

MACHINE	HAND WASH
Very hot (85°C) to boil maximum wash	Hand-hot (48°C) or boil
Spin or wring	

MACHINE	HAND WASH
Warm (40°C)	
Warm rinse. Hand-hot final rinse. Drip-dry.	

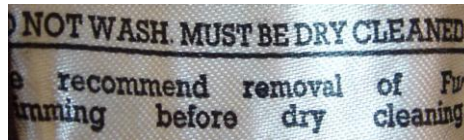
MACHINE	HAND WASH
Warm (40°C) medium wash	Warm (48°C)
Spin or wring	

Dating Collections Using Standardised Wash Codes On Garment Labelling

Wash code labels in garments are primarily used to guide us to the appropriate cleaning methods. Symbol based wash codes have evolved since 1966 and because they are standardised, these codes can be used to help date our textile from this period onwards. Before this time there was little or no instruction provided.

History of Care Labelling

With the introduction of a variety of new modern fibres that did not respond well to traditional cleaning methods, the need arose for a standardisation of the advice and labelling based on a greater knowledge of laundry processes and practises. In the 1950's, a text based system was used by a number of organisations, ad-hoc and none of which were standardised.



Eventually a standardised, symbol based system was created by the Home Laundering Consultative Council and the British Standards Institute. Starