



# Standard Terminology Relating to Care Labels for Textile and Leather Products Other Than Pile Floor Coverings and Upholstery<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D 5253; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon ( $\epsilon$ ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

## 1. Scope

1.1 This terminology provides a uniform language for the writing of care instructions to be supplied with carpets, rugs, and upholstered furniture, excluding leather. These items cannot be refurbished by the laundering and drycleaning methods used for apparel and other domestic textile products.

1.2 This document includes tables of care terms and general refurbishing procedures for textile floor coverings and textile upholstered furniture. The exact care instructions and sequence of procedures are to be determined by the manufacturer.

1.3 The recommended terminology covers common meanings used by both textile technologists and consumers.

1.4 Terminology for the following two groups of products is covered:

1.4.1 Carpets and rugs.

1.4.2 Upholstered furniture.

1.5 This terminology is not applicable to unattached fabrics, such as slipcovers, used for covering furniture.

## 2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*

D 123 Terminology Relating to Textiles<sup>2</sup>

D 3136 Terminology Relating to Care Labels for Textile and Leather Products Other Than Pile Floor Coverings and Upholstery<sup>2</sup>

2.2 *Other Document:*

Federal Trade Commission Amendment to Trade Regulation Rule Concerning Care Labeling of Textile Wearing Apparel, and Certain Piece Goods Federal Register, Vol 48, No. 99, May 20, 1983<sup>3</sup>

## 3. Significance and Use

3.1 When permanently attached labels are to be used, use the standardized terminology in a logical sequence to facilitate maximum disclosure of essential information in small label space and to assist understanding of recommended care practices by the consumer.

3.2 When permanently attached care labels are not feasible, the care procedure may be presented in any convenient fashion such as hang tags, on package surfaces, or in a booklet. Brevity not being critical, such instructions can be more detailed and more useful to the consumer. They should still follow a logical sequence and the terms should be consistent with those recommended for labels.

3.3 The use of either a permanent or a nonattached care instruction should not preclude the use of the alternative as an additional source of information to the consumer.

3.4 Most of the terms in this standard are peculiar to specific products. When conventional laundering or drycleaning practices are to be followed, the terms and routines detailed in Terminology D 3136 are to be used.

3.5 The use of a negative term that pertains to only one particular care method implies that all other customary care procedures involved may be used.

3.6 The term “only” in a term limits the procedure to the stated instruction.

## 4. Terminology

**absorbent compound**, *n*—*in textile cleaning*, sponge-like particles which, when saturated with water or dry solvent and detergent and brushed into the textile, remove soil from the textile. See **powder cleaner**

DISCUSSION—Naturally absorbent granules such as fullers earth and wood flour or synthetic granules are commonly used.

**absorbent pad**, *n*—*for cleaning textile floor coverings*, a damp textile material (fabric, felt, sponge, or mop) used to agitate and wipe the pile and, in the process, absorb soil.

**bath mat**, *n*—an absorbent textile floor covering normally used in the bathroom as a pad on which to step when getting out of the tub or shower.

DISCUSSION—Bath mats are normally made from woven terry fabric similar to that used in towels and are cleaned by laundering.

**bath rug**, *n*—a scatter rug used in the bathroom.

**bleach**, *n*—*in care of textiles*, a product for brightening and aiding the removal of soils and stains from textile materials by oxidation that is inclusive of both chlorine and non-chlorine products. **D 3136**

**bonnet**, *n*—*in cleaning pile floor coverings*, an absorbent pad which can be mounted under a rotary shampoo machine.

<sup>1</sup> This terminology is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D-13 on Textiles and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D13.62 on Care Labeling. Current edition approved Nov. 10, 1995 and January 10, 1996. Published June 1996. Originally published as D 5253 – 92. Last previous edition D 5253 – 95

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 07.01.

<sup>3</sup> Available from U.S. Government Printing Office, North Capital and H Streets, NW, Washington, DC 20401.

**brush, n**—a hand-held cleaning tool consisting of a base into which bristles are inserted.

DISCUSSION—Bristles may vary in material, length, density of coverage, stiffness, and type to suit various types of textiles.

**brush, vt**—*in refurbishing textiles*, to use a brush to remove surface particulate soils, (2) work a cleaning solution or spot cleaning agent into carpet pile or upholstery fabric, or (3) restore the appearance of pile fabrics.

