

BLING

is Everywhere

by Arlene Converse

Decorative garments are all the rage these days! Everything from wearing apparel, purses and accessories to household items. You can find tassels, decorator buttons, beads, sequins, rhinestones, fur, leather and even wooden and metal embellishments. And we love them! The more the better, but at some point these items will need to be cleaned and in many cases this can present a challenge. Decorative garments are more common place today than ever before in the drycleaning industry and each of these items require special handling to ensure that they are returned to our customers in close to like new condition. By law, most garments today are required to have a care label listing at least one safe method for cleaning the garment. The Care Label Rule clearly states that the care label instructions must apply to all permanently attached parts of the garment, including decorative trim. Labels that say "Dryclean Only, Exclusive of Ornamentation" are unacceptable. They do not explain that the trim must be removed before the garment is cleaned nor do they specify a separate care method for the trim. Most of the time, the trim and ornamentation is not removable. They are either sewn into the garment or are glued making these items not removable prior to cleaning. There are many cases in which the care method indicated for the fabric causes damage to the garment's decorative trim because the trim and ornamentation is added to the garment after the care label is attached. Here are some problems to be on the lookout for:

PROBLEMS WITH BEADS, SEQUINS AND RHINESTONES:

Glued on trim such as glitter, sequins, beads and/or rhinestones, can become unglued if the glue is not resistant to the recommended care procedures suggested by the care label.

Sewn-on trim and/or beading may not be secure and properly sewn or become loose during wearing. Beaded fringe that hangs from the garment are secured by a simple thread. The thread can break, the beads then become lost during the cleaning process.

Buttons, beads, buckles, and other trim made of plastic called polystyrene can dissolve when exposed to

drycleaning solvents, especially perchloroethylene.

Some buttons, particularly those that resemble pearl, are quite fragile and may crack, chip or break during use and cleaning procedures. The serviceability of the button often depends upon how it is made and how it is attached.

Decorative buttons, sewn on broaches, that have rhinestones or other beads, are secured by small metal prongs. These prongs become loose from wear and the stones fall out. These items many times are not removable.

Garments that are labeled "Dryclean" should be made to withstand proper pressing procedures. Steam used to remove wrinkles and restore a garment to its proper shape can sometimes cause damage, particularly to suede, leather, fur, sequins, beads, and buttons. Garments with decorative trim elements placed very close together also can be difficult to finish, even with a hand iron. In these cases, the cleaner may be forced to return the garment in less-than-perfect condition.

TIPS:

- Remove any decorative pins or belts prior to taking the item to Toudanines Cleaners.
- Some decorative buttons or broaches that are sewn to the garment may need to be removed prior to cleaning.

Toudanines Cleaners takes great care in thoroughly inspecting each garment prior to cleaning to ensure the proper cleanability of each garment. Toudanines Cleaners is a member of the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI), who handle hundreds of these garments each week. DLI may suggest that there is considerable risk in processing a garment whose trim may be damaged by following the care label. In the event that Toudanines Cleaners feels the garment could become damaged due to either a faulty care label or due to ornamentation, we will not proceed without first discussing the situation, the options available and obtaining a consent form.

If you experience a problem with an inaccurate care label, do not hesitate to return the garment to the retailer for a refund. If such a garment is incorrectly labeled "Dryclean," it should be returned to the manufacturer if damage results. The retailer should likewise return it to the manufacturer as it their responsibility to communicate proper cleaning procedures via the care label instructions for the garment. □

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.

