

DRYCLEANING & LAUNDRY INSTITUTE CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING GUIDE



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

6.HANDLING CHALLENGING GARMENTS AT THE COUNTER

CATEGORIES: CUSTOMER SERVICE

When accepting garments for cleaning, there are some basic things we must look for during every transaction, such as:

- Spots and stains
- Missing buttons
- Damaged trims
- Color loss
- Care instructions

There are also some more challenging items that need to be checked carefully before accepting them for cleaning. You will need to know what your plant's policies are, what types of items require release forms, and the items your plant does not accept for cleaning.

NO CARE LABEL

Some items that come into a cleaning plant won't have care instructions attached. The Federal Trade Commission's Care Label Rule does not require care instructions on all items. Another possibility is the customer may have removed the care label.

The Care Label Rule requires the manufacturer or importer of textile garments to provide instructions for a single care procedure. Other apparel items such as leather, fur, shoes, gloves, hats, handkerchiefs, belts, suspenders, neckties, and non-woven garments made for one-time use are not required to have care instructions. Household items such as drapes, comforters, and bedspreads also are not covered by the rule.

The following items do not need care instructions:

1. Products sold to institutional buyers for commercial use—for example, uniforms sold to employers for employee use in job-related activities, but not purchased by the employees.
2. Garments custom-made by a tailor or seamstress from materials provided by the customer.
3. Products granted exemptions under the original Care Label Rule because they are completely washable and retail for \$3 or less.

When accepting garments for cleaning it is important to learn as much about them as possible, such as the age of the item, what's been done in prior care, and whether there are any coordinating items, so the cleaner can better determine if they can be safely cleaned without causing damage.



SPOT CLEAN ONLY

According to the Care Label Rule, if a garment cannot be cleaned by any available cleaning method without being harmed, the label must state this. For example, if a product would be harmed by both washing and drycleaning, the label might say, "Do not wash-do not dryclean-spot clean only."

It is the practice in some plants that these items be tagged for the dry cleaner to determine what can be done. Others accept them only if the customer signs a release or permission-to-process form. Still others do not accept items with this label. Check your plant's policy before accepting these items. If the item is accepted, assure the customer that the garment will be checked carefully and if the dry cleaner feels there will be any problem caring for it, the customer will be contacted to determine how to proceed.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

Drapes

Drapes can be made of many different fibers and have linings or coated backings. They should be inspected carefully for the following:

- Look for care instructions and fiber content information. If they are not attached to the drapes, ask if the customer has that information.
- Check for light fading, water spots, weak or thin areas, and stains. Explain that water spots are very difficult to remove and that every effort will be done to improve the appearance of the drapes.
- Measure the drapes.
- Examine drapes with coated backings for peeling and to evaluate the condition of the coating. If it has started to crack, peel, or has been altered in any way, it may be best to not accept them.

Sofa Cushion Covers

Cushion covers on upholstered furniture are not designed to be cleaned by immersion in solvent or water. These items have different cleaning instructions designated by the fabric manufacturer. The cleaning codes for these items are S, W, S/W, or X. These codes indicate the fabric has been designed for surface cleaning only or cleaning by a professional furniture cleaning service.

All the codes for cleaning upholstered items come with the following caution note: "Never remove cushion covers for separate dry cleaning or washing. Any tumble cleaning method can destroy the back, shrink, or otherwise damage upholstery fabric." Check your plant's policy regarding acceptance of these items.

Feather Beds and Down-Filled Comforters

Check your plant's policies about accepting down comforters or feather beds. These items need to be carefully inspected before accepting for cleaning. Be sure to check for the following:

- Adequate quilting to prevent the down from shifting during cleaning.
- Care instructions (if any).
- Stains, rips or tears that would need to be repaired before cleaning.

FABRICS

Silk

Silk fabrics can be damaged by light, perspiration, products containing alcohol, and rubbing the fabric while wet. Carefully inspect for any existing problems and note them on the ticket.

- Check under collars and shoulders for light fading.
- Warn the customer that stains that have been treated by rubbing with water may appear lighter or exhibit color loss after cleaning.
- Look for stains from hairspray, since there may be color loss in those areas after cleaning.



Fabrics From Acetate Fibers

Acetate fabrics are prone to fume fading from nitrous oxides in the atmosphere. The color change usually occurs on green, black, blue, or purple acetates that turn a reddish hue and affects both sides of the fabric.

- Check for color changes.
- Warn customers that cleaning may make the change more evident.