**care instructions, n**—*in textiles*, a series of directions that describe the practices which should refurbish a product without adverse effects and that warn against any part of the directions which one could reasonably be expected to use that may harm the item. **D 3136**

**care label, n**—*in textiles*, a label or other affixed instructions that report how a product should be refurbished. **D 3136**

DISCUSSION—The Federal Trade Commission, in Rule 16 CFR 423, requires care instructions on most apparel and certain other textile terms. In relation to these products, the FTC definition states *Care label* means a permanent label or tag, containing regular care information and instructions, that is attached or affixed in such a manner that it will not become separated from the product and will remain legible during the useful life of the product.

**care procedure, n**—*in textiles*, one or more refurbishing methods to which products may be subjected for soil and stain removal and aesthetic improvement such as appearance restoration or hand. **D 3136**

DISCUSSION—The process employs appropriate equipment, materials, and processes, and may include, but need not be limited to, the following: water or dry cleaning solvent, detergent, foam, absorption-(powder) type compounds, bleach, agitation, and drying.

**carpet, n**—all textile floor coverings not designated as rugs. (Compare **rug**.) **D 418**

DISCUSSION—Carpet generally is installed wall to wall and frequently extends through several rooms; carpet so used cannot carry a permanent care label as it would be unavailable on the back and would be unsightly on the face.

*carpet shampoo, n*—See **shampoo**.

**carpet sweeper, n**—a manually powered machine which has rotary brushes and which is used for light surface cleaning of carpets and rugs. (Compare *vacuum cleaner*.)

**chemical wash, n**—*in rug cleaning*, a specialized professional process used on oriental rugs.

**cleaning agent, n**—a chemical compound or formulation of several compounds which loosens, disperses, dissolves or emulsifies, or causes a chemical change in the soil to facilitate removal by mechanical action. **D 3136**

**coated fabric, n**—a flexible material composed of a textile fabric and an adherent polymeric material applied to one or both surfaces. **D 4850**

*coated upholstery fabric, n*—See **coated fabric**.

**consumer care, n**—*of consumer textile products*, cleaning and maintenance procedures as customarily undertaken by the ultimate user. **D 3136**

**cylindrical wet-scrub extraction, n**—a carpet cleaning method in which (1) a cleaning agent is sprayed onto the carpet, and (2) soil and cleaning agents are removed by a

machine which feeds water into two counter-rotating brushes.

**detergent, n**—*in textile product care*, any cleaning agent containing one or more surfactants as the active ingredient(s). **D 3136**

DISCUSSION—In popular usage this term includes washing and cleaning agents with a composition other than soap. Detergents clean by much the same mechanism as does soap. The term detergent is used to describe both the basic surface active agents and finished products. For use in carpet and upholstery cleaning, the finished product may contain additional ingredients such as builders and fluorescent whitening agents.

**dry cleaning, n**—*in carpet cleaning*, a deprecated term. See the preferred term, **dry extraction cleaning**.

**dry extraction cleaning, n**—a method in which an absorbent compound is dispersed over the surface of a textile product by hand or machine, thoroughly brushed through the pile, allowed to dry, and removed by suction.

DISCUSSION—Sponge-like particles absorb the soil from the yarns. The soil-laden particles are removed by suction from the carpet. (Syn. *powder cleaning*.)

**dry foam extraction cleaning, n**—a process by which a highly aerated, low moisture content shampoo is brushed through the textile floor covering pile or applied to the surface of upholstery.

DISCUSSION—The foam holds the soil in suspension and is simultaneously removed by a cylindrical brush machine incorporating a built-in suction recovery system or hand-held wet sponges.

**dry solvent, n**—any organic solvent used to dissolve another material. See **solvent**.

**extraction cleaning, n**—a general term for a number of refurbishing methods in which the cleaning agent is delivered onto the textile product, agitated, and simultaneously removed by suction.

*extraction cleaning, dry foam, n*—See **dry foam extraction cleaning**.

*extraction cleaning, hot water, n*—See **hot water extraction cleaning**.

*extraction cleaning, rotary, n*—See **rotary extraction cleaning**.

