Our offices receive calls every day from designers who want information about the characteristics of certain fabrics and how they will stand up to everyday use as well as cleaning. While fabric selection is often a small part of the design project, it can have a big impact on client satisfaction. That’s why it is so important to make responsible selections.

The next time you are specifying fabrics, consider the six criteria listed below. Three criteria—color, style and client satisfaction—are the domain of the designer, but perhaps we can provide some information about the other three. Those are suitability, cleanability and longevity.

**Client Satisfaction**
This is always an important consideration and sometimes it is hard to balance what a client thinks he or she wants – and what will work in the design scheme. We have found that designers want to make choices that are both pretty AND practical, but are sometimes foiled by those clients who insist on white, weird, or family-unfriendly fabrics.

**Color**
Fabric color and texture are what attract us to textiles and it's the designer’s trained eye that is best for making those choices.

**Suitability/Durability**
A beautiful fabric can light up a room—but regardless of the look, sometimes it is just not a good choice. A white silk in a sunny room is a good example: white silks tend to yellow over time and silk is very susceptible to sun damage. Needlepoint carpets and rugs are lovely but they are not really suited to stairways and may not be durable when subjected to constant use or the paws and nails of the family pets.

**Cleanability**
In a room that is used constantly, cleanability is an important consideration. Certain fibers are simply more cleanable than others. Using a fabric with a rayon pile (or any significant rayon content) on a family room sofa can be a disaster for the client when he or she realizes that rayon is difficult to maintain. This does not mean that EVERY fabric selection must be steel-like and dull, only that fabrics and carpets specified for high use areas should be able to withstand both spotting and overall cleaning so that they can be enjoyed without

**Style**
Almost an indefinable in the design process, style is so important—making sure that fabrics work together well, that they carry off the look the designer is trying to create, that they send a “message” about the room or the home.
worry by the client. One-of-a-kind exotics have their place in every design plan, but they should not be selected for areas of high use.

**Longevity**

Longevity should always be part of the selection criteria. Choosing quality fabrics that will last and safeguarding them with soil and stain protection are the final steps in making a professional selection. One way to assure clients that longevity has been considered is to talk to them about fabric protection DURING the selection process, rather than thinking of it as an “add-on.” Letting the client know about resources that can help them with maintenance, cleaning and after care shows the client that you respect the costs they are incurring and want to help them protect their investment. Without proper care, fabrics can “ugly out” long before they wear out and that can be an unpleasant surprise that leads to client dissatisfaction.

While no one can determine how long a certain fabric will last, making selections with these criteria in mind should certainly help you and your client conclude that you have done your best to choose the best!

**The Aftercare Pros!**

For field testing of fabrics or additional information to help you make good choices, call your local Fiber-Seal office. Not only do we study fabrics, but we also see them installed in homes and offices and know how they stand up to everyday use and care. While no fabric protection or aftercare program can remedy an inappropriate selection, introducing your client to Fiber-Seal at the time the fabrics are chosen will allow them to enjoy their new fabrics with confidence. It will also ease YOUR mind, knowing that Fiber-Seal will be there—and we care!

**Designer's Corner**

Have you visited us online? Our website is another great source of information on the fabrics and fibers you see every day in the markets and showrooms. Once you have registered, you’ll have access to an extensive library of information that will help you broaden your understanding of textiles and make the selection process much simpler.

Visit us online today at www.FiberSeal.com to find the local Service Center nearest you. Also, there are dozens of articles written on everything from Bamboo Fabrics to Flame Retardants. Drop by and see all of the *FiberFacts* and *Textile Tip* publications in Designer’s Corner.

**You can also connect with us on our social media networks!**

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**Need Help With Fabric Cleaning Or Fabric Protection?**

Your local Fiber-Seal Service Center is ready to help and just a few clicks away... find out which one is closest to you by visiting [www.FiberSeal.com/Locations](http://www.FiberSeal.com/Locations).

Or, you can always give us a call at 214.333.9400 or email us at [info@FiberSeal.com](mailto:info@FiberSeal.com).