



Product safety

Care labelling for clothing and textile products

Supplier guide



Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
23 Marcus Clarke Street, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, 2601

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Care labelling for clothing and textile products

What is this guide about?

Under the Australian Consumer Law (ACL), mandatory information standards are introduced when considered reasonably necessary to allow consumers to make an informed choice about goods they may be buying. This guide provides a summary of the requirements for care labelling on clothing and textile products.

A full list of mandatory standards and bans is available pages 14–16.

Who should read this guide?

Suppliers of new clothing and textile products should read this guide to familiarise themselves with the mandatory requirements for these products.

What is care labelling?

Care labelling outlines how a user should care for a particular clothing or textile product. The label provides things to do and not to do when cleaning or caring for the product.

Under the mandatory standard, care labelling for clothing and textiles covers items such as:

- clothing
- household textiles
- apparel
- furnishings
- upholstered furniture
- bedding
- mattresses
- bed bases
- piece goods and yarns made from textiles
- plastics
- plastic coated fabrics
- suede skins, hides, grain leathers and/or furs
- custom or made to measure garments (e.g. wedding dresses, suits).

Excluded items:

- second hand goods
- some types of men's, women's, children's and infants' wear
- footwear
- drapery (e.g. cleaning cloths and dusters)
- haberdashery, where instructions are not needed to ensure that the clothing or textile product is not damaged during cleaning and maintenance
- some types of furnishings
- jute products
- medical and surgical goods
- canvas goods
- range of miscellaneous goods (e.g. cords, toys, umbrellas, shoelaces).

Refer to the consumer protection notice on page 8 for full details on excluded items.

Why is care labelling important?

Care labelling provides the public with enough information to:

- know how to care for clothing and textile products
- have prior knowledge of costs such as dry cleaning in the ongoing care of clothing and textile products
- understand how to clean clothing and textile products properly (e.g. cold hand wash only)
- maximise the useful life of clothing and textile products
- avoid damage such as dyes running (e.g. wash separately).

Mandatory standard

The mandatory standard for care labelling is based on *Australian/New Zealand Standard (AS/NZS) 1957:1998, Textiles—Care labelling* with variations and additions made by Consumer Protection Notice No. 25 of 2010.

The mandatory standard applies to the supply of new clothing and textiles.

Meeting mandatory requirements

To comply with the mandatory standard for care labelling you and your business must meet all labelling requirements for the products you supply.

The following are some key labelling requirements of the mandatory standard.

Format of label

General requirements

Care instructions must be:

- permanently attached to articles
- written in English
- legible
- appropriate and adequate for the care of the article so an article is not damaged when the user follows these instructions.

Note: Care symbols alone are not sufficient.

Non-permanent labelling

Certain made-up articles, such as reversible garments, neckwear and shower curtains can have non-permanent care labels. If the non-permanent label is not on the made-up article, suppliers can provide care instructions on:

- a removable ticket
- a label attached to the goods
- a pamphlet accompanying the goods
- as printed instruction on the packaging.

Refer to clause 2.5 in the consumer protection notice on page 11 for full details of articles that can have non-permanent care labels.

Content of label

Adequate and appropriate instructions

Suppliers must ensure that care instructions are adequate and appropriate for the article. For example, providing overly cautious instructions such as 'dry-clean only' or 'hand wash in cold water only' on a garment that a user can safely wash using other methods may breach the mandatory standard.

Adequate care instructions must include information on:

- general care and warnings
- washing
- drying
- ironing
- dry-cleaning.

Where an article can be laundered or dry-cleaned or both, care instructions for both treatments must appear on the label.

Information in addition to care instructions in English, such as care symbols or instructions in other languages may be provided.

Specific and prohibited care instructions

Care instructions may include both specific and prohibited instructions.

Specific instructions provide advice on what a user should do with the article.

Examples include:

- dry flat
- cool iron
- dry-clean only.

Prohibited instructions provide advice on what a user should not do with the article.

Examples include:

- do not iron
- do not tumble dry.

For articles that can be neither laundered nor dry-cleaned, suppliers should indicate this on the care label and adequately describe the recommended care treatment.

Delicate and multiple components

Sometimes delicate components of articles such as trims or padding in furniture or bedding cannot or should not be removed. In these cases, suppliers should also consider the care of the delicate parts when developing care instructions for the article.