**extraction cleaning, steam, n**—a deprecated term since no steam is used. See the preferred term, **hot water extraction cleaning**.

**foam, n**—*in cleaning textiles*, a frothy mass of fine bubbles generated by whipping or agitating a shampoo.

DISCUSSION—A rotary brush shampooing machine normally produces a foam as the brushes rotate over the carpet pile. Cleaning agents which dispense a foam from aerosol cans can be purchased.

**foam cleaning, n**—a process in which a prepared foam is applied to a textile product, scrubbed in, allowed to dry, and the encapsulated soil is removed by suction.

**hot water extraction cleaning, n**—a process in which a heated solution of detergent is sprayed into the textile material and immediately removed by a wet suction nozzle behind the spray-head.

**in-plant cleaning**, *n*—for *textile floor coverings*, a cleaning process performed in a facility away from the location where the product is used.

**laundering**, *v*—in *textile product care*, a process intended to remove soil or stains by treatment (washing) with an aqueous detergent solution (and possibly bleach) and normally including subsequent rinsing, extracting, and drying. **D 3136**

DISCUSSION—Some rugs, particularly small bath and scatter rugs, may be laundered using such procedures but ironed or pressed only if required.

**on-location cleaning**, *n*—for *textile floorcoverings and upholstered furniture*, a cleaning process performed in the location where a product is used.

**pilate**, *v*—a deprecated term. See the preferred term, **pile lifting**.

**pile lifting**, *n*—the process of raising the pile on a textile.

DISCUSSION—Carpet pile is raised to an erect position to loosen embedded soil so that it can be more readily removed. Pile may be lifted by a vacuum cleaner having rotating brushes, by a manually manipulated toothed tool, or by a powered pile lifter.

*pile lofting*, *n*—See the preferred term, **pile lifting**.

**powder cleaner**, *n*—a cleaning agent in which an absorbent compound is the principal ingredient. See **absorbent compound**.

*powder cleaning*, *n*—See the preferred term, **dry extraction cleaning**.

*prespot*, *n*—See **pretreat**.

**pretreat**, *vt*—preapplication of cleaning agent to spots, stains, and areas of high soil concentration to maximize activation time and therefore facilitate soil removal during overall cleaning.

**professional care**, *n*—for *textile products*, cleaning and maintenance procedures requiring the services of a person specially trained or skilled in their use. **D 3136**

**rotary extraction cleaning**, *n*—a cleaning procedure which uses a rotating brush machine or a series of rotating jets through which shampoo is fed or sprayed into the carpet pile and simultaneously removed by suction.

**rotary shampoo**, *n*—a cleaning procedure which uses a rotating brush machine through which shampoo is fed into the pile of a textile floor covering. See also **rotary extraction cleaning**.

DISCUSSION—Some machines extract the soiled solution immediately. If not extracted, after the carpet has dried it must be cleaned by suction to remove loosened soil.

**routine maintenance**, *n*—in *textile cleaning*, superficial daily or weekly cleaning to remove particulate soil and dust.

**rug**, *n*—a textile floor covering of limited area which is complete in itself and is intended for use as a partial covering of a floor or another floor covering. **D 418**

“S”—a letter code. See **upholstery cleaning instructions**.

**scatter rug**, *n*—a small rug which is designed to be flexible and is usually cleaned by laundering. (Syn. *throw rug*.)

**shampoo**, *n*—a solution of detergent in water formulated for specialized cleaning tasks.

**slipcover**, *n*—a removable, fitted, protective textile cover,

other than a cushion cover, often decorative and specifically made for upholstered furniture. **D 4852**

DISCUSSION—Slipcovers are usually a lighter weight fabric than upholstery fabrics and are normally cleaned by laundering or dry cleaning, not dry extraction cleaning. **D 123**

**soap**, *n*—a cleaning agent usually consisting of sodium or potassium salts of fatty acids. **D 3136**

**solvent**, *n*—any liquid used to dissolve another material.

DISCUSSION—Water is the most commonly used solvent, and in textile cleaning its use is commonly referred to as “cleaning on the wet side.” So-called “dry” cleaning solvents may be any of various combustible hydrocarbons or noncombustible chlorinated hydrocarbons, such as perchloroethylene, which are primarily used to dissolve oily, greasy, and waxy soils.

