

Black and Red Dyes and Bleeding...

Oh My!

by Arlene Converse



Fashion changes constantly! What's popular and faddish one year is history the next! The manufacturer's and designers are constantly developing new fabrics, dyes and designs and more often than not, when they find something that is popular every manufacturer and designer in the world will do their best to copy it. And you the consumer, are pulled into the "look" of the garment, with no consideration to the fabric content or care labeling that is sewn inside the garment. We've all been there!! Looking for the perfect outfit you shop from store to store and bingo... you found it! It fits, price is right and so you buy it! However, in the cleaning process, color loss and color bleeding in today's fabrics and garments is all too common. Black/white garments or red/white garments, and many that contain polyester and/or spandex, can be problematic. It's the dye that's the problem.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) requires manufacturers to attach a permanent label to textile garments that provides directions for their care. The Care Labeling Rule was intended to give both the consumer and the dry cleaner complete guidance on how to take care of a garment. A garment labeled "dry clean" should have dyes that can withstand dry cleaning solvents, and "washable" garments should have dyes that will stand up to washing. The best way for the manufacturer to determine care procedures is through testing. Unfortunately, this is not always done and sometimes items are dry cleaned or wet cleaned with poor results.

What Is The Problem?

Many black and white combination garments are not colorfast to cleaning. During the drycleaning process, the black fabric will bleed, fade and stain the lighter areas of the garment. The garments can be black and red, black and yellow or any other combination. It's the black that is the problem. Dyes can bleed in the most common drycleaning solutions as well as during wetcleaning. Garments that are black and white, red and white, can see the black dye bleed into the white fabric. Red dye is problematic as well as and can bleed into the lighter areas of the garment just as black dyes. This can happen in the first cleaning or in subsequent cleanings. If it doesn't occur the first time it can still occur in future cleaning of the garment.

What Caused This To Occur?

Although this black color loss and dye migration could happen on any fabric, we most often see it on synthetics, like polyester or other synthetic blends. These synthetic fabric colors used to all be solution dyed which was very colorfast to drycleaning or washing. However, today many synthetics are poorly "top dyed", a process that doesn't allow the dye to penetrate the yarn giving permanency to the color. When dark fabrics are dyed by this method, there is a good chance that during drycleaning, there will be color bleeding resulting in self-staining or migration into the lighter areas of the garment. Years ago, the yarn was pre-dyed, therefore the dye would withstand the drycleaning process. Because the manufacturer's changed their process to allow them to use the fabric for more than one color,

they chose to "top dye" the yarn which has resulted in bleeding during the cleaning process for the consumer as well as the drycleaner.

Can Bleeding Be Prevented?

Since most dark colors on fabrics that are labeled as drycleanable are colorfast to drycleaning, the drycleaners would have no cause to suspect a problem with dye bleeding, fading or color change. There is no way to prevent this type of color bleeding from occurring in drycleaning. It cannot be prevented from occurring in the cleaning process. Toudanines Cleaners takes the time to test items that we are suspect of prior to drycleaning however not all garments that bleed are easily detectable by sight. Garments that are black with a lighter areas are tested for bleeding. If the garments tests positive for bleeding, the garment will be returned to the customer explaining the garment has the potential to bleed. At that time the customer can chose to allow Toudanines Cleaners to proceed with


signed consent or the customer can return the garment to their retailer for a refund. Many times testing reveals that the black dye in the fabric will also bleed when processed in wet cleaning solution leaving no safe method of care with risk of dye migration.

Who Is Responsible?

The textile manufacturer who applied the original color on the black fabric is responsible for its colorfastness to the accepted and/or suggested drycleaning procedure. When properly manufactured there is no fading and/or dye migration during professional cleaning. The manufacturer has failed to test the colorfastness of the fabric during their recommended cleaning process therefore, they are responsible for the garment failing the suggested cleaning process.

Is There A Remedy?

In more severe fading and dye transfer cases; there is no safe restoration. In some instances, Toudanines Cleaners will reprocess the garment in an attempt to reverse the bleeding process, however, the reverse can also occur causing more bleeding. Once the dye has migrated into the lighter areas of the garment it is nearly impossible to reverse. Toudanines Cleaners carefully tests every garment that appears to be at risk but it is virtually impossible to detect all therefore, the recommended cleaning process is followed as indicated on the Care Label by the manufacturer. Garments that test positive for bleeding should be returned to the retailer immediately.

Toudanines Cleaners considers it a privilege to handle your dry cleaning needs and cherished garments. We take great care to handle each garment on an individual basis to ensure that it is returned to you in like new condition. You can trust that we will handle your garments and household items with the respect and special attention that they deserve. Toudanines Cleaners always adheres to the manufacturer's care label for cleaning. Garments that fail the manufacturer's care label process should be returned to the manufacturer. 

Arlene Converse is President of Toudanines Cleaners in Boerne, San Antonio and Schertz, Texas. They currently own and operate 3 locations in Boerne and throughout the San Antonio area. In 19 years they have owned and operated 17 stores in 11 cities throughout the state of Texas. For more information visit our website at www.ToudaninesCleaners.com, Facebook and Twitter. If you have a question for The Dry Cleaning Lady, please submit it to info@ToudaninesCleaners.com.



Serving our Friends and Neighbors of the Hill Country Since 1916

KCAC

KENDALL COUNTY ABSTRACT COMPANY

"Where experience and service make the difference"

From its beginning in 1916, Kendall County Abstract Company has been Kendall County's locally owned and operated title company. Over the last 97 years, we've earned the trust of real estate professionals because we're experienced, we're professional, and we care about our customers.



Ashlee Pfeiffer, Manager

Agent for:

- Stewart Title Guaranty Company
- Fidelity National Title
- First American Title Insurance
- Alamo Title Insurance

830.816.2131 | 830.249.3341 - Fax
 103 N. Saunders • Boerne, Texas 78006
 (across from the courthouse)

VISIT US AT WWW.KCAC.NET

MARCIE L. COX
 CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

Offering Services in Accounting and Tax for Small Business, Individuals, and Non-Profits

830.995.5810

marcie@mlcoxcpa.com | www.mlcoxcpa.com