When an article is made of different materials, suppliers must provide care instructions that are suitable for all materials, including those most sensitive.

Articles with multiple parts

Each detachable or separate part of an article must have a care label, even if the care instructions are the same for all parts.

For example, care instructions must appear on:

- pants, skirt and jacket of a suit
- chairs and sofas in a lounge suite (but not individual cushions that are an integral part of a furniture suite)
- bath and hand towels in a towel set.

Your responsibilities as a supplier

As a supplier, you are legally responsible for ensuring that clothing and textile products you supply meet the mandatory requirements, which are enforceable by law. Failure to comply can result in legal action, penalties and/or recalls.

All suppliers are equally responsible for ensuring that products they supply meet the mandatory standard.

To do this, we strongly advise you to take the following steps:

- Read the requirements specified in the consumer protection notice printed in this guide.
Do not rely on the guide alone.
- Have systems in place to visually check these products to ensure they comply with the requirements of this mandatory standard.
- Register to receive automatic email updates from the Product Safety Australia website (www.productsafety.gov.au) to help ensure you are aware of the latest product safety information.

Information for retailers

If you are a retailer, you are responsible for ensuring that the products you supply meet mandatory standards. To ensure that the clothing and textile products you sell comply with the mandatory standard, you should always:

- stipulate that any clothing and textiles you order must meet the mandatory standard
- undertake visual checks of delivered stock where possible to check compliance with the requirements of the mandatory standard.

Providing advice to consumers

As a retailer, you may wish to add value to your services by encouraging consumers to read and follow the care instructions to avoid damage and maximise the useful life of clothing and textile products you supply.

Consumer Protection Notice No. 25 of 2010

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Trade Practices Act 1974

Consumer Protection Notice No.25 of 2010

CONSUMER PRODUCT INFORMATION STANDARD CARE LABELLING FOR CLOTHING AND TEXTILE PRODUCTS

I, Craig Emerson, Minister for Competition Policy & Consumer Affairs, pursuant to subsection 65E(1) of the *Trade Practices Act 1974* and for the purposes of section 65D of that Act, hereby:

- (a) **REVOKE** the consumer product information standard for care labelling for clothing and textile products declared by consumer protection notice No. 16 of 2003 published in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No. GN 50 of 17 December 2003; and
- (b) **DECLARE** that:
 - i) In respect of the goods specified in Division 1 of the Schedule to this Notice, the standard approved by the Standards Association of Australia specified in Division 2 of the Schedule as amended by the variations specified in Division 3 of the Schedule, is a consumer product information standard for the purposes of section 65D of the *Trade Practices Act 1974*.
 - ii) This standard will come into effect on 26 July 2010

THE SCHEDULE

Division 1: Particulars of Goods:

Clothing, household textiles, apparel (including articles such as wedding dresses, christening gowns, and promotional, sample and flawed articles), furnishings, upholstered furniture, bedding, (including sleeping bags), mattresses, bed bases, piece goods and yarns made from textiles, plastics, plastic coated fabrics, suede, skins, hides, grain leathers and/or furs but not including goods specified below.

Goods exempt from Care Labelling Requirements

Second hand goods: All second hand goods are exempt.

Men's, Women's, Children's and Infant's Wear: Unsupported coats (including overcoats, jackets and the like) of PVC film, handkerchiefs, braces, garter suspenders, arm bands, belts, headwear.

Footwear: All footwear other than all types of hosiery and textile materials used in the manufacture of footwear.

Drapery: Floor cloths, dish cloths, dusters, cleaning cloths, pressing cloths.

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Haberdashery: Ornaments, artificial flowers, sewing and embroidery threads and all other small items of haberdashery used in the making of clothing and textile products where instructions are not needed to ensure that the clothing or textile product is not damaged during cleaning and maintenance.

Furnishings: Oil baize, window blinds, shade blinds, sun blinds, awnings, floor coverings, light fittings, lampshades, tapestries, wall hangings, ornaments, handicraft items, draught excluders, non-upholstered furniture, cushions and cushion covers manufactured from remnants and labelled by the manufacturer with the following disclaimer “cushion cover manufactured from remnant/s, care treatment unknown”.

Jute Products: All jute products.