**sour**, *v*—in *refurbishing textiles*, to neutralize the alkalinity of a material after cleaning by using a weak acid such as acetic acid or an acid-forming salt.

**spot and stain removal**, *n*—a cleaning procedure for localized areas using cleaning agents and mechanical action specific to the removal of the foreign substances present. (Syn. *spot cleaning*.) **D 3136, D4850**

**spot clean**, *vt*—to remove localized spots and stains by treating them with cleaning agents and mechanical actions specific to the fiber, fabric, and product type and the foreign material present.

*spot cleaning*, *n*—See **spot and stain removal**.

*steam cleaning*, *n*—a deprecated term since no steam is used.

Use the preferred term, **hot water extraction cleaning**.

*steam extraction cleaning*, *n*—a deprecated term since no steam is used. Use the preferred term **hot water extraction cleaning**.

**stripper**, *n*—in *textiles*, a product, usually a reducing agent, that changes the coloring material, dye, or soil stain to reduced color (see also **bleach**).

DISCUSSION—Stripper is sometimes referred to as a “reducing bleach,” as opposed to the conventional oxidizing bleach.

*throw rug*, *n*—See **scatter rug**.

**upholstered furniture**, *n*—furniture covered with such materials as textiles or leather and generally with padding or cushions, or both. **D 4852**

*upholstery, coated*, *n*—See **coated upholstery fabric**.

**upholstery cleaning instructions**, *n*—any of the various letter codes supplied by the fabric manufacturer to provide acceptable cleaning methods.

DISCUSSION—The following codes are intended to be used with detailed instructions (see Table 1) included on the label:

“S”—clean with dry solvent cleaner only.

“W”—clean with water-based shampoo only.

“WS”—clean with either water-based shampoo or dry solvent.

“X”—do not clean, use vacuum cleaner or light brush only.

“P”—professionally clean only, an alternate to the “S” dry cleaning term although not in customary usage.

**upholstery fabric**, *n*—the exterior fabric covering applied to a furniture unit. **D 4771**

**vacuum**, *vt*—to clean using an electrically powered machine to

**TABLE 1 Care Terms and General Refurbishing Procedures for Textile Upholstered Furniture**

Label Term	Instructions
<i>Routine Refurbishing</i>	
Brush	Use a hand-held brush to remove surface particulate soils such as dust, hair, and other solids. May also be used to restore the appearance of pile fabrics.
Spot clean	Remove localized spots and stains by treating them with cleaning agents and mechanical actions specific to the fiber, fabric, and product type and foreign material present. Note: See manufacturer's letter code for upholstery fabrics.
Vacuum clean	Remove embedded soil by suction using the upholstery attachments on a vacuum cleaner.
Wipe	Clean face-coated fabrics by removing surface soil with a sponge or cloth wetted with a mild detergent or soap solution or coated fabric cleaner formulated for the purpose.
<i>Overall Cleaning of Upholstery Fabrics</i>	
S	Clean only with dry cleaning solvent. Do not saturate. Do not use water or solutions containing water. Pile fabrics may require brushing to restore appearance. Cushion covers should not be removed and dry cleaned.
W	Clean only with water-based shampoo or foam upholstery cleaner. Do not overwet. Do not use dry solvents to spot or clean. Pile fabrics may require brushing to restore appearance. Cushion covers should not be removed and laundered.
WS	Clean with shampoo, foam, or dry cleaning solvents as desired. Do not saturate with any liquid. Pile fabrics may require brushing to restore appearance. Cushion covers should not be removed and laundered or dry cleaned.
X	Do not clean with either water cleaner or solvent-based cleaner. Use a vacuum cleaner or light brushing only.
Dry extraction clean	Brush an absorbent compound into the fabric, allow to dry, and remove with vacuum cleaner, following manufacturer's instructions.
<i>Overall Cleaning of Coated Fabrics</i>	
Wipe	Clean coated upholstery fabrics with a sponge or cloth wetted with a mild detergent, soap solution, or coated fabric cleaner formulated for the purpose. Do not use dry solvent cleaner.

create suction in order to remove loose, particulate soil, and lint.

**D 4852**

“W”—a letter code. See **upholstery cleaning instructions**.

