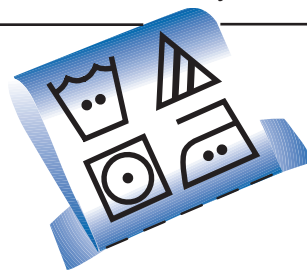


# Considering The Move To Care Symbols?

Here are some important issues to review.



In July, 1997 the Federal Trade Commission adopted a conditional exemption to the Care Label Rule that allowed the use of symbols in lieu of words on care labels. A condition was attached to the exemption requiring that, if symbols were used without words, until **January 1, 1999** the words defining the symbols must be provided in some other medium such as a hang tag or package insert. The FTC has provided no indication that they intend to change either the conditional exemption or the attached condition. Progressive manufacturers trading in NAFTA countries are preparing symbols-only care labels for introduction in January.

accepted in most of Europe and Asia, and Japan has their own symbol system. Negotiations are under way to harmonize the two major systems, ASTM and GINETEX, into a truly universal symbol system for care procedures.

- **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO USE SYMBOLS.** You may continue to use words with appropriate translations.
- **SYMBOLS DO NOT REPRESENT EVERY POSSIBLE INSTRUCTION.** Those instructions that are not provided for in symbols must be provided in words.

Textile Industry Affairs (TIA) is always available to help you with the transition to symbols. A CD is available for \$29 that includes all the approved USA/NAFTA symbols in BMP, EPS, TIF & PIC formats. Call, write or email for your copy of the CD or to have a TIA representative visit with you.

## Labeling Trends

For eleven years Textile Industry Affairs has been working with the trade on all types of labeling and compliance issues. Our focus has always been on Care Labeling and our message has always been clear: "Care instructions are small solutions to big problems." Whether the problem has been defined as lagging sales, competitive pressure, regulatory compliance or concern for the environment, care instructions contribute to the solution.

**AND THE TRADE IS LISTENING!**  
The logic of "small solutions" is unavoidable;

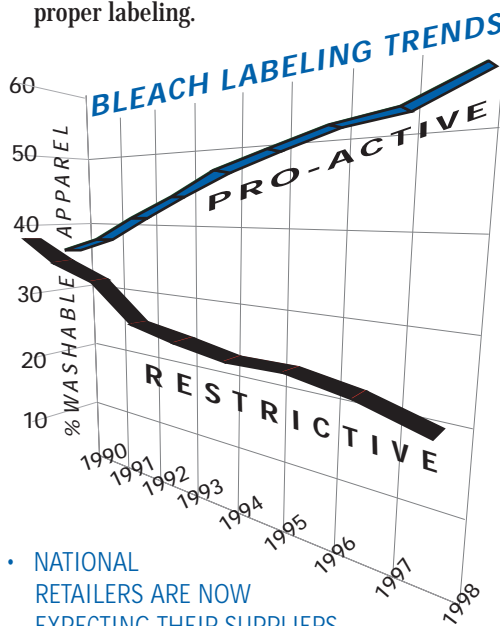
1. **CONSUMERS PREFER TO BUY** apparel they can clean with bleach.
2. **ALL WASHABLE APPAREL IS SAFE** in some type of bleach.
3. **GIVE THE CONSUMER WHAT THEY WANT.** The trends clearly indicate that a growing number of manufacturers and retailers are taking advantage of the marketing benefits associated with accurate bleach care instructions.

### What's Driving These Trends?

As the number and size of the manufacturers and retailers who are taking advantage of the preference for affirmative care instructions increases, the remaining competitors are realizing their disadvantage.

Those with pro-active instructions are gaining the benefits of the enhanced perceptions of easy-care, quality, value and durability consumers associate with affirmative bleach instructions. Their competitors are suffering from consumer perceptions that are translating "Do Not..." on a care label into "Do Not Buy" at the cash register.

- **A MAJOR EAST COAST WOMEN'S WEAR MANUFACTURER** recently conducted a seminar for sixty production, designers and sourcing experts on the power of proper labeling.



- **NATIONAL RETAILERS ARE NOW EXPECTING THEIR SUPPLIERS** to provide them with the benefits of accurate and affirmative care instructions. *One huge national chain has distributed specific guidelines mandating compliance with federal bleach labeling requirements.*
- **INTERNATIONAL MARKETERS** up and down the West Coast are making the change to affirmative care instructions so they can maintain compliance and compete effectively.

THE TRENDS ARE OBVIOUS AND THE DRIVERS ARE POWERFUL AND LONG TERM. Regulatory compliance is important, to be sure, but competing at a disadvantage is dangerous. And, in the case of care labeling, unnecessary.

### A Few Reminders...

- **THE SYMBOLS APPROVED FOR USE IN THE U.S. ARE THE ASTM SYMBOLS.** They can be found on the Textile Industry Affairs



web site, [www.textileaffairs.com](http://www.textileaffairs.com), or directly from ASTM. Call ASTM at (610) 832-9500 and request the most recent **Annual Book of ASTM Standards, Volume 07.02.** The symbols are listed in the index as Standard D5489-96c under "Fabrics", sub-category "Guides for".

- **AT PRESENT, THERE IS NO UNIVERSAL SYMBOL SYSTEM.** The ASTM symbols are accepted in NAFTA countries, ISO/GINETEX symbols are

# How's your Labeling IQ?

## WHAT ARE THE THREE BASIC LABELS REQUIRED?

*Fiber content, Country of Origin, Care*

## WHAT IS THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF FIBER THAT MUST BE IDENTIFIED ON A FIBER CONTENT LABEL?

*5% by weight*

## WHICH OPERATION DENOTES COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, CUTTING OR SEWING?

*As of 1997, sewing denotes origin for most products.*

## WHERE MUST A CARE LABEL BE ATTACHED?

*Care labels must be permanently attached so that they are easily accessible to the consumer at the point of purchase. A side or bottom seam is acceptable on hanging goods, but not on folded goods.*

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACCURACY OF CARE INSTRUCTIONS?

*The manufacturer or importer who directs production. In general, responsibility for accuracy is assigned to the RN owner.*

## DOES A PRODUCT NEED A CARE LABEL TO BE IMPORTED?

*No, a product may be imported without a care label, but one must be attached before the product is sold.*

## DO CONSUMERS REALLY READ CARE LABELS?

*Absolutely. 83% of them read the labels before making a purchase decision and 59% of them consider care instructions the most important information on a garment after size!*

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*For free care label assistance contact:*

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