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Standard Guide for Care Symbols for Care Instructions on Textile Products¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D5489; 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.

^{ε1} NOTE—Editorial changes were made in January 2013.

1. Scope

1.1 This guide provides a uniform system of symbols for the disclosure of care instructions on textile products such as apparel, piece goods, and household and institutional articles, hereinafter referred to as “textile,” or “textile product.”

1.2 This guide provides a comprehensive system of symbols to represent care instructions reducing language-dependent care instructions.

1.3 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard. The values given in parentheses are for information only.

1.4 *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 and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

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

D3938 Guide for Determining or Confirming Care Instructions for Apparel and Other Textile Products

2.2 *ASTM Adjunct:*³

Care Symbol Chart

2.3 *AATCC Standard:*

A A Glossary of AATCC Standard Terminology, Current Edition⁴

2.4 *Other Standards:*

Federal Trade Commission Amendment to Trade Regulation Rule Concerning Care Labeling of Textile Wearing Apparel, and Certain Piece Goods, *Federal Register*, Vol 48, No. 99, May 20, 1983 (cited as 16 CFR 423).⁵

The National Standard of Canada—Care Labelling of Textiles (CAN/CGSB-86.1-M91)⁶

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*— For definitions of terms related to care labeling, refer to Terminology **D3136**. For definitions of other textile terms used in this guide, refer to Terminology **D123**.

3.1.1 *care instructions, n—in textiles*, a series of directions that describe practices which should refurbish a product without adverse effects, and that warn against any part of the directions which one could reasonably be expected to use that may harm the item. **D3136**

3.1.2 *care label, n—in textiles*, a label or other affixed instruction set that reports how a product should be refurbished.

¹ This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee **D13** on Textiles and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee **D13.62** on Labeling. Current edition approved Jan. 1, 2013; May 15, 2014. Published January 2013; June 2014. Originally approved in 1993. Last previous edition approved in 2007; 2013 as **D5489 – 07; D5489 – 07(2013)**^{ε1}. DOI: 10.1520/D5489-07R13E01; 10.1520/D5489-14.

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 Available from ASTM International Headquarters. Order Adjunct No. **ADJD5489**. Original adjunct produced in 1994.

⁴ *Annual AATCC Technical Manual*, available from the American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists, P.O. Box 12215, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709.

⁵ Available from U.S. Government Printing Office, North Capital and H Streets, NW, Washington, DC 20401.

⁶ Available from CGSB, Sales Unit, Ottawa, Canada. (819) 956-0425 or (819) 956-0426.

3.1.2.1 *Discussion*—

The Federal Trade Commission, in Rule 16 CFR 423, requires care instructions on most apparel and certain other textile items. In relation to these products, the FTC definition states: “Care Label means a permanent label or tag, containing regular care information and instructions, that is attached or affixed in some manner that will not become separated from the product and will remain legible during the useful life of the product.” **D3136**

3.1.3 *care symbol, n*—a pictorial symbol that gives directions for refurbishing a consumer textile product.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This guide provides symbols and a system for their use by which care instructions for textile products can be conveyed in a simple, space-saving, and easily understood pictorial format that is not language dependent. See also **ADJD5489**

4.2 Care symbols are an important means for identifying the appropriate care procedure for home laundering, commercial laundering, professional textile care, and coin-operated drycleaning, of textile products.

4.3 Care labeling using symbols can be used by the purchaser to select textiles on the basis of the care method required without knowledge of the language.

4.4 In countries in which a word-based care labeling system is required, the care symbol system may be used as a supplemental system.

4.5 The word-based instructions for each symbol in this guide are harmonious with Terminology **D123**, and **D3136**, the United States Federal Trade Commission Care Labeling Rule, 16 CFR 423 and industry practice (see **Figs. 1 and 2**).

4.6 The care label symbol system is based on five basic care symbols representing five operations: washing, bleaching, drying, ironing, and professional textile care.

4.7 One color is used for all care symbols in this care labeling system.

NOTE 1—While this symbol system uses one color, it is harmonious with tri-color systems such as the Canadian system because the instructions are clear whether printed in one or three colors.

4.8 This guide does not specify the type of label material or fabric to use. However, appropriateness for consumer comfort is recommended.

