

TABS

INTERNATIONAL FABRICARE INSTITUTE BULLETIN

FUZZY SPANDEX

No. 310

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM ?

Some garments containing a percentage of “stretch” fibers appear faded or have a lint-like appearance after dry cleaning. The generic name for these fibers is spandex. It may also be listed on a care label as elastane and include trade names such as Cleerspan[®], Dorlastan[®], Linel[®], Lycra[®], or others.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Examination shows that the stretch spandex yarns have lost their color, appearing gold or tan. In other instances, these yarns have stretched out or broken, thus protruding from the surface of the fabric. In both cases, the fabric now appears fuzzy or looks like it has lint on the surface.

WHAT CAUSED IT?

Spandex can be dyed effectively to match the other colors in the fabric blend. However, just like other fabric dyes, sometimes the color will dissolve in the dry cleaning solvent and be flushed away, leaving the goldish-tan, raw-colored spandex showing. In other cases, the stress from wear and the agitation of dry cleaning can cause these fine stretch yarns to slip out of the fabric, forming small loops on the surface. Sometimes, the spandex yarns actually break during dry cleaning, again leaving a “fuzzy” lint-like appearance.

CAN IT BE PREVENTED?

Only the garment manufacturer can prevent the dyes from fading or damage to the stretch yarns by selecting dyes and stretch yarns with more resistance to conditions of wear and the recommended cleaning process. The dyes need to be properly set in order to avoid color fading during the recommended procedure. Excess tension applied to the spandex during fabric construction, insufficient heat setting, and the use of solvent soluble lubricants and/or incompatible fabric blends can all contribute to spandex yarn damage.



The elastic yarns in this garment have been broken during cleaning and now appear on the surface as “fuzzy” tan spots.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Only the manufacturer can be held responsible when one of the aforementioned problems occurs through normal wear and following the recommended care procedure in articles not past their life expectancy. Sometimes this damage will occur in a short period of time or during the initial cleaning, while at other times the damage is progressive and will not show up until much later or after repeated cleaning. The dry cleaner has no control over any of the factors that can cause such fading or damage and cannot prevent it during the accepted or manufacturer’s recommended care procedure.

IS THERE A REMEDY?

Faded, stretched, or damaged spandex used as a blended component of fabrics cannot be restored.