Medical and Surgical Goods: All goods intended for medical and surgical use as bandages, dressings, sanitary pads or materials forming part of manufactured medical and surgical goods.

Canvas Goods: Beach and garden umbrella coverings.

Miscellaneous Goods: Cords, twines, lashings, garden hose, toys, umbrellas and parasols, shoelaces, woven labels, flex coverings, sporting and gardening gloves, articles designed to be disposed of after one use (except where specifically included) or intended for one use only (including disposable plastic rain ponchos and interment garments for the deceased), mops, basket hangers, shoe holders, remnants, industrial gloves, polypropylene webbing furniture, all bags and cases (including handbags, purses, wallets, travel bags, school bags, sports bags, briefcases and wash bags).

Division 2: The Standard

1. Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1957:1998 *Textiles - Care labelling*, published on 5 January 1998.

Division 3: Variations:

Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1957:1998, specified in Division 2 is varied by:

- (A) Deleting clauses 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4.
- (B) Deleting clause 2.1.1 (a) and replacing it with:
 - “(a) Appropriate and adequate care instructions take into account all elements of an article including dyes, finishes, fibres, construction, design, zips, buttons, fasteners, padding, lace, beading, trims, decals, linings, interfacings and embroidery which form an integral part of an article and include cleaning instructions and where necessary maintenance instructions that when followed do not cause damage to the article. Maintenance instructions are generally necessary for articles which require a cleaning process other than laundering or drycleaning.

- (C) Add the following words after the first sentence at Clause 2.1.1 (d):

“For example, a care procedure may be a dry cleaning method not specified Table 1 which may include using hydrocarbon, liquid silicone, ozone or liquid carbon dioxide.”

- (D) Delete the following words at clause 2.1.2 (a) “on the same side of the label”.

- (E) Deleting clause 2.1.3 and replacing it with: “**2.1.3 Care instructions for articles unable to be washed or drycleaned:** Where an article is unable to be washed or drycleaned, the permanent label shall include appropriate instructions in words:

(a) which warn that the article is unable to be washed or drycleaned; and

(b) which adequately describe the care treatment.”

- (F) Deleting clause 2.2(a)

- (G) Deleting clause 2.2(b).

- (H) Deleting clause 2.2(c) and replacing it with the following clause:

“(c) The wording of the label shall be in English and be clearly legible.”

- (I) Delete note 1 to clause 2.2.

- (J) Delete note 2 to clause 2.2.

- (K) Add the following words to note 5 after clause 2.2:

“This includes individual pieces of household textile products sold as sets, e.g. napkin and tablecloth sets.”

- (L) Adding the following clauses after clause 2.3:

“**2.4** Where in this standard there is a requirement for care instructions from categories in Tables 1, 2 or 3 to be provided on or with articles, words that have a similar meaning to the care instructions listed in Tables 1, 2 or 3 may be used, e.g.:

“DO NOT SOAK IN PRODUCTS CONTAINING ENZYMES” could be reworded as “DO NOT SOAK IN PRODUCTS WITH ENZYMES” or “DO NOT SOAK IN ENZYME PRODUCTS” or other words to similar effect.

“DO NOT SOAK IN PRODUCTS CONTAINING OXYGEN-BASED BLEACHES” could be reworded as “DO NOT SOAK IN OXYGEN-BASED BLEACHES”

“GARMENT SIZED TO ALLOW FOR SHRINKAGE WASH BEFORE WEARING” could be reworded as “DESIGNED TO SHRINK, WASH BEFORE WEARING” or other words to similar effect.

“DO NOT USE SOAP-WASH IN SYNTHETIC DETERGENT” could be reworded as “WASH IN SYNTHETIC DETERGENT ONLY” or other words to similar effect.

2.5 Made-up goods of a kind specified below are exempt from the requirement that a permanent label shall be attached to the goods. However where a permanent label is not provided for such goods, care instructions shall be provided on a removable ticket or label attached to the goods, on a pamphlet accompanying the goods or as printed instructions on the wrapper or packaging.

Made-up goods for which care instructions may be provided in a form other than by a permanent label:

Adult’s, children’s and infant’s wear: Collars, neckwear, bow ties, gloves, mittens, all types of hosiery, incontinence garments, reversible garments, fur garments, bibs, washable nappies, squares of flannelette, terry towelling or muslin, baby pilchers.

