelling System
5. The American Care Labelling System

1. The International Care Labelling System

The International Association for Textile Care Labelling (**GINETEX**) is the world body which governs care labels since 1975. Member nations of **GINETEX** are Belgium, France, Germany, England, Netherlands, Israel, Austria, Switzerland, and Spain. Its objectives are to:

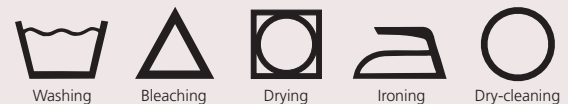
- Inform consumers on the correct care labelling of textiles through a system of uniform and simple care labelling symbols, independent of language.
- Achieve and promote voluntary care labelling on an international basis through the uniform symbols of **GINETEX**, thus avoiding the use of different systems.

The **GINETEX** care labelling system is based on the following principles:

- The care symbols provide information on the maximum permitted type of treatment.

- The care symbols must always be used in full and in the prescribed sequence.
- The care labelling must be clear, readily understandable, easy to use and not dependent on any particular language.
- The care symbols must not leave room for possible misinterpretation by the consumer.
- Uniform positioning of labels and harmonised use of the care symbols.
- The uniform care labelling system using symbols must take account of consumer habits without using complex technical data.
- The appliances used for textile care purposes must ensure the best possible implementation of the recommended care treatment.
- Adaptations which are necessary to keep up with ongoing technical and economic developments must as far as possible be made without the use of new symbols and additions in the framework of the existing system.

Five basic symbols are used in the International care labelling system in this order:



Note: The symbols for the International Care Labelling System are the same as those listed in the European Care Labelling System.

2. The Japanese Care Labelling System

The Japanese system, like other care labelling systems must have symbols placed in a specified order. Labels should be designed based on the following convention:

- Symbols should be arranged from left to right according to the following sequence: **1) Washing, 2) Bleaching, 3) Ironing, 4) Dry-cleaning, 5) Wringing & 6) Drying.**
- For coloured products which are not usually bleached, the symbol for possibility of chlorine bleached may be omitted.

- For products which are not usually ironed, the symbols for ironing may be omitted. (Except 'cannot be ironed')
- For products which can be washed with water, the symbols for dry-cleaning may be omitted. (Except 'cannot be dry-cleaned')
- The symbols should be either in black or dark blue whereas the prohibition symbols are in red and on a white background.

Washing (with water)			
	Machine-washable in maximum water temperature of 95°C		Machine-washable at slow water current or gentle hand wash in maximum water temperature of 40°C
	Machine-washable in maximum water temperature of 60°C		Machine-washable at slow water current or gentle hand wash in maximum water temperature of 30°C
	Machine-washable in maximum water temperature of 40°C		Should be washed gently by hand (not machine washable)
			Cannot be washed with water
Bleaching			
	Chlorine-based bleaching allowed		Do not use chlorine-based bleach
Ironing			
	Should be ironed at a temperature between 180°C - 210°C		Cannot not be ironed
	Should be ironed at a temperature between 140°C - 160°C		May be ironed at 180°C - 210°C if a cloth is placed between iron and garment
	Should be ironed at a temperature between 80°C - 120°C		
Dry-cleaning			
	Can be dry-cleaned. Use solvent of perchloroethylene or of petroleum-based solvent		Cannot be dry-cleaned
	Can be dry-cleaned. Use only a petroleum-based solvent		

Wringing			
	Wring gently by hand or for a short time by centrifugal hydroextractor		Cannot be wrung
Drying			
	Hang dry		Lay flat to dry
	Hang dry in shade		Lay flat to dry in shade

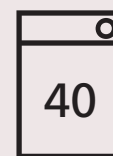
Note:



(i) The word '中' indicates that neutral detergent should be used.



(ii) The symbol '高' indicates that clothes ironed should be covered with another cloth.



(iii) The sentence 'ネット' indicates that a net should be used.

3. The Canadian Care Labelling System

Until July 1973 care labelling was not a legal requirement in Canada. After this date a new care labelling system was introduced. The new Canadian care symbol system used green (go ahead), amber (caution), and red (don't try) with five symbols which were wash tub, bleach triangle, square dryer, iron, and dry cleaning circle. In 2003 the Canadian system was updated to harmonise with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and (ISO) standards, and the colour code was discontinued.











4. The European Care Labelling System

Individual committees of the European Union are reviewing existing care label standards by collaborating with other international bodies so that they can create a unified system under the ISO scheme.



The symbols used in Europe are trademarked by **GENETEX** and a trademark fee needs to be paid to **GENETEX**, the trademark holder, if the garments are to be sold in a **GENETEX** country.

