

MATELASSÉ

IDENTIFICATIONS AND USE

Due to the increase in consumer preference for texture and subtle designs, matelassé has become one of the more popular fabrics used in household textiles. Matelassé, which is a French word for padded or cushioned, refers to materials that are predominately used for bedspreads, but can be also used for cushions and slip covers.

This complex or novelty fabrication method is made on intricately constructed looms to produce the desired patterns. When finished, the fabric will have a woven-in quilted or raised effect.

PROBLEMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Due to the various weaves in the fabric, one of the biggest problems with matelassé is shrinkage or lack of dimensional stability. This shrinkage usually exceeds the allowable 2-4 percent shrinkage rate for household fabrics. The dimensional change may occur in drycleaning or washing procedures. Also, noticeable shrinkage may be apparent after the first cleaning, or it may be progressive over several cleanings.

Another problem common to matelassé is fabric damage. Since the fabric has some yarns that “float” on the surface (similar to satin in some areas), surface abrasion may contribute to snagging, pulled yarns or tears. Also, some areas may contain imbalanced weaves, and when the yarns are broken, larger holes or open areas may develop.

STAIN REMOVAL

Normal stain removal procedures should not cause problems on this fabric. Because this is a heavier weight material, it is important to make sure that the fabric is completely dry after wetside stain removal procedures to prevent local staining or redeposition in drycleaning.

And due to the presence of “float” yarns on the surface, tamping should be limited. Also, keeping the air gun at least four inches above the fabric will prevent shifting of the yarns in loosely woven areas.

DRYCLEANING

Most materials can be drycleaned without adverse effects. Before cleaning, measurements should be taken on the item. Since the material is prone to shrinkage, it may be beneficial to reduce the cycle time. Normal drying temperatures should not affect the material.

Slip covers should be checked for finishes or coatings



on the reverse. If coated, it may be beneficial to dryclean a sample before processing the item, since some coatings may be solvent-soluble, and will be adversely affected in normal drycleaning. If the finish is removed, excessive shrinkage, fraying or separation at the seams may occur.

WETCLEANING

Some matelassé items may require washing procedures. This could involve the recommended process by the manufacturer, or may be necessary due to stains or atmospheric soiling. The items should be processed in front loading or larger machines to allow free movement in processing. Normal washing, and cooler temperatures may be beneficial to minimize shrinkage. Also, extra rinsings may be necessary to ensure that all residues are removed from this heavier-weight material.

If machine or tumble drying, use larger machines to allow free movement and ensure uniform drying. Low temperatures are also recommended.

FINISHING

These items may be subjected to normal steam finishing, if necessary. When using the press head, however, only “kiss” the fabric (without locking the head). If the press head is closed or locked down, the intentional quilted or raised effect will be flattened.

If some relaxation shrinkage occurs in normal cleaning, it may be possible to use steam to return the item to its original dimension. This practice is most beneficial when the item is measured prior to cleaning. □