Drapery: Face washers, serviettes, doilies, table cloths, tray cloths, centres, runners, duchess sets, mosquito netting and covers made from mosquito netting, butter muslin and gauze, tea towels, place mats, pot holders, finger tips, appliance covers for teapots, toasters or the like, hot water bottle covers.

Haberdashery: Elastic, elastic threads, ribbons, zips, iron-on binding patches or trim, velcro type fasteners, curtain making kits and all other small items of haberdashery used in the making of clothing and textile products where instructions are needed to ensure that the clothing or textile product is not damaged during cleaning and maintenance.

Furnishings: Cushions that are an integral part of a furniture suite, shower curtains.

- (M) Delete the words “each of” from the first sentence of clause 3.4.
- (N) Delete the words “each of” from the first sentence of clause 3.5.
- (O) Delete the words “each category” from the second sentence of clause 3.6 and replace with the words “the categories”.
- (P) Delete the third sentence of clause 3.6.
- (Q) Add the words “The symbol denoting ‘do not dry clean’, that is the circle with the cross through it, is optional.” at the end of clause 3.6.

Dated this 15th day of July 2010

CRAIG EMERSON
Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs

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Role of the ACCC

To minimise the risk of injury associated with consumer products, the ACCC undertakes a variety of activities:

- developing mandatory safety and information standards, when necessary
- informing and educating suppliers about emerging hazards and requirements of mandatory standards or bans
- liaising with suppliers to assist them in understanding how to comply with the standards or bans
- consulting with suppliers and other agencies to identify non-compliant goods
- promoting benefits of compliance with mandatory standards or bans
- assessing overall levels of marketplace compliance with mandatory standards or bans
- informing and educating consumers to choose only compliant products, report suppliers of non-compliant goods to the ACCC and always use products safely
- conducting compliance surveys or inspections to detect non-compliant products
- investigating allegations from consumers and suppliers about supply of non-compliant products
- investigating possible breaches found during compliance surveys or inspections
- seeking the immediate withdrawal of non-compliant or unsafe products from sale
- seeking the recall of non-compliant or unsafe products from the market
- taking action against suppliers including:
 - substantiation, infringement or public warning notices
 - court enforceable undertakings, injunctions and various other court orders
 - damages, compensation orders, disqualification orders and civil penalties
 - adverse publicity orders or requirements for corrective advertising
 - prosecutions resulting in criminal sanctions (fines).

Consumer guarantees

All Australian traders, whether online or running a bricks and mortar operation, must comply with Australian trading laws. From 1 January 2011 this includes laws on consumer guarantees, which are provided as part of the ACL (which forms Schedule 2 to the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010*).

Every business that supplies goods—by selling, leasing or hiring—or services to consumers automatically provides certain guarantees about those goods or services.

Businesses that make goods, put them together or have their name on them also give certain guarantees. Importers give these same guarantees if the maker does not have an office in Australia.

If a consumer has a problem with a good, they are free to approach the seller or manufacturer/importer to obtain a remedy—and you cannot tell them otherwise.

For more information on consumer guarantees, please refer to the publication, *Consumer guarantees—business snapshot*, available on the ACCC website.

It is important to remember that if you don't comply with a consumer guarantee, your customers have a right to take action against you. This is the case even if the problem with the good was caused by the manufacturer.

The consumer guarantees do, however, provide sellers with rights against manufacturers or importers of goods if the seller provides a remedy to a consumer for a problem which was caused by the manufacturer or importer.

Mandatory standards and bans

The following mandatory standards and bans apply nationally under the ACL.

Mandatory standards

- Aquatic toys
- Babies' dummies
- Baby bath aids
- Baby walkers
- Balloon-blowing kits
- Basketball rings and backboards
- Bean bags
- Bicycle helmets
- Bunk beds
- Care labelling—clothing and textile products
- Child restraints for motor vehicles
- Children's household cots
- Children's nightwear and paper patterns for children's nightwear
- Children's portable folding cots
- Children's projectile toys
- Children's toys containing magnets
- Corded internal window coverings
- Cosmetics and toiletries—ingredient labelling
- Disposable cigarette lighters
- Elastic luggage straps
- Exercise cycles
- Hot water bottles
- Lead and certain elements in children's toys
- Motor vehicle recovery straps
- Movable soccer goals
- Pedal bicycles
- Portable fire extinguishers (aerosol type)
- Portable fire extinguishers (non-aerosol type)

- Portable ramps for motor vehicles
- Prams and strollers
- Protective helmets for motorcyclists
- Reduced fire risk cigarettes
- Sunglasses and fashion spectacles
- Swimming aids and flotation aids for water familiarisation and swimming tuition
- Tobacco labelling
- Toys for children under, up to and including 36 months of age
- Treadmills
- Trolley jacks
- Vehicle jacks
- Vehicle support stands.

