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The International Fabricare Institute is a trade association that represents the interest of the drycleaning/laundry industry. IFI provides education, research, legislative representation, and industry specific information through its programs, products, and services. It has approximately 7,500 members in the U.S. and 68 countries worldwide.



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The Association of
Professional Drycleaners,
Wetcleaners, and Launderers

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Ruined!

Some Garments Are Destined To Go Bad

Some garments come out of the wash or drycleaning machine mere shadows of what they used to be. Very often, a customer will blame the cleaner, but it turns out that frequently the cleaner is not to blame.

In many cases, one garment style in a line of clothing a manufacturer offers will have a bad run, or even just a bad bunch of fabric could result in an entire truckload of bad garments that don't reveal their secrets until they are cleaned.

Often, a bad care label (which instructs users on how to care for a garment) can send a beautiful blouse, or even an evening gown, to the dumpster simply because the label said "Dryclean Only" when in fact the garment, in whole or in part, was not drycleanable.

In cases like these, the cleaner should not be blamed because he or she followed the care label instructions and damage still occurred. Although cleaners are not required to follow the manufacturer's care label instructions, deviating from them is done at their own risk. There might be two or more ways to adequately care for a garment, but the Federal Trade Commission's Care Labeling Rule only requires that manufacturers list one acceptable care method that is applicable to all components of the garment. Problems arise when a care label is incorrect or contains insufficient information to adequately process the garment.

Fortunately for cleaners and their customers,



Manufacturer: Betsey Johnson

Description: Black garment with various ornamentation, such as mirror-like trims and embroidery.

Problem: When the garment is drycleaned, as recommended on the care label, the mirror trim is removed from the item. This may occur in the first drycleaning or progress over several drycleanings.

Response: The company acknowledges some problems with these garments. Betsey Johnson recommends that consumers who experience trim problems return the garment to the store where purchased.

both parties to a reasonable resolution when damage due to a faulty care label occurs.

◀ Case Study: Tommy Hilfiger

A few years ago, Tommy Hilfiger shirts had a dye bleeding problem. Cleaners around the country were getting blamed for ruining expensive articles of designer clothing in their machines. In almost all of the cases the cleaners turned out to have done everything properly and the clothing was ruined anyway.

A red, white, and blue shirt could easily become red, pink, and purple due to a red dye mixing with the entire garment. In some cases, an entire load of cleaning could be ruined by just one garment with problems.

Several cleaners contacted their national association, the International Fabricare Institute (IFI), to ask for some analysis work. A thorough investigation determined that the dyes were bleeding because they were not set properly. This evidence indicated the clothing manufacturer was responsible for the damage.

Manufacturers React to Problems

Following a \$300,000 fine by the FTC, Tommy Hilfiger agreed to begin a program



Manufacturer: Polo Sport

Description: Men's polyester/nylon coat. Have seen this damage on black coats, and white coats.

Problem: When drycleaned, as indicated on the care label, the surface film peels and separates from the shell fabric. Also, some transfer of the coating may be noted on the inner pockets and on the lining.

Response: Call the Consumer Relations Department at (800) 775-7656, and advise them of the problem. They will work with you and your customer to resolve problems with the damaged garment. If mailing garments to them, ship via UPS or FedEx to:

**Polo, 4100 Beechwood Drive,
Greensboro, NC 27410**

with IFI that allowed member cleaners to give customers with problem garments direct access to the manufacturer for replacement. The customer could send in a damaged article of clothing and receive a new one in short order. The system satisfied customers and Hilfiger took precautions against future problems.

Hilfiger then asked IFI's Textile Testing department to verify the integrity of future styles to ensure that they would not have similar problems.

The partnership that came from Hilfiger's devotion to solving the problems with some of their garments created a new dialogue between drycleaners, manufacturers, and consumers.

Problem Garments Are Not In Vogue

IFI's International Textile Analysis Laboratory (ITAL) maintains a watch list of the most common problem garments seen in its lab for members. This information helps drycleaners identify problem garments before they get into the machine and cause trouble.

