

# Who's RESPONSIBLE?

Professional  
CLEANERS  
CARE

ADVANCED  
CLEANERS



## Who's Responsible?

Whether it's a broken button, a previously unseen spot, or color fading, imperfect results are a problem for both drycleaners and their customers. Damage that occurs during the drycleaning process may stem from the failure of a component part to be drycleanable or from the circumstances of use. Regardless, drycleaning customers need to know who is responsible for damaged items and what recourse they have to remedy the situation.

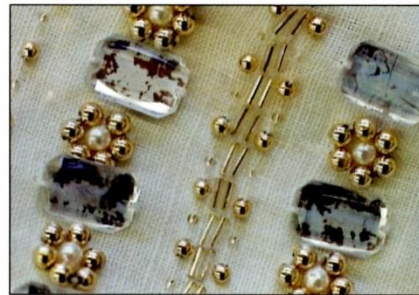
### WHAT IS THE LAW?

Wearing apparel is covered by the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) Care Label Rule. Textile garments sold in the United States must have a permanent, legible care label attached in a conspicuous place. All parts of the garment must be able to withstand the recommended care procedure. Garment manufacturers and importers of foreign-made garments are responsible for having a reasonable basis for the instructions given and for seeing that these labels are present.

### MANUFACTURER RESPONSIBILITY

The care label is intended to give both the consumer and the drycleaner guidance on how to care for the item properly. If a label says "dryclean," this should mean that all

*All parts of the garment should be able to withstand the recommended care procedure, shown on the care label.*



components including the outer shell, lining, buttons, interfacing, fusing material, and trim will be colorfast and will not be altered during cleaning. If any such problem occurs, it is the responsibility of the manufacturer, who has not tested the component accurately before labeling.

Manufacturing problems arise in fabrics as well. Other defects to look for are:

- Dyes that dissolve in drycleaning solvent, causing excessive bleeding or fading.
- Sizing that dissolves in solvent or water.
- Shrinkage due to failure to preshrink fabric before garment construction.
- Loss or dulling of surface sheen due to wear and tear of finish.
- Color loss or change in dyes sensitive to light or to action of the surrounding air.
- Shrinkage or separation of attached interfacing and bonded fabrics.

### WHY SIGN A CONSENT FORM?

The great majority of garments and household articles clean satisfactorily, without any problems at all. Occasionally, your professional cleaner may recognize a potential problem and ask you to sign a consent form before cleaning the item.

The use of a consent form is a signal that your drycleaner is aware of a potential problem and is showing consideration and prudence in the handling of your clothes. If you agree, the item will be processed with extreme care and probably returned to you in good condition. If damage does occur, however, the drycleaner should not be held responsible, since he/she warned you of the risk and obtained your consent to proceed.

Signing a consent form, of course, does not relieve the cleaner of the normal responsibility of handling the item with professional care, according to accepted industry standards.

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### WHAT CAN I DO?

It depends where the responsibility lies. If the problem arises from a manufacturing defect, you should take the article back to the retailer for an adjustment or refund. In some cases, the retailer may resist making an adjustment, even if the problem is a manufacturer defect. Ask the retailer for the name of the manufacturer or obtain the RN number which usually is found on the care label. Call the FTC at (202) 326-3170 and ask for the manufacturer's name and address. Send the item to the manufacturer via registered mail, return receipt, and include an explanation for the return.

### DRYCLEANER RESPONSIBILITY

Occasionally, damage done in drycleaning is the responsibility of the drycleaner and not the result of preexisting conditions or defects. In such cases, the cleaner will usually settle the claim promptly and fairly, often using the Fair Claims Guide published by the International Fabricare Institute (IFI). If there is some doubt about responsibility, the member cleaner can send the garment to IFI's Garment Analysis Laboratory to determine the cause of the problem.

ADVANCED  
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INTERNATIONAL  
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INSTITUTE

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and Launderers

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