A correct care label for European countries is required to consist of at least four and sometimes five symbols in the following sequence: **1) Washing, 2) Bleaching, 3) Ironing, 4) Dry-cleaning & 5) Drying.**





Washing Process			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum temperature 95°C • Mechanical action normal • Rinsing normal • Spinning normal 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum temperature 40°C • Mechanical action normal • Rinsing normal • Spinning normal

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum temperature 95°C Mechanical action reduced Rinsing at gradually decreasing temperature (cool down) Spinning reduced 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum temperature 40°C Mechanical action reduced Rinsing at gradually decreasing temperature (cool down) Spinning reduced
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum temperature 70°C Mechanical action normal Rinsing normal Spinning normal 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum temperature 40°C Mechanical action much reduced Rinsing normal Spinning normal Do not wring by hand
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum temperature 60°C Mechanical action normal Rinsing normal Spinning normal 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum temperature 30°C Mechanical action much reduced Rinsing normal Spinning reduced
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum temperature 60°C Mechanical action reduced Rinsing at gradually decreasing temperature (cool down) Spinning reduced 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand wash only Do not machine wash Maximum temperature 40°C Handle with care
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum temperature 50°C Mechanical action reduced Rinsing at gradually decreasing temperature (cool down) Spinning reduced 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not wash Be cautious when treating in wet stage

Bleaching Process







	Chlorine-based bleaching allowed. Only cold and dilute solution.		Do not use chlorine-based bleach.
---	--	---	-----------------------------------

Ironing Process




	Iron at a maximum sole-plate temperature of 200°C.		Iron at a maximum sole-plate temperature of 110°C. Steam-ironing may be risky.
	Iron at a maximum sole-plate temperature of 150°C.		Do not iron. Steaming and steam treatments are not allowed.

* Note: The symbols most popularly used in the UK.

Dry-cleaning Process

	Dry-cleaning in all solvents normally used for dry-cleaning - this includes all solvents listed for the symbol P, plus trichloroethylene and 1,1,1-trichloroethane.		Dry-cleaning in trifluorotrchloroethane, white spirit (distillation temperature between 150°C and 210°C, flash point 38°C to 60°C). Normal cleansing procedures without restrictions.
	Dry-cleaning in tetrachloroethylene, monofluorotrchloro methane and all solvents listed for the symbol F. Normal cleansing procedures without restrictions.		Dry-cleaning in the solvents listed in the previous paragraph. Strict limitations on the addition of water and / or mechanical action and / or temperature during cleaning and / or drying. No self-service cleaning allowed.
	Dry-cleaning in the solvents listed in the previous paragraph. Strict limitations on the addition of water and / or mechanical action and / or temperature during cleaning and / or drying. No self-service cleaning allowed.		Do not dry-clean. No stain removal with solvents.

Drying Process

	Tumble dry possible. Normal drying cycle.		Do not tumble dry.
	Tumble dry possible. Drying at lower temperature setting.		

5. The American Care Labelling System

According to the Federal Trade Commission's Care Label rule, care labels may be composed of either words or symbols. Irrespective of whether the content is words, symbols, or both, care instructions appear in the following order:









































1. Machine wash / Hand wash / Dry-clean
2. Washing temperature (hot / warm / cold)
3. Washing machine programme (delicate / permanent press / normal cycle)
4. Bleaching instruction (do not bleach / non-chlorine bleach / chlorine bleach)
5. Drying method (tumble dry / line dry / flat dry / drip dry)
6. Ironing (do not iron / cool iron / warm iron / hot iron)
7. Warnings

In addition to the care label instructions, manufacturers and importers must provide labels that:

- Are permanently attached so that they can be easily seen at the point of sale. If the product is packaged, displayed or folded so that the customers cannot find the label, care information must also appear on the side of the package or on a hang tag.
- Remain fastened and legible during the useful life of the product.

- Mention the regular care needed for the ordinary use of the product.
- Warn the customer about additional factors which may harm the garment.

Since December 1996, a new system using only symbols and no words has been used in the United States of America. The revised care symbols developed by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) with their meanings are listed below.

















Symbols used in the American Care Labelling System (ASTM Symbols)		
 Washing	 Do not wash	Machine wash cycles  Normal  Permanent press  Delicate / gentle  Hand wash
		Water temperatures (Maximum) (200°F) (160°F) (140°F) (120°F) (105°F) (65°F - 85°F) Symbol (s) ●●● ●● ●● ●● ●● ●
 Bleaching	 Do not bleach	 Any bleach when needed  Only non-chlorine bleach when needed
 Drying	 Do not tumble dry  Do not dry (used with do not wash)	Tumble dry cycles  Normal  Permanent press  Delicate / gentle  Line dry / hang to dry  Dry flat
		Tumble dry heat setting  Any heat  High  Medium  Low  No heat / air  Drip dry  In the shade (added to line dry, drip dry, or dry flat)
 Ironing	 Do not iron	Iron-dry or steam Maximum temperature  200°C (390°F) High  150°C (300°F) Medium  110°C (230°F) Low  No steam (added to iron)
 Dry-clean	 Do not dry-clean	Dry-clean - normal cycle  Any solvent  Any solvent except trichloroethylene  Petroleum solvent only
		Dry-clean - additional instructions  Short cycle  Reduce moisture  Low heat  No steam finishing



Fabric Performance Codes

The Premiere Vision Performance Codes were created to highlight specific properties or qualities of the fabric. These are value-added characteristics of the fabric which may or may not be visible to the buyer.

Premiere Vision has created 28 pictograms that are listed below with their meanings:

Premiere Vision Fabric Performance Codes	
	Responsible Production Fabric whose manufacturing is environmentally responsible, and / or integrates fair trade principles and respect for human labour.
	Wind-Proof Property of a fabric that consists of blocking wind; through a weave, impregnation or membrane.
	Chlorine Resistant Property of a fabric to resist chlorine products, either in the course of its production cycle or during use, thanks to the employment of specific fibres or dyes (resistance to pool water and to chlorine-water stains, control of the level of bleaching).
	Natural Stretch A fabric that stretches in the warp and / or the weft, which regains its initial dimensions after stretching. Property obtained without the use of elastane or lycra, by a mechanical retraction of the yarn, or by chemically treating the fabric.
	Mono-Stretch A fabric that stretches in the warp or the weft, and which regains its initial dimensions after stretching. This property is obtained through the use of elastane, textured yarns or yarns of an elastic nature.
	Bi-Stretch A fabric that stretches in the warp and the weft, and which regains its initial dimensions after stretching. This property is obtained through the use of elastane, textured yarns or yarns of an elastic nature.
	Easy-Care Property of a fabric aimed at easing its domestic use.
	Fast Drying Fabric Property of a fabric permitting quick drying thanks to the specificity of its fibres and / or its structure, and / or a hydrophobic treatment.
	Water-Repellent Finishing process which enables a fabric to resist penetration by water in its liquid form, by oil or dirt. Liquids run off the fabrics without penetrating it.
	Water-Proof Property of a fabric which stops water going through.
	Breathable-Waterproof Property of a fabric which stops liquid water going through but allows perspiration to exit.
	Breathing Property of a fabric that consists of wicking humidity from the body to the exterior thanks to fibres properties and / or properties inherent in its structure. A dry micro-climate can thus be maintained between skin and clothing.
	Coating Finishing process which deposits a specific product on the surface of a fabric to give it special qualities.
	Membrane Very thin synthetic film, bonded onto a fabric, either freely inserted or laminated, to give it water and wind proofing whilst retaining breathability.
	Multi-Layer Cloth obtained by a bonding process of two or more materials, each with its distinct properties.
	Double-Face Cloth presenting two different sides; each with its specific function.

	<p>Climatic Property of a fabric that controls the temperature of the fibre in order to protect the body from exterior climatic conditions - whether they are hot or cold.</p>
	<p>Thermal Property of a cloth which regulates the temperature of a fibre in order to retain a dry and warm micro-climate between skin and garment in order to avoid body chill.</p>
	<p>Fleece Type of double-knit bouclé knit, intensely raised on one face or on both, producing a fleece effect.</p>
	<p>Stain-Resistance Finishing treatment intended to prevent dirt from attaching to fibres.</p>
	<p>Anti-UV Function added to a fabric via a special treatment of the fibre and blocking the UV rays that are dangerous to the skin with a protection factor of over 30.</p>
	<p>Anti-Bacterial Chemical process applied to a cloth to stop the development of bacteria caused by perspiration.</p>
	<p>High-Resistance Property of a fabric to resist tearing and / or abrasion, through the use of high tenacity fibres.</p>
	<p>Reflecting Property of a cloth that reflects the light. This term includes fluorescents, phosphorescents and retroreflexive.</p>
	<p>Organic A fabric with a majority of certified-organic natural fibres (cotton, wool, silk, linen).</p>
	<p>Recycled A fabric with a majority of recycled fibres, either natural or synthetic (principally cotton, wool, linen, polyester, polyamide or silk).</p>
	<p>Eco-friendly Finishing Dyes and treatments respecting the strictest international standards (regarding laundering, the absence of heavy metals, water conservation, pollution-reduction).</p>
	<p>Garment Washable A textile designed to stand up to garment washings and wash-out treatments.</p>



