



Textile Tips

PERFORMANCE FABRIC

PERFORMANCE FABRICS... They're Notable, But Not New

What is "Performance Fabric"?

The term "performance fabric" is sometimes thought to describe one certain type of fabric or, at most, a narrow group of fabrics. In fact, the types of fabrics that fall into this category are many and varied.

Performance fabric is a very broad term that encompasses fabrics that offer some degree of increased resistance to any or all of the following: staining, fading, microbial growth, abrasion/wear. As you might guess, fabrics with these characteristics have been around for many years (Sunbrella was created in the 1960s).

Performance fabrics can be made using a wide variety of different fibers, but acrylic, olefin, nylon, and polyester are most common. Let's look at some of the pluses and minuses of these fibers.

Acrylic:

Fabrics made with acrylic fibers are resistant to mildew and are relatively easy to clean. Acrylic fibers used in performance fabrics



are typically solution-dyed (see section at end of this article), which gives them excellent resistance to fading.

Olefin:

Olefin has inherent performance qualities. It is naturally resistant to

chemicals, water-based stains, and mildew. Olefin is always solution-dyed. One of the biggest drawbacks for olefin fabrics is their tendency to absorb and hold oily soils and stains.

Nylon:

One of the least common fibers in performance fabrics, nylon is durable and effectively resists mold and mildew. Nylon stains easily if not treated. Like acrylic, nylon fibers used in performance fabrics are most often solution-dyed.

Polyester:

Polyester resists mildew and most water-based stains. Some polyester fibers are solution-dyed, but many are conventionally dyed (where dye is added after the fiber is created). Polyester is almost as oleophilic as olefin, meaning that it absorbs oils and tends to attract soil.

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Other Fibers:

Believe it or not, there are "performance fabrics" made with blends of synthetic and natural fibers. Even rayon has been used in some of these fabrics. Though these fabrics might offer a few of the advantages, they will never be as fade resistant as some of the 100% synthetic types.



showerhead-like device called a spinnerette.

If colored pigments are added to the liquid polymer before it is forced through the spinnerette, the resulting fibers will have color locked within the fiber itself. These pigmented fibers offer the ultimate in colorfastness/fade resistance.



removed with professional care.

Can Fiber-Seal help with performance fabrics?

Absolutely! When issues like these arise, Fiber-Seal is there to assist.

On The Bright Side

As always, the experts at your local Fiber-Seal Service Center are just a phone call away when you need assistance with performance fabrics... or any other soft surfaces.

What Is Solution Dyeing?

Most fibers, yarns and fabrics are conventionally dyed, but for synthetic fibers there is another method available: Solution dyeing. Synthetic fibers (including rayon) are formed by forcing a syrup-like polymer through tiny holes in a

Service, Service, Service!

At Fiber-Seal, we know that no fabric is perfect. Performance fabrics have their strengths, but none are bulletproof. For example, stains such as lipstick, crayon, ballpoint pen and oily foods do not just wipe up. They need to be

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