

Who is responsible?

If a relatively new garment is damaged as the result of a manufacturing defect, return it to the retailer. See the store owner or the top person in charge. Garments have a warranty of reasonable serviceability at the point of sale for expected use and cleaning. When a garment fails during normal wear or care, the seller (as the manufacturer's representative) should stand behind the product and offer an adjustment. In some instances, you may need to contact the manufacturer directly.

Problems evident after cleaning

Whether it's a previously unseen spot, a colour change, or a broken button, imperfect results represent a problem that must be addressed. Sometimes damage that occurs during the cleaning process may reflect a manufacturer's defect or a problem that arises from circumstances of use. [DIA](#) members will work with you to promptly address the situation and resolve the problem.

What is the Law?

The ACCC Care Labelling Rule requires care labels on all garments sold in Australia. These labels must be permanent, legible, and easy to find. The care label is intended to give consumers and cleaners guidance on how to care for the item properly. All parts of the garment must be able to withstand the recommended care procedure.

Consent Forms

Occasionally, dry cleaners may recognize the likelihood of a problem or risk with your garment and will discuss it with you. They will explain that they would not recommend drycleaning or laundering because of what they think might happen during the process. If you want them to try to clean it anyway, the cleaner may ask you to sign a release acknowledging that the risk of possible damage has been explained to you. In this case, if damage occurs during very careful professional care, they cannot be held responsible.

Consumer Responsibility

Damage due to consumer use or storage is often not apparent until after cleaning. Many staining substances are invisible when they are dry, but they oxidize, darken, and therefore become visible when exposed to heat in cleaning and pressing. Likewise, several staining substances, such as alcoholic beverages, perfumes, or household cleaning products, contain chemicals that contribute to colour loss.

None of this is the result of defective materials or mishandling by the cleaner. Damage from circumstances of use should be considered the consumer's responsibility.

Cleaner Responsibility

Sometimes damage that occurs during the cleaning process is the cleaner's responsibility.

Whenever that happens the cleaner should address the circumstances promptly and fairly, often using the *Fair Claims Guide for Consumer Textile Products* as a guide in proper settlement.

However, if there is a valid question regarding responsibility, the cleaner may seek permission to submit the item for an independent determination performed by a Textile Analysis Laboratory.

Manufacturer Responsibility

If a label indicates “dryclean” or “wash,” this should mean that all components—including the outer shell, lining, buttons, interfacing, fusing material, dyes, and trims—will not be altered during cleaning. If following the care instructions leads to a problem, responsibility lies with the manufacturer for not properly testing the garment before labelling.

Common manufacturing problems include:

- Dyes that dissolve in drycleaning solvent, water, or detergent, causing bleeding or fading.
- Sizing that dissolves in solvent or water.
- Shrinkage because of failure to properly stabilize the fabric before garment construction.
- Colour loss or change in dyes sensitive to light or to action of the surrounding air.
- Shrinkage or separation of interfacing and bonded fabrics.



Consumer guarantees — a guide for consumers



When you buy goods and services, you have rights under law. This guide explains your consumer rights and the steps you can take to resolve problems.