Interim bans

Interim bans may be made by the state, territory or Commonwealth Minister. Their duration may be 60–120 days. Check the Product Safety Australia website (www.productsafety.gov.au) for details of any interim bans.

Permanent bans

- Candles with lead wicks
- Children's plastic products with more than 1 per cent DEHP
- Children's stationery sets containing undeclared knives or cutters with a metal blade
- Combustible candle holders
- Fire footbags and other such goods
- Gas masks with asbestos breathing devices
- Glucomannan in tablet form
- Inflatable toys, novelties and furniture containing beads
- Jelly cups containing konjac
- Miniature motorbikes (monkey bikes) with unsafe design features
- No holes tongue stud
- Novelty cigarettes
- Pools and spas with unsafe design features
- Sky lanterns
- Smokeless tobacco products

- Tinted headlight covers
- Toothpaste containing Diethylene glycol (DEG)
- Toy-like novelty cigarette lighters
- Yo-Yo water balls.

Penalties

Supplying products that do not comply with a mandatory standard or ban is an offence under the ACL. Maximum fines for non-compliance are:

- \$500 000 for individuals.

For a body corporate, the greater of:

- \$10 000 000
- three times the value of the benefit received, or
- 10% of annual turnover in the preceding 12 months, if a court cannot determine the benefit obtained from the offence.

More information

For the latest information on bans, standards and recalls, visit www.productsafety.gov.au.

Key terms used in this guide

Below is a list of key terms that have been used in this guide.

article	In this guide and in the mandatory standard, an item of clothing or a textile product is referred to as an article.
care labelling	Care labelling outlines how a user should care for a particular clothing or textile product. The label provides things to do and not to do when cleaning or caring for the product.
<i>Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (CCA)</i>	The <i>Competition and Consumer Act 2010</i> (formerly the <i>Trade Practices Act 1974</i>) deals with almost all aspects of the marketplace: the relationships between suppliers, wholesalers, retailers, competitors and customers. It covers anti-competitive conduct, unfair market practices, industry codes, mergers and acquisitions of companies, product safety, product labelling, price monitoring, and the regulation of industries such as telecommunications, gas, electricity and airports.
consumer protection notice	A consumer protection notice is a notice that declares a particular standard prepared by Standards Australia (or other approved body), with any additions or variations specified in the notice, to be a prescribed standard.
made-up articles	Please refer to clause 2.5 of the mandatory standard for a full list of items categorised as made-up articles.
mandatory consumer product information standard	A mandatory consumer product information standard outlines the minimum information requirements and safe usage markings for a product. Often the term <i>mandatory standard</i> is used instead of the full form.
mandatory consumer product safety standard	A mandatory consumer product safety standard outlines the minimum design, construction, performance and safety requirements and safe usage markings for a product. Often the term <i>mandatory standard</i> is used instead of the full form.

supplier

Anyone in the business of selling, exchanging, leasing, hiring or hire-purchasing of goods or provisions, or of granting or conferring of services.

supply

Selling, exchanging, leasing, hiring or hire-purchasing of goods or provisions, or granting or conferring of services.

Contacts

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

Product safety

For more information about mandatory standards, bans, recalls and emerging issues—and to subscribe to email alerts and RSS feeds—visit our websites:

www.productsafety.gov.au

www.recalls.gov.au

You can also follow us on Twitter: @ProductSafetyAU

ACCC Infocentre: 1300 302 502

Callers who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment can contact us through the National Relay Service: www.relayservice.com.au

Voice-only (speak and listen) users phone: 1300 555 727 and ask for 1300 302 502

SAI Global

To obtain copies of Australian/New Zealand standards, contact SAI Global on 131 242 or visit the SAI Global website at www.saiglobal.com/shop.

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