Fabric Selection Guidelines

To assist customers in choosing a fabric that will suit their needs, all Profile Fabrics samples are labelled to identify the various fabric types and performance categories. Every Profile Fabric's product is tested for seam slippage, abrasion resistance, colour fastness to light and formaldehyde. All fabrics conform to the relevant industry standards.

Abrasion testing

The Martindale abrasion machine tests the durability of woven fabrics and the STOL abrasion machine tests the durability of knitted fabrics. In laboratory conditions fabric samples are continuously rubbed until the yarn is observed to fatigue. These internationally recognised tests ensure that Profile Fabrics conforms to the standards indicated below:

Durability (Martindale Rub Test ISO 12947-2)

In laboratory conditions fabric samples are continuously rubbed under pressure until the fibre is observed to fatigue.

D 2,500 – 10,000

LD 10,000 – 15,000

GD 15,000 – 20,000

HD 20,000 – 30,000

HC 30,000 +

Chenille yarn fabrics

Fabrics using chenille yarn constructions from viscose, rayon, acrylic, polyester or cotton fibres will behave like most pile or napped fabrics during service i.e. orientation of pile fibres will be disrupted when sat upon, resulting in an apparently different shade on contact areas. This disruption of the pile fibres and consequent apparent colour change are inherent characteristics and should not be considered as defects.

Colour Fastness

All fabrics are tested to Australian industry standards. It is important to note that no fabric is 100% colour fast and that it is impossible to prevent colours fading if adequate precautions are not taken in the home. Winter sun, sitting lower in the sky, can cause the most damage, particularly when protective curtains have been pulled back to warm the room.

Fading

Colours with which the fabrics are dyed, particularly bright colours, will be susceptible to light fading depending on the degree of exposure. Some fabric damage will be evident where fading is most pronounced. In situations where rooms are northerly facing or exposed to constant daylight we recommend jacquard woven or vat dye printed furnishings. Sun damage: constant exposure to the direct rays of the sun will break down fabric fibres, causing them to become brittle and resulting in the affected area breaking when cleaned.

General care

When arranging your furniture, care should be taken to avoid touching external walls or radiators to prevent problems of moisture build up and/or scorching damage. Take care to prevent sharp objects such as rings, buckles and pet's claws from coming into contact with your furniture, as this may cause snagging or tearing of the fabric. Vacuum regularly (weekly) using low suction. Rotate reversible cushions regularly. Protect from direct sunlight.

Needle size

Selecting the correct needle for your project is just as important as selecting the fabric, thread and stabilizer. There are different sizes and types of needles for different types of fabric. The European metric sizing system for sewing machine needles is numbered from 60 to 110. The American sizing system is numbered from 8 to 18.

For both sizing systems, the lower the number the finer the needle and the higher the number the larger the needle. Most needle companies show both sizes on the package.

A good rule of thumb to keep in mind; the lighter the fabric the smaller the needle size and the heavier the fabric the larger the needle size. Many times the thread you will be using for your sewing project will also determine the type of needle you choose. For example, when using a fine, delicate thread, be sure to use a smaller needle size. Ball point (Style 2045) needles are used for sewing on knits; the rounded tip allows the needle to pass between the fabric threads by separating them. (Using a regular point needle on knit fabric will result in skipped stitches and fabric damage, causing it to curl).

Oxidation

Fumes from chimneys, auto exhausts, open fires, gas fires, stoves, or wherever combustion is present, produce a sulphur compound which when combined with humidity and oxygen in the air produce a mild sulphuric acid. This matter is absorbed by or clings to the furnishing fabric and contributes to discolouration and deterioration of the fabric.

Pilling

Can occur occasionally as a result of normal daily wear and should not be considered as a fault. There are many variables which can trigger pilling, including climatic conditions, atmospheric purity and user environment. Even specific clothing types (fleecy tracksuits etc.) can transfer pills from the clothing to the furniture fabric. As the fabric surface is rubbed, a single or small group of loose fibres on the surface begins to twist upon itself, forming tiny balls of 'pills'. Often the catalyst that starts this process is a foreign fibre or speck of dirt. Pilling can be successfully removed with battery operated pilling tools available from most haberdashery stores. 'De-pilling' only removes unsightly loose surface fibres and does not affect fabric performance.

Seam slippage

It is possible for fabrics which are tested for seam slippage and approved for upholstery use to display fraying problems. This may occur if the following recommendations are overlooked:

- Stitch lengths – a minimum of 8 - 10 seam stitches per inch (25mm).
- Seams – a minimum half inch (13mm) seam should be taken.
- Over locking – should be used for loose woven fabrics and for seat cushion seams.
- Taping – in some cases an additional safe-guard of stitching through a quarter inch tape along the seam may be necessary to prevent fraying in high-load areas (such as corner back cushions]. This may be done at the manufacturer's discretion after testing on individual designs.

Shrinkage

All fabrics are prone to shrinkage and it is important that sufficient allowances be made. An allowance of 3% is considered an acceptable industry standard.

Velvets

To protect against pile loss incurred when velvets are upholstered onto foam we recommend high wear areas be completely covered by Dacron or Calico. In particular, side and end panels of foam seat cushions should not be overlooked. We recommend curtains to be made with pile up. When velvet curtains are hung for the first time it is recommended that they be drawn across and finely sprayed with water. The spray should dampen but not soak the velvet. The curtains should then be left to dry and under no circumstances to be touched during this period. When the curtains are dry most creases and marks will have come out and the pile should have lifted to reveal the richness and lustre of the velvet. If initially cared for, the pile should continue to improve as the atmosphere lifts it. This process can continue for several months. Orders of velvet are protected by corrugated board. Despite this precaution, bruising can occur if the parcel is dropped or heavily crushed. If this occurs it is recommended that the fabric be unrolled and laid on the table either flat or in gentle folds and left for several days. This procedure will allow the pile to 'breathe' and recover naturally. Any severe bruising can be removed by gentle steaming.

Yellowing

Fumes and atmosphere in any room where tobacco is smoked will cause a yellow/brown stain on most fabrics. This is a particular problem in modern fabrics with a white or light background.