

# Holiday Shopping Alert

Federal Trade Commission ■ Bureau of Consumer Protection ■ Office of Consumer and Business Education

## Buying Cashmere? Avoid Pulled Wool

*Cashmere.* The very word evokes images of luxury, warmth and softness. The ultra-fine wool, from the undercoat of the Cashmere (or Kashmir) goat, is indeed a premium fiber – one that generally costs a good deal more than mere sheep’s wool.

If you’re shopping for a gift of cashmere this holiday season, do yourself a favor – and the recipient, too. Read the label to make sure you’re both getting what you’re paying for.

According to the Federal Trade Commission, all wool products must have a label that reflects the true fiber content of the item. For example, if a product is made of wool – and only wool – the label can say *100% Wool* or *All Wool*. If the product contains a specialty wool – such as cashmere, camel hair, mohair, alpaca, llama, or vicuna – it can be labeled with the name and percentage of the speciality fiber. If a product is made of cashmere only, it can be labeled as *100% Cashmere* or *All Cashmere*. But if an item, say a sweater or a pair of gloves, contains cashmere mixed with sheep’s wool, the label must disclose both fibers accurately, such as *80% Wool, 20% Cashmere*.

Products marketed as *pashmina* have become very popular, yet many consumers aren’t sure just what *pashmina* is. Some manufacturers use the term to describe an ultrafine cashmere fiber; others use it to describe a blend of cashmere and silk. An Indian word for cashmere, *pashmina* is not a legally recognized labeling term. In fact, the FTC says, *pashmina* is not a fiber separate or distinct from the cashmere fiber.

The fiber content of a shawl, scarf or other item marketed as *pashmina* must be disclosed accurately because it is a wool product. For example, a *pashmina* stole that is a blend of cashmere and silk might be labeled *50% Cashmere, 50% Silk* or *70% Cashmere, 30% Silk*, depending on the actual cashmere and silk content. If the item contains only cashmere, it should be labeled *100% Cashmere* or *All Cashmere*.

In addition to the item’s fiber content, the FTC says labels on wool products also must include the country of origin, the name of the manufacturer or marketer, and a safe cleaning method.

The FTC works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid them. To file a complaint, or to get free information on any of 150 consumer topics, call toll-free, **1-877-FTC-HELP** (382-4357), or use the complaint form at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov). The FTC enters Internet, telemarketing, and other fraud-related complaints into **Consumer Sentinel**, a secure, online database available to hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies worldwide.