**wipe**, *v—in upholstery cleaning*, to clean coated upholstery fabrics with a sponge or cloth wetted with a mild detergent, soap solution, or coated fabric cleaner formulated for the purpose.

“WS”—a letter code. See **upholstery cleaning instructions**.

“X”—a letter code. See **upholstery cleaning instructions**.

## 5. Other Terminology

5.1 For definitions of other textile terms used in this standard, refer to Terminology D 123. For definitions of other care labeling terms, refer to Terminology D 3136.

## 6. Care Terms and Detailed Instructions for Textile Floor Coverings and Upholstery Installed on Furniture

6.1 See Table 2<sup>4</sup> for a listing of care terms and the instructions that apply to textile floor coverings.

6.2 See Table 1 for a listing of care terms and the instructions that apply to upholstered furniture.

<sup>4</sup>The complete label may be “dry foam extraction cleaning,” “hot water extraction cleaning,” “dry extraction cleaning,” or “rotary extraction cleaning.” Follow the manufacturer’s instructions.

**TABLE 2 Care Terms and General Refurbishing Procedures for Textile Floor Coverings**

Label Term	Instructions
<i>Routine Refurbishing Procedures</i>	
Carpet sweep	Remove loose soil particles and lint from the carpet or rug surface using a carpet sweeper.
Vacuum clean	Clean using an electrically powered machine to create suction in order to remove loose, particulate soil and lint.
Spot clean	Remove localized spots and stains by treating them with cleaning agents and mechanical actions specific to the fiber, fabric, and product type and foreign material present.
<i>In-Plant Cleaning</i>	
Remove loose soil	Subject to agitation, impact, and suction to remove dust and particulate soil.
Pretreat	Apply a cleaning agent to spots, stains, and areas of high soil concentration prior to overall cleaning to maximize activation time and facilitate soil removal.
Spot clean	Remove localized spots and stains by treating them with cleaning agents and mechanical actions specific to the fiber, fabric, and product type and foreign material present.
Shampoo	Process with cleaning machine which applies detergent solution, brushes it in, rinses, and extracts as much water as possible.
Dry	Suspend in a heated room until dry.
Launder	Wash scatter rugs, bath mats, and bath rugs labeled as washable in conventional laundry equipment.
<i>On-Location Overall Cleaning</i>	
Pile lift	Life pile and loosen soil.
Vacuum clean	Clean using an electrically powered machine to create suction in order to remove loose, particulate soil and lint.
Pretreat	Apply a cleaning agent to spots, stains, and areas of high soil concentration prior to overall cleaning to maximize activation time and facilitate soil removal.
Spot clean	Remove localized spots and stains by treating them with cleaning agents and mechanical actions specific to the fiber, fabric, and product type and foreign material present.
Rotary shampoo	Clean using a brush or bonnet-type machine to impregnate the textile floor covering with a foam. After drying, remove loosened soil with a vacuum cleaner.
Extraction clean <sup>4</sup>	Clean using one of the wet extraction or dry foam extraction machines.
Pad clean	Clean using an absorbent pad.
Foam clean	Clean using a prepared foam.
Dry extraction clean	Clean with an absorbent compound, either by hand or machine.

## 7. Keywords

7.1 care label; floor covering; terminology; upholstered furniture; upholstery

## APPENDIX

### (Nonmandatory Information)

#### X1. RATIONALE

X1.1 Work on developing standard definitions of terms relating to the care of carpets, rugs, and furniture upholstery as an adjunct to Terminology D 3136 was started during the period when the Federal Trade Commission was developing amendments to the Care Labeling Rule, 16 CFR Part 423. During this period advanced information indicated home furnishings would have to carry Permanent Care Labels in addition to apparel which was already covered. An expansion of the ASTM recommended terms and practices appeared to be needed.

X1.2 When the new Rule was published on May 20, 1983,

the section dealing with home furnishings had been deleted, so Terminology D 3136, with some modifications, was still adequate to meet the requirements of the FTC regulation.

X1.3 There is still a consumer need and desire for care instructions on carpets, rugs, and upholstery. Therefore, this terminology has been prepared to recommend standard terminology and practices for the use by those sellers who have been voluntarily labeling their products or otherwise furnishing information to consumers.

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