

TCS Textile Consultancy Services

• *Textile Problem Analysis* • *Textile Labelling Advice* • *Education and Training*

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TITLE

THE COLOUR AND TEXTURE OF THIS RELATIVELY NEW BROWN SUEDE JACKET HAVE CHANGED FOLLOWING A RECOMMENDED DRY CLEANING PROCEDURE TO TRY TO REMOVE A RECTANGULAR MARK LEFT BY THE CUSTOMER'S APPLICATION OF A TEMPORARY ADHESIVE NAME TAG

Report prepared by

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ENQUIRY

The client submitted a lady's dark brown suede jacket for examination and report. The purpose of the enquiry was to comment on the most likely cause of the colour and textural changes that the customer believes have only become apparent after recently being dry cleaned for the first time. The customer was also concerned about a residual mark on the jacket from the application of a temporary adhesive name label.

The client reported that the mark left by the adhesive name label was pre-spotted and then the jacket was dry cleaned in in-line refrigerated perchlorethylene charged with a proprietary soap product using a four minute short cycle/minimum agitation cleaning cycle in a process that was intended to correspond with the requirements of the 'Dry Cleanable Only By A Suede/Leather Cleaning Specialist' instructions on the care labelling.

LABELLING

- **Fibre Content Labelling:** Outer Shell - Suede, lining - 100% polyester
- **Care Labelling:** Dry Cleanable Only By A Suede/Leather Cleaning Specialist, Do Not Iron
- **Size Labelling:** 10

ADDITIONAL GARMENT INFORMATION PROVIDED BY A SWING LABEL

There was a photocopy of a swing label attached to this enquiry with the following additional care and other information about the garment on it:

This garment is made from a natural product, any markings or variation in surface colour or texture are an inherent characteristic.

Caring For Your Garment

Suede

To remove surface dirt, brush with soft bristle brush, avoid contact with water.

General Care

- **please ensure the garment is only cleaned by a specialist suede and leather expert**
- **dry cleaning may result in some change in shade and handle**
- **do not treat stains with chemicals or cleaners as this can cause permanent damage – seek professional advice**
- **dark colours may cause slight colour transfer onto lighter coloured garments.**

EXAMINATION

The suede jacket was examined under standard white lighting conditions and it was immediately apparent that there was a rectangular shaped mark approximately 60 mm by 45 mm about halfway down the right lapel that was presumably caused by the application of the temporary adhesive name label by the customer.

There was also very obvious colour variation both within and between different panels throughout the garment, which is generally indicative of overall colour loss. Some of the panels used in the jacket were also clearly more obviously spotted in their appearance than others, indicating that they had origins from different parts of the beast. There were also some slight textural differences between panels that may indicate that some textural changes had occurred following cleaning but it is difficult to comment on the extent of these changes because the jacket was obviously not examined prior to dry cleaning.

There are now panels on this jacket with very clearly different shades, appearances and textures of suede, and significant visual differences between panels can be seen, especially when comparing the long outer panels on both sleeves with their two inner sleeve panels and comparing the two matching lower front panels of the jacket with most of the other panels in the main body of the jacket.

These differences indicate that these panels have originally either received different treatments during their manufacturing processing and/or are from different parts of the skin of the same beast, or even possibly from different beasts. It is very likely that all the panels of

the jacket had very similar colours and textures when it was new, and that they largely appeared homogenous in appearance, but that these panels have now reacted adversely to the dry cleaning process in different ways and they have developed different appearances and possibly textures.

PHOTOGRAPH



Suede Jacket Showing the Rectangular Mark and Variation in Shade between Panels

DISCUSSION

The 'Dry Cleanable Only By A Suede/Leather Cleaning Specialist' instruction on the care labelling clearly indicates to a professional dry cleaner that the garment is dry cleanable and this can reasonably be taken to signify that it is dry cleanable in the most common and primary dry cleaning solvent used, perchlorethylene, using normal dry cleaning procedures with no specific process restrictions indicated.

In this case, the dry cleaner has reported using refrigerated perchlorethylene solvent and also a very short cleaning cycle of four minutes and it would therefore be reasonable to consider that this dry cleaning process, as reported to have been carried out by the dry cleaner, is fully compliant with the requirements of the attached care labelling. By attaching such care labelling to a garment, it is also incumbent on the manufacturer to ensure that the garment is manufactured in such a way as not to be unacceptably adversely affected by a dry cleaner following this recommended dry cleaning treatment.

Having said this, however, it needs to be appreciated that a slight degree of change in both the colour and the texture of a suede garment is always to be expected following its first dry cleaning treatment. Such changes may include some generalised loss of shade and slight stiffening, mainly due to the loss of tanning materials, such as dyes, oils and finishes. The additional swing label attached to this garment makes reference to these possible changes in shade and handle.

However, the significant changes in colour, such as can be seen in this garment, as well as texture, are not acceptable to consumers. The significant colour differences between panels that can now be seen in this garment would indicate that the panels had received different tanning and processing conditions and/or that they had come from different areas of the same animal or even from different animals.

Colour and textural changes caused by such variations in either the processing or the origins of the skins are clearly beyond the control of dry cleaners and therefore cannot be considered to be their responsibility. A copy of a technical bulletin, TABS-231, entitled 'Colour Loss On Suede or Leather', prepared by the International Fabricare Institute (I.F.I.) in the U.S., that discusses the causes of both changes in colour and texture in suede garments following dry cleaning, is attached for further information and explanation about these problems.

This technical bulletin generally considers that the responsibility for such changes in colour, when they are either more severe and/or occur between different garment panels, is that of the manufacturer rather than the dry cleaner. This technical bulletin also points out that in following the attached care instructions, professional cleaners have no way of predicting or preventing such severe colour changes in suede garments.

Unfortunately, the staining damage caused by the use of the temporary adhesive name label must be considered to be the responsibility of the customer because attaching it to the jacket clearly involved a degree of risk. However the customer considers that it might have been helpful for the swing ticket containing additional garment information to include a general warning about the dangers of using of this type of temporary sticky labelling on suede, because it is now commonly used at conferences, seminar and other social functions.

CONCLUSIONS

The garment has failed to perform appropriately to a dry cleaning treatment that must be considered to be in full compliance with the requirements of the attached care labelling and the nature of the problems exhibited by the garments strongly indicates they have been caused by inadequate suede and garment manufacturing techniques, rather than by incorrect handling by the dry cleaner.

This is the fifth garment of this type, from the same manufacturer, which has been seen by this Consultant over the last two or three years, which has exhibited similar unacceptable changes in colour and/or texture following an initial dry cleaning treatment. The garment should be returned to the point of purchase, along with a copy of this report, so that the customer can receive appropriate redress for her loss.



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CERTIFICATE

I, Steven Donald Pyott, do hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the above information is accurate. Being an Associate of the Textile Institute, I have agreed to be bound by the terms of the Institute's Royal Charters, By-laws and Professional Code of Conduct for the time being in force. The Textile Institute accepts no responsibility for the information contained in this reply to your enquiry.



Steven Pyott

TABS

INTERNATIONAL FABRICARE INSTITUTE BULLETIN

COLOR LOSS ON SUEDE OR LEATHER

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

After cleaning, a noticeable change in the original shade of a suede or leather garment may occur. In some cases, the color variance is noticeable on different panels of the outfit.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Usually, the color will not be as rich and deep, but will be uneven and lighter than when it was new.

WHAT CAUSED IT?

In some cases, suedes and leathers are not completely colorfast to acceptable leather cleaning procedures because of the method of dyeing. Once the article is subjected to the care process, some of the original oils and/or dyes are solubilized and removed from the garment, resulting in an objectionable change of appearance. This loss of original tanning materials may also cause a texture change to the skins.

Furthermore, skins used to construct a garment or outfit are often tanned (dyed) under different conditions or are taken from different areas of an animal and, in some cases, from different animals. These factors may result in a noticeable variance in shade from one panel to another after cleaning. This type of discoloration or color difference may be noted prior to cleaning.

CAN IT BE PREVENTED?

The only method of prevention is through a better selection of dyes, oils, and finishes during the original leather tanning process. The leather cleaner cannot prevent this type of color change.



The left panel of this leather jacket is noticeably lighter than the right panel. Severe color losses on leather or suede are due to poor manufacturer selection of dyes, oils, and finishes.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Some slight variance in color is always to be expected on leathers and suedes after cleaning. However, the tannery is responsible for severe color losses due to a poor selection of the dyes and finishes.

IS THERE A REMEDY?

Professional leather refinishers can sometimes restore leathers to a wearable condition by the re-application of color and finishing oils. However, there may be an overall shade variance. Severe color losses in cleaning cannot be restored to a satisfactory condition. □