5. Procedure

5.1 *Introduction*—This section defines the basic symbols and prohibitive symbols: the washing, bleaching, drying, ironing, and professional textile care processes; the required number and order of symbols; supplementary care information; and appropriate instructions and labels.

5.2 *Basic Symbols:*

5.2.1 There are five basic symbols: the washtub, triangle, square, iron, and circle.

5.2.2 The washtub represents the washing process, the triangle represents the bleaching process, the square represents the drying process, the iron represents the ironing or pressing process, and the circle represents the professional textile care process (**Fig. 3**).

5.3 *Prohibitive Symbols*—The prohibitive “X” symbol may be used only when evidence can be provided that the care procedure on which it is superimposed would adversely change the dimensions, hand, appearance, or performance of the textile. (**Fig. 4**).

5.4 *The Washing Process—The Washtub Symbol:*

5.4.1 The washtub with a water wave represents the washing process in a home laundering or commercial laundering setting.

5.4.1.1 The washtub without a water wave may be used to present the washing process.

NOTE 2—The washtub without a water wave is used in the Canadian care symbol system.

5.4.2 Additional symbols inside the washtub indicate the suggested water temperature and hand-washing process.

5.4.3 Additional symbols below the tub indicate the permanent press cycle (one underline, minus sign, or bar) and delicate-gentle washing cycle (two underlines, minus signs, or bars).

5.4.3.1 Permanent dress and gentle/delicate cycle instructions may be reported in symbols or words on a label with the symbolic instructions for machine wash and the water temperature.

5.4.4 The numerical or the dot system or both illustrated in **Fig. 1** may be used to represent the maximum water temperature for machine and hand washing.

5.4.4.1 The six washing temperatures are 30°C (80°F), 40°C (105°F), 50°C (120°F), 60°C (140°F), 70°C (160°F), and 95°C (200°F) and shall be in Celsius when using the numerical water temperature system.

NOTE 3—The Fahrenheit temperatures, while not true conversions from Celsius to Fahrenheit, are within the range of tolerance and represent common consumer usage.

5.4.4.2 The symbols used to represent the maximum water temperature in the dot system are: six dots [95°C (200°F)], five dots [70°C (160°F)], four dots [60°C (140°F)], very hot, three dots [50°C (120°F)], hot, two dots [40°C (105°F)], warm, one dot [30°C (85°F)], cool/cold.

ASTM GUIDE TO CARE SYMBOLS																					
 Wash	Machine wash 			 hand wash																	
	Cycles & Water temperatures (maximum) symbol (s) dots & °C. <table border="1"> <tr> <td>(200F)</td> <td>(160F)</td> <td>(140F)</td> <td>(120F)</td> <td>(105F)</td> <td>(65F-85F)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>95</td> <td>70</td> <td>60</td> <td>50</td> <td>40</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•••••</td> <td>••••</td> <td>•••</td> <td>•••</td> <td>••</td> <td>•</td> </tr> </table>	(200F)	(160F)	(140F)	(120F)	(105F)	(65F-85F)	95	70	60	50	40	30	•••••	••••	•••	•••	••	•		
(200F)	(160F)	(140F)	(120F)	(105F)	(65F-85F)																
95	70	60	50	40	30																
•••••	••••	•••	•••	••	•																
 Bleach	Bleach when needed 	 only non-chlorine/oxygen bleach																			
 Dry	Tumble dry 			 line dry/hang to dry																	
	Cycles & Heat settings <table border="1"> <tr> <td>any heat</td> <td>high</td> <td>medium</td> <td>low</td> <td>no heat/air</td> </tr> <tr> <td>○</td> <td>●●●</td> <td>●●</td> <td>●</td> <td>●</td> </tr> </table>	any heat	high	medium	low	no heat/air	○	●●●	●●	●	●	 drip dry dry flat									
any heat	high	medium	low	no heat/air																	
○	●●●	●●	●	●																	
 Iron	Iron when needed dry or steam Heat settings <table border="1"> <tr> <td>high</td> <td>medium</td> <td>low</td> </tr> <tr> <td>●●●</td> <td>●●</td> <td>●</td> </tr> </table>	high	medium	low	●●●	●●	●	 in the shade (added to line dry, drip dry, or dry flat) no steam (added to iron)													
	high	medium	low																		
●●●	●●	●																			
 Professional Textile Care	Dryclean <table border="1"> <tr> <td>normal cycle</td> <td>mild cycle</td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>any solvent</td> <td>gentle solvent petroleum or silicone solvent only</td> </tr> </table>		normal cycle	mild cycle			any solvent	gentle solvent petroleum or silicone solvent only	Do not dryclean 	Wetclean <table border="1"> <tr> <td>normal</td> <td>mild</td> <td>very mild</td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </table>	normal	mild	very mild								
	normal cycle	mild cycle																			
any solvent	gentle solvent petroleum or silicone solvent only																				
normal	mild	very mild																			
				Do not wetclean 																	

NOTE 1—This figure illustrates the symbols to use for laundering and drycleaning instructions. As a minimum, laundering instructions shall include, in order, four symbols: washing, bleaching, drying, and ironing; and, professional textile care instructions shall include one symbol. Additional symbols or words may be used to clarify the instructions.

FIG. 1 Commercial and Home Laundering and Professional Textile Care Symbols

5.4.4.3 The water temperature placed in the hand washing symbol may be 40°C (105°F) or 30°C (85°F).

NOTE 4—In the Canadian care symbol system, a hand in a yellow washtub means *wash gently by hand in cool water (not exceeding 30°C (85°F))*. In the ISO system, a hand in a washtub means hand wash only, do not machine wash, maximum temperature 40°C (105°F), handle with care. A water temperature is not reported in either system.

5.4.5 To represent the care instruction for a specific wash condition, use the appropriate symbol as illustrated in Fig. 1.

NOTE 5—Consumers may obtain washing machine temperatures that are frequently below the suggested temperature. The actual water temperature obtained when using the washing machine settings of hot, warm, and cold vary in North American by region, season, water heater settings, and regulations governing factory-set mixes. In general, North American washing machines do not have internal heaters.

NOTE 6—For consumer information the 30°C wash water is represented on the symbol charts by the temperature range of 65°F–85°F because detergents are not effective at lower temperatures.

5.5 The Bleaching Process—The Triangle Symbol:

5.5.1 The triangle represents the bleaching process.




























5.5.2 The triangle and an additional symbol inside the triangle represent the type(s) of bleach to use.

5.5.3 A solid triangle on which the prohibitive “X” is superimposed represents the *do not bleach* warning.

NOTE 7—The Guide D5489 bleach symbols represent the three bleaching instructions listed in the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Glossary of Terms. The FTC Care Labeling Trade Regulation Rule states, “If regular use of chlorine bleach would harm the product, but regular use of a non-chlorine bleach

GUIDE TO ORDER OF ASTM CARE SYMBOLS

The care instruction symbols shall be in the following order:

WASH OR DRYCLEAN	=		=		=		=		=				
		WASH		BLEACH		DRY		IRON		DRYCLEAN			
WASH	=		=		=		=						
DRYCLEAN	=												
		DRYCLEAN											
WASH OR DRYCLEAN OR WETCLEAN	=		=		=		=		=		=		
										DRYCLEAN		WETCLEAN	
DRYCLEAN OR WETCLEAN	=		=										
		DRYCLEAN		WETCLEAN									
WASH DO NOT DRYCLEAN	=		=		=		=		=				
DO NOT WASH DRYCLEAN	=		=										
				DRYCLEAN									
DO NOT WASH DO NOT DRYCLEAN	=		=										

Examples of care instructions:











	=		=		=		=				
	=	Machine wash, warm, 40C (105F) Permanent press									
	=	Only non-chlorine bleach when needed									
	=	Tumble dry, low									
	=	Steam iron, medium									
	=	Dryclean, any solvent, modified cycle									

FIG. 2 Guide to Order of ASTM Care Symbols



FIG. 3 Basic Symbols

would not, the label must say "Only non-chlorine bleach, when needed."

NOTE 8—The bleach symbol in the Canadian symbol system, a yellow triangle with the letters *Cl* inside, means *use chlorine-based bleach with care*. The bleach warning symbol in the Canadian system, a red triangle enclosing the letters, *Cl* on which a red "X" is superimposed, means *do not use chlorine-based bleach*.

5.5.4 To represent the care instruction for a specific bleaching condition, use the appropriate symbol as illustrated in Fig. 1.