



FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Conference on
Cashmere Labeling

Care Labeling Issues

Presentation by

Connie Vecellio & Vada Martin

Division of Enforcement



Care Labeling Rule

16 C.F.R. Part 423

- ❖ **Unfair and deceptive to fail to include care instructions on garments**
- ❖ Intended “to assist consumers in making **informed purchase decisions**, and to enable consumers and cleaners to **avoid product damage.**”
- ❖ Applies to manufacturers and importers of **Textile wearing apparel and certain piece goods.**

Label Requirements

- ❖ State **One** Regular Care Procedure – Either Washing or Drycleaning
 - Or
- ❖ Disclose if Garment Cannot be Cleaned by Either Method Without Causing Harm:
 - “**Do Not Wash -- Do Not Dryclean.**”
- ❖ **Dry Clean Only** – Use only when evidence shows that dry clean is ok and washing harms
 - Cashmere usually can be hand-washed so
 - **Dry Clean Only** is usually not correct

Rule Specifies What Must Be Included in Care Instructions

- ❖ Wash Instruction – By Hand or Machine
 - Specify water temperature unless regular use of hot water will not harm garment
 - Warn if part of normal washing process would harm garment
- ❖ Dry Clean – Name Solvent Unless All Are OK
 - Warn if part of process would harm garment: for example, if steam should not be used, the label should say, “Professionally dry clean. No steam.”
 - Instruction applies to entire garment (& trim)

Reasonable Basis

- ❖ Manufacturers & Importers Must Have a Reasonable Basis for Care Instructions
- ❖ Reliable Evidence to Support Instructions



What is Reliable Evidence

- (1) Reliable evidence that the product was not harmed when cleaned reasonably often according to the instructions on the label. . .; Or
- (2) Reliable evidence that the product or a fair sample of the product was harmed when cleaned by methods warned against on the label. . .; Or
- (3) Reliable evidence, like that described in paragraph (1) or (2) of this section, for each component part of the product; or

What is Reliable Evidence

- (4) Reliable evidence that the product or a fair sample of the product was successfully tested. . . ; or
- (5) Reliable evidence of current technical literature, past experience, or the industry expertise supporting the care information on the label; or
- (6) Other reliable evidence.

Violation of Care Labeling Rule: Penalties & Injunctions

- ❖ Civil Penalties up to \$11,000 per violation
 - \$300,000 highest penalty to date
- ❖ Injunction by US District Court
- ❖ 16 cases since 1992
 - No label
 - Trim
 - Shrinkage
 - Dye bleeding
 - Failure to specify solvents
- ❖ One related case: Cleaner with Zurcion label

Hints to Avoid Violating the Rule

- ❖ Make sure dyes don't run
- ❖ Sequins or beads: Make sure they don't melt, curl, or lose color
- ❖ Don't say "Dry Clean Only" when garment can be washed (e.g., on cashmere garments)
- ❖ Make sure dye from trim does not bleed on to other parts of garment
- ❖ Make sure trim can survive the recommended process without damage

Business Publications

- ❖ Writing a Care Label
- ❖ Website www.ftc.gov -- Business Guidance – Textile, Wool, Fur and Apparel Matters
- ❖ RN Look-Up Service

Informational Phone Tree: 202-326-3553

