TEXTILE TIPS

FIBER·SEAL® FABRIC CARE SYSTEM

RAYON

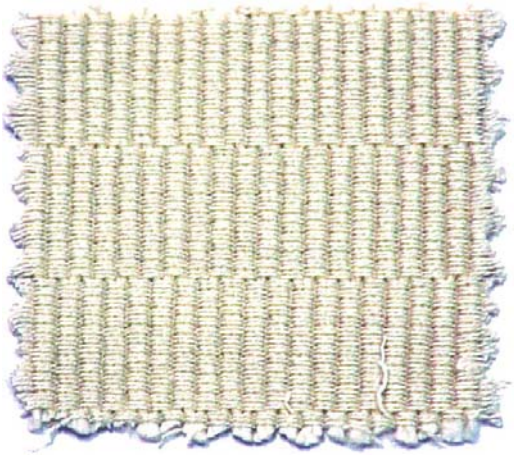
WHAT IS RAYON?

Rayon is a man-made fiber created from regenerated cellulose products (wood pulp). These products are broken down with a combination of chemicals and then forced through spinnerets to make the rayon fiber. Available in both filament and staple forms, there are actually several different types of rayon (viscose, Bemberg, cuprammonium, etc.), each slightly different depending on the method of manufacture.

RAYON CAN LOOK LIKE SILK

Though the natural appearance is one of bright luster, rayon can be pigmented during manufacture to create various degrees of luster from bright to dull. Most often, the luster of rayon is very much like that of silk, the fiber which rayon was created to imitate. Microscopic examination, burn testing, and testing with chlorine bleach are all methods which can help distinguish between the two fibers. The fabric sample below is 100% rayon.

Though there are 100% rayon fabrics available, this fiber finds more widespread use in blended fabrics. Rayon/cotton blends are perhaps most common, but rayon can also be found in blends with any of the other natural or man-made fibers. The fabric sample below is a rayon/cotton blend. Note the characteristic luster of the rayon in the horizontal yarns.



CLEANABILITY

Although rayon is produced from cellulosic materials, some of its properties are very different from other cellulosics. Instead of being stronger when wet, rayon is up to 50% weaker when wet. This is a significant difference and one that needs to be remembered when spotting and cleaning with water-based chemicals.

Shrinkage from wet cleaning is another common characteristic of rayon that is not usually a problem with cotton and other cellulosic fibers. Again, because of the extreme nature of the shrinkage (especially on loose upholstery fabric such as skirts) this problem must be considered before wet cleaning of any kind.

Copyright © 2002 by Fiber-Seal Systems. All rights reserved.

Because of properties such as those just detailed, rayon must be cleaned with more delicate methods. This can result in inferior cleaning results, especially on moderately to heavily soiled fabrics. Dry-cleaning is the only safe method for many rayon fabrics.

SPOT CLEANING

Ringing can be a problem with rayon, though rings caused by improper spot removal can usually be removed readily. As mentioned above, shrinkage can be a problem for skirts, cording and other areas. As with other cellulosic fibers and fabrics, strong acids should be avoided or at least used with great caution.

ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

Rayon can be used to make some very attractive fabrics. These fabrics, maybe even more so than others, need the protection of a topical treatment, making the normally very absorbent fiber much less hospitable to stains.

AS WITH ALL FABRICS AND FINISHES, ALWAYS TEST CHEMICALS AND/OR PROCEDURES FIRST ON AN INCONSPICUOUS AREA OF THE FABRIC.

Copyright © 2002 by Fiber-Seal Systems. All rights reserved.