As the introduction to each "Not In Vogue" bulletin states:

"There may be some difficulty processing the garments featured here. Members have indicated that the damage occurred even though these garments were cleaned according to the care label. The garments shown are among the current top repeaters in IFI's International Textile Analysis Lab, and are selected on the basis of the seasonality and timeliness of the problem.

"...[A]s these garments are currently on the market, and since we have seen repeated examples of damage, you may want to discuss these problems with your customers."

Excerpts from some recent Not In Vogue bulletins appear on pg. 1 and on this page.

ITAL Lab Finds Answers

If a garment is damaged during the cleaning process, an IFI member cleaner, wanting to know why it happened, may decide to send the garment to the International Textile Analysis Laboratory to be analyzed. In most cases, the analysts determine the nature of the problem and discover how it could have occurred.

This service is not available directly to consumers; however, through their local

Better Business Bureau consumers could send in a garment for analysis. According to the ITAL's 2000 statistics, 42.26% of the problems the lab received were due to improper manufacturing or improper care labeling, 38.05% of the problems were caused by consumers, 11.25% were the fault of the cleaner, 6.16% were restoration jobs, and 2.28% were attributed to causes unknown.

Every time a new garment comes to IFI's Textile Analysis Lab, it is recorded and inspected. If the lab spots a trend, or many garments by the same manufacturer come in, the lab will produce a bulletin to make IFI members aware of a recurring problem. The bulletins are called "Not In Vogue" and they are like a wanted poster for things to look out for. Every other month a new "Not In Vogue" warns cleaners about the potential pitfalls of specific garments, indicating the manufacturer, the specific problem, and the manufacturer's response, if any. Many manufacturers have made it possible for consumers to return garments that were damaged because of incorrect care labels.

With the information included in a "Not In Vogue" bulletin, a cleaner is aware of garments that cause problems. However, without prior notification the cleaner has no way of detecting these problems before cleaning. □



Manufacturer: Geoffrey Beene

Description: Men's dress shirts made from a blend of cotton and polyester fibers.

Problem: When the shirts are exposed to commercial finishing procedures, a heat-sensitive material used in the armhole seams softens. This material leaches through the shell/seam area, resulting in discoloration. Stiffness may also be noted in the affected areas. The staining is not removable.

Response: The manufacturer is aware of the problem. Customers should contact the store, and return the garment to the retailer.

Q Can jewelry damage garments during wear?

A Undoubtedly, the answer is yes. Buttons, baubles, and timepieces can damage beautiful smooth satins, plush chenilles, or soft wools. The damage can usually be found along necklines or sleeve cuffs where a necklace or watch was worn. These accessories frequently have rough edges that rub and abrade the fabric. Damage may not become apparent until the item is cleaned.

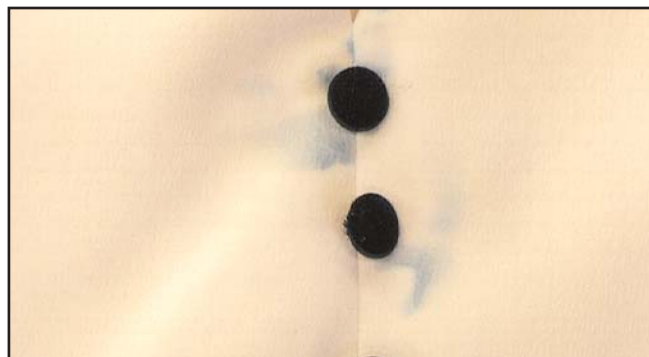
Smooth satins are very susceptible to this type of abrasion. Many yarns float on the surface of the fabric, and the jewelry constantly rubs a local area. This weakens the yarn fibers, allowing them to shift or break during cleaning, resulting in a fuzzy or pilled and snagged surface.

Items made with soft, plush chenille yarn are easily snagged by jewelry or contact with any rough surface, including purse straps, bracelets, backpacks, and desks or chair arms. The chenille yarns snag and pull out from the weave. In very severe cases the short, fuzzy pile fibers fall out of the yarn, and only a sheer net of the base yarns remain.

Loosely-woven wool made from soft, low-twist yarns may show pilling along lower, front panels that may rub against a rough counter top. Pilling may also occur along the edge of the sleeve hem that has been abraded by a watchband.

Q What causes button dye stains?

A Button dye stains are caused when the dyes on a colored button bleed during cleaning or finishing, creating discolorations or stains on the adjacent fabric. Some dyes used on buttons are soluble in drycleaning solvents, due to being improperly set by the manufacturer. During cleaning, the dyes soften and stain the surrounding areas. In other cases, the dyes on the buttons hold up to drycleaning but bleed upon contact with moisture such as is found in steam finishing. Again, the fabric adjacent to the buttons becomes discolored or stained.



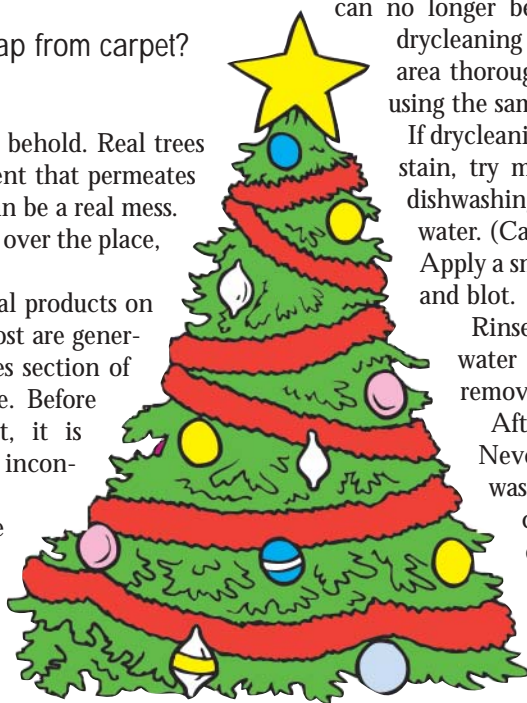
An unstable dye caused these buttons to bleed onto the surface of the blouse. Proper dye setting would have prevented the damage.

Q How do you remove tree sap from carpet?

A A Christmas tree is a beauty to behold. Real trees look great and create a pine scent that permeates your home. But taking them down can be a real mess. They not only spread pine needles all over the place, but the sap can get into your carpet.

There are a variety of stain removal products on the market for removing tree sap. Most are generally available in the cleaning supplies section of your local grocery or hardware store. Before using any stain removal treatment, it is important that you test them in an inconspicuous area for colorfastness.

Two products you may try using are non-flammable drycleaning fluid and amyl acetate. (Caution: Never pour drycleaning fluid or amyl acetate directly onto the carpet or allow it to reach the backing, because the carpet may become damaged permanently.) Apply using a clean, white towel and blot until the stain



can no longer be picked up by the towel. Try using the drycleaning fluid first. If that does not work, blot the area thoroughly with a dry towel and try amyl acetate using the same method.

If drycleaning fluid and amyl acetate fail to remove the stain, try mixing one-quarter (1/4) teaspoon of mild dishwashing detergent with one cup of lukewarm water. (Caution: Never use a stronger concentration.) Apply a small amount of the solution to a white cloth and blot.

Rinse the area by blotting with a towel and cold water until the detergent residue is completely removed.

After rinsing, blot the area with a dry towel. Never use laundry detergent or automatic dishwashing detergent because they contain optical brighteners or bleaching agents that may damage the fiber or color. If the stain remains, you can also try mixing two tablespoons of household ammonia with one cup of water and blot.

If the stain persists after this process, it may become necessary for you to seek advice from a carpet cleaning professional.

Cleaners Support Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Torch Relay Through 'Operation Running Clean'

As the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Torch Relay procession moves across the country, more than 40 fellow members of the International Fabricare Institute are helping the Torch Relay staff get to Salt Lake City as cleanly as possible. Roughly 150 support personnel are getting a good deal on cleaning their uniforms: they will be cleaned for free or at a heavily discounted rate. At every cleaning stop along the cross-country route, an IFI member will be there to take care of their clothing.

