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Standard Guide for Care Symbols for Care Instructions on Textile Products¹

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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 Glossary of AATCC Standard Terminology, Current Edition](#)⁴

¹ This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D13 on Textiles and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D13.62 on Labeling.

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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 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.

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.

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

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.

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:

ASTM GUIDE TO CARE SYMBOLS				
 Wash	<u>Machine wash</u> Cycles: normal, permanent press, delicate/gentle Water temperatures (maximum): 200F (95 dots), 160F (70 dots), 140F (60 dots), 120F (50 dots), 105F (40 dots), 65F-85F (30 dots)	 hand wash	Warning symbols for laundering: do not wash, do not bleach, do not dry (used with do not wash), do not iron	
	<u>Bleach when needed</u> any bleach, only non-chlorine/oxygen bleach	Additional instructions (in symbols or words): do not wring, do not tumble dry, in the shade (added to line dry, drip dry, or dry flat), no steam (added to iron)		
 Dry	<u>Tumble dry</u> Cycles: normal, permanent press, delicate/gentle Heat settings: any heat, high, medium, low, no heat/air	line dry/hang to dry, drip dry, dry flat	Additional instructions (in symbols or words): do not wring, do not tumble dry, in the shade (added to line dry, drip dry, or dry flat), no steam (added to iron)	
	<u>Iron when needed dry or steam</u> Heat settings: high, medium, low	Additional instructions (in symbols or words): do not wring, do not tumble dry, in the shade (added to line dry, drip dry, or dry flat), no steam (added to iron)		
 Professional Textile Care	<u>Dryclean</u> normal cycle (P), mild cycle (F)	Do not dryclean (X)	<u>Wetclean</u> normal (W), mild (W), very mild (W)	Do not wetclean (X)
	any solvent (P), gentle solvent petroleum or silicone solvent only (F)			

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

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 WET-CLEAN
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

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



FIG. 3 Basic Symbols

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:*