



Designation: D3938 – 18 (Reapproved 2023)

Standard Guide for Determining or Confirming Care Instructions for Apparel and Other Textile Products¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D3938; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ε) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

1.1 This guide may be used to determine and confirm the appropriate care label instructions for apparel, piece goods, and other textile products excluding textile floor coverings and upholstery.

1.2 This guide encompasses the following care procedures: home laundering, professional textile care, and other alternative cleaning methods.

1.3 This guide includes provision for evaluating the complete textile product and the product components.

1.4 This guide covers the performance characteristics as a result of refurbishing that are important in determining the acceptability of a textile product.

1.5 This guide is appropriate for the evaluation of all garments and household textiles that are sold with care labels.

1.5.1 This guide may also be used in connection with the evaluation of similar materials that do not have a care label.

1.6 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety, health, and environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

1.7 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

D123 Terminology Relating to Textiles

D3136 Terminology Relating to Care Labeling for Apparel, Textile, Home Furnishing, and Leather Products (Withdrawn 2023)³

D5489 Guide for Care Symbols for Care Instructions on Textile Products

2.2 *AATCC Methods:*⁴

Technical Manual of the American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists

2.3 *Other Standards:*⁵

Federal Trade Commission Trade Regulation Rule. Care Labeling of Textile Wearing Apparel and Certain Piece Goods. Effective July 3, 1972, most recent version (cited as 16 CFR 423)

CAN/CGSB-86.1 The National Standard of Canada – Care Labelling of Textiles (most recent version)⁶

3. Terminology

3.1 For all terminology relating to D13.61, Apparel, refer to Terminology **D3136**.

3.1.1 The following terms are relevant to this standard: care instructions, main components.

3.2 For all other terms are related to textiles, refer to Terminology **D123**.

3.3 *Definitions:*

3.3.1 For definitions of other textile terms used in this guide, refer to Terminology **D123**. For definitions of terms related to care instructions, refer to Terminology **D3136**.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This is a guide to help a manufacturer distributor, or importer establish a reasonable basis for care information.

4.1.1 The manufacturer, distributor, or importer should possess, prior to sale, reliable evidence that the product was not harmed when refurbished reasonably often according to the

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² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

³ The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

⁴ Available from American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists, P.O. Box 12215, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709. <http://www.aatcc.org>.

⁵ Available from Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20580. <http://www.ftc.gov>.

⁶ Available from Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Supply and Services Canada, Publication Section, Hull (Quebec) K1A 0S9.

instructions. Additionally, they should possess reliable evidence that the product, or a fair sample of the product, would be harmed when refurbished by methods warned against on the label.

4.2 This guide is intended for general use by those who wish to evaluate whether apparel or other textile products will perform in an acceptable manner when refurbished according to particular care instructions.

4.3 Refurbished products are evaluated against previously selected product specifications to determine whether the products can be refurbished successfully by following the instructions on the care label or other care instructions.

5. Summary of Guide

5.1 This guide describes general procedures for determining and confirming instructions on a care label for a textile product.

5.2 General procedures include setting minimum or maximum performance specifications for the product, selecting appropriate standards and test methods to match the care label instructions, conducting the testing and evaluation process, and writing the report.

5.3 The products are evaluated for changes in dimension, hand, appearance, or performance characteristics as a result of refurbishing.

6. General Considerations

6.1 Care instructions can be determined by testing the component parts or by testing the completed textile product or both if necessary.

6.1.1 When confirming the care label, the testing shall be done on the completed textile product.

6.2 The test methods and evaluation processes selected to represent the washing, bleaching, drying, ironing, and dry-cleaning care label instructions shall simulate at least 3 complete refurbishing cycles.

6.2.1 The actual number of complete refurbishing cycles shall be agreed upon by the purchaser and the supplier.

6.2.2 One complete refurbishing cycle includes either (1) laundering including washing and drying, and, if appropriate, bleaching and/or ironing; (2) drycleaning and pressing; or, (3) wet cleaning and restorative treatment.

6.3 Test results that meet or exceed the preset specifications for product characteristics indicate that the determined or labeled care instructions represented by testing are appropriate for the tested product.

7. Product Characteristics for Evaluation as a Result of Refurbishing

7.1 *Change in Dimensions:*

7.1.1 Shrinkage.

7.1.2 Growth.

7.1.3 Distortion caused by uneven growth or shrinkage (skewness).

7.2 *Change in Hand:*

7.2.1 Changes in the physical properties related to the hand of fabrics listed in Annex A3 of Terminology **D123**.

7.3 *Change in Appearance:*

7.3.1 Loss or change of color.

7.3.2 Staining or self-staining, that is transference, or running of original color from one product to another or from one area to another area on the same product.

7.3.3 Distortion and loss or change in surface appearance or structure (such as, pilling, fuzzing, snagging, or matting; or loss of nap, flocking, embossing, or fabric smoothness; or other effects).

7.3.4 Change in appearance of components including base fabrics and items such as zippers, linings, interfacings, interlinings sewing thread, waist bands, pockets, seam bindings or tape, textile trim, nontextile trim, and labels.

7.3.5 Other changes in appearance not listed in **7.3.1 – 7.3.4**.

7.4 *Change in Performance:*

7.4.1 Loss of claimed functional properties (stated or implied) such as durable press, water repellency, anti-static, flame-resistant, or soil release.

7.4.2 Loss of performance of construction or design due to impairment or malfunction of items such as seams, bonding, trim, closures, or other hardware.

7.4.3 Failure of textile structure resulting from laundering or dry cleaning (for example, delamination).

7.4.4 Other changes in performance not listed in **7.4.1 – 7.4.3**.

8. Selection of Test Methods and Performance Specifications

8.1 If the textile product to be evaluated has no care label, *determine* a set of care instructions suitable for the item.

8.1.1 On making the final determination consider factors such as fiber content, fabric construction, item construction, findings, color and finish applications, and end use.

8.2 If the textile product to be evaluated has an attached care label, then *confirm* the care by using the designated instructions on the label.

8.3 Select the product characteristics listed in Section 7 that are to be evaluated for the samples to be tested.

8.3.1 The product characteristics are not limited to those examples listed, but may include all items which are agreed upon between the purchaser and supplier.

8.4 Select test methods that are representative of the care instructions.

8.4.1 The test procedures must be at least as severe as the conditions specified in the care instruction.

8.4.2 Where less common care instructions, for example, “wipe with a damp cloth,” are to be used, an appropriate care practice shall be used to evaluate the product.

8.5 Select test methods for evaluation of functional properties such as those listed in **7.4.1**.

8.6 Select the performance specification level for each product characteristic to be evaluated.

8.6.1 Product specifications should be agreed upon by the purchaser and supplier, or the end-use standards of ASTM Committee D13 shall be used.