

DRYCLEANING & LAUNDRY INSTITUTE CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING GUIDE



INDEX

1. Asking the Right Questions: A Checklist Every CSR Should Review
2. How Often Should You Clean Your Clothes?
3. Dealing With Difficult Customers
4. Checking In Leather And Suede Garments
5. Five Questions About Perchloroethylene Dry Cleaning
6. Handling Challenging Garments At The Counter
7. Inspection At The Counter
8. Think Small: Selling Additional Services

Note: This information has been sourced from the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute Encyclopedia which covers all aspects of drycleaning and management.

2.HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU CLEAN YOUR CLOTHES?

CATEGORIES: CUSTOMER SERVICE

Some industries have set standards that should be followed for proper care and to extend the life of the product. As consumers, we are instructed to have our oil changed in our cars every 3,000 miles or three months, and a general check-up every 30,000, 60,000, or 100,000 miles. Food products and beverages have a "Fresh by or Use by" date that guarantees freshness.

So what are the recommendations for cleaning clothes? The easy answer is that you should have your drycleanable garments cleaned as frequently as you clean your washable garments. Drycleanable garments are subject to the same soils, staining, and odors from wear as your cotton dress shirts and blouses, washable work separates, khakis, jeans, etc. So if you wear a pair of drycleanable pants with a washable cotton sweater, doesn't it make sense to have the pants cleaned as often as you wash your sweater?

METHODS USED TO DETERMINE WHEN TO CLEAN CLOTHES

SNIFF METHOD

When determining how frequently to dryclean clothes, many consumers may rely on the sniff method. If it stinks, clean it. If it doesn't, you can probably get away with another wear or two. This method may work for a while, but permanent stains, odors, and holes may develop on your clothes that may actually, shorten the wearable life of your garment.

WRINKLE METHOD

Some consumers follow the wrinkle method. If you can shake, steam, or iron the wrinkles out, you can wear it again. In theory, this may work on a short-term basis. But if there are stains on the garment, age, or the heat of Ironing can contribute to oxidation and setting of the stain.

TIME WORN METHOD

The amount of time a garment is worn is a commonly used method for determining if a garment needs to be cleaned. But remember, even if a garment is only worn for a few hours, such as to a wedding, odor, and staining may still occur. For example, you attend an evening wedding followed by a sit-down reception dinner with dancing:

Wedding 1 Hour

Reception 4 Hours

Total 5 Hours



During the five hours, you are fabulous, but cosmetics, beverages, perfume, and hair spray may soil that expensive silk dress. If you are like most people, and have a really good time at the reception, you will probably break out in a sweat from doing the electric slide, Macarena, funky chicken and other dances. After you have returned home, do you hang your dress back in the closet for the next special occasion, or take the dress to the cleaners?

ROTATION METHOD

After wearing, clothes may be placed at the back of the closet, and rotated forward as other garments are worn. This method keeps consumers from wearing the same garments too close together. In theory, this is a good method, but depending on the amount of clothes you have, it may be two or three weeks, or even a month before you wear the garment again. During this time, odors may have sufficiently dissipated from the garment, however, stains have been allowed to set in the fabric, and may become permanent.

PROBLEMS

If clothes are not cleaned regularly, some damage may occur. The following are some problems that may develop with infrequent cleaning.

PERSPIRATION AND BODY ODORS

During use, garments are subject to odor from perspiration and body discharges, as well as other environmental conditions. Each time the item is worn; additional odors may penetrate into the fibers. Airing garments out between wearing may be sufficient to gain one or two extra wearings of a wool or silk sweater, but after three or four wearings, there may be sufficient build-up of body odor to make the sweater objectionable. According to Susan Morem in "How to Gain the Professional Edge, we become accustomed to our own scent within 15 minutes. You will not be able to smell your cologne or body odor, but it doesn't mean others can't." She further recommends that you "watch for nonverbal reactions; people who back away from you may be trying to tell you something."

Also, perspiration is known to cause odors, but it can also deteriorate fibers. According to Carol Konop, author of *The Shirt Book*, "your shirts should be laundered after each use. Perspiration and aluminum chlorides from deodorant can weaken the fibers if left in the fabric too long. Washing your shirt as soon as possible after wearing can prevent perspiration stains and will lengthen the life of your shirt."

Stains becoming set in the fabric

Let's be honest, your clothes are going to get stained, by your hand, or someone else's.

The longer the stains remain in the fabric, the more difficult it will become to remove them. In some cases, stains that have aged and remain in the fabric for a prolonged period of time can start to degrade the fabric, and holes may develop. Also, if the fabric is ironed with stains present the heat from ironing can contribute to oxidation of the staining. Once oxidized, stain removal becomes much more difficult.

STAINS ATTRACTING INSECTS

It is a commonly known fact that moths are attracted to wool, but did you know that they are also attracted to stains present on fabrics or garments? If a garment is put in storage, or even in a closet while stained, moths, crickets, ants, silverfish, and other insects may be attracted to the stain. And if the stain contains sugars, such as from beverage, the fiber type does not matter. When feeding on the stain, the insects also eat the fibers, and thin areas or holes may develop.

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

As Morem states in *How to Gain the Professional Edge*, "your clothing is the first thing others notice about you. Always look your best. Make sure your clothes are clean, pressed, mended and fit well. Look sloppy and you are sloppy. Look like a pro, and you are one. It's that simple. You are what you wear."

Morem also offers the following advice: Reduce your chances of surprises by taking a little extra time before you face your day. Before you head out the door each morning, run through this checklist to make sure you've taken care of those final touches.

- Is clothing clean?
- Is clothing free of spots and stains?
- Is clothing lint-free?
- Does clothing fit properly?
- Are buttons buttoned and zippers zipped?
- Are garments well pressed?

If you apply the same rationale to your clothing as you do your car, household furnishing, or other possessions, it just makes sense to frequently clean your drycleanable garments. Also, if you take into consideration the cost of replacing damaged garments, it is more wallet-friendly to take proper care of your clothing to prolong the life of your investment. Otherwise, you may need to replace your clothing frequently, which will be much more expensive and time consuming than the price of regular professional care.

HOW OFTEN DO YOUR CLOTHES NEED TO BE CLEANED?

While we would love you to bring your clothes to be professionally cleaned after each and every wearing, we know that is not practical. The following guidelines were developed based on a survey of consumers who were asked how often they wore specific garments before having them professionally cleaned. Of course, the timeline gets shortened depending on the heat and activity level during the garment's use and how much the wearer perspires and whether the item gets stained.

GARMENT CARE GUIDELINES

Outerwear	Monthly during the season and then before storage
Tuxedo	Every other wearing
Eveningwear	After every wearing
Dress	Every third wearing
Skirt	Every fourth wearing
Blouse	Every other wearing
Cotton Laundered Shirt	After every wearing at the most every other wearing
Polo Shirt	After every wearing
Khakis or Casual Pants	Every other wearing
Dress Pants	Every third wearing
Wool Suit	Every third wearing
Lightweight Suit	Every third wearing
Sport coat or Blazer	Every third wearing
Cotton sweater	Every third wearing
Wool sweater	Every third wearing
Silk sweater	Every other wearing