Participating cleaners will have to work long into the night to meet the demanding schedule the Torch Relay Team is keeping. They will receive the garments after 5 p.m. and have to get them back to the procession members by 6:30 the next morning. With 1,400 items to wash, dry, and press, our fellow association members have their work cut out for them.

"It's a one-hit, one-night job," said Jon Meijer, IFT's Vice President of Membership. "It requires a lot of dedication by the cleaners to offer these services for free or at a deep discount."

Meijer said the hardest parts would be the finishing involved (pressing the pants and shirts), the short turnaround time, and having a facility big enough and the people power to complete the job in one night.

For their efforts each participating cleaner will receive a commemorative, framed Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Torch Relay shirt and a certificate of appreciation. □



These models show the Salt Lake 2002 Torch Relay official uniforms. The pants are particularly heavy, and the inner and outer jackets are designed to keep the runners warm in cold weather.

The Torch Relay staff will drop off 1,400 items such as these to cleaners listed at right during the trip.



The Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Torch Relay route and cleaning stops.

Operation Running Clean Participants

Dec. 1	Atlanta, GA	Fashion Care Cleaners, Atlanta, GA
Dec. 8	Mobile, AL	Brass Hanger Cleaners, Gautier, AL
Dec. 11	Fort Worth, TX	Cousins Fabricare Specialists, Fort Worth, TX Reino Cleaners, Grand Prairie, TX D.D. French Cleaning, Dallas, TX Twin Kell Cleaners, Fort Worth, TX Glo Cleaning System, Dallas, TX Cox Drycleaners, Dallas, TX Gerald Stavely Cleaners, Dallas, TX Avons Cleaners, Dallas, TX Fishburns Cleaners, Dallas, TX
Dec. 15	Nashville, TN	Ted's Cleaners, Nashville, TN Signature Cleaners, Hendersonville, TN
Dec. 19	Pittsburgh, PA	Clean Care, Pittsburgh, PA
Dec. 23	New York City, NY	Aphrodite Cleaners, Brooklyn, NY
Dec. 29	Lake George, NY	Feigenbaum Clnrs & Furriers, Glen Falls, NY
Jan. 2	Columbus, OH	Swan Cleaners, Columbus, OH
Jan. 6	Detroit, MI	Michigan 49 Min. Cleaners, Detroit, MI Omega Cleaners, Detroit, MI Magic 40 Minute Cleaners, Detroit, MI Quality 40 Minute Cleaners, Detroit, MI
Jan. 10	Wichita, KS	Millers Cleaners, Wichita, KS
Jan. 15	Los Angeles, CA	Sterling Westwood, Inc., Los Angeles, CA Bryan's Cleaners & Dyers, Pasadena, CA Pico Cleaning Centers, Los Angeles, CA
Jan. 18	San Francisco, CA	Fairmont Cleaners, Pacifica, CA Aristocrat Cleaners, San Francisco, CA Blue Bird Cleaners, San Francisco, CA Buck's Change Cleaners, San Francisco, CA Fanta Delux Cleaners, San Francisco, CA Fine Arts Cleaners, San Francisco, CA Lucky Cleaners, San Francisco, CA Mill's 1 Hour Cleaners, Millbrae, CA One Hour Cleaners, Colma, CA Parkside Cleaners, San Francisco, CA Sunshine Cleaners, San Francisco, CA Sunshine Express, San Francisco, CA Wardrobe Cleaners, San Francisco, CA Kent Cleaners, Foster City, CA One Hour Drycleaning, San Bruno, CA
Jan. 22	Portland, OR	Cintas, Portland, OR
Jan. 26	Idaho Falls, ID	Davis's Imperial Cleaners, Idaho Falls, ID
Jan. 30	Denver, CO	Colorado Lace, Denver, Colorado
Feb. 4	Salt Lake City, UT	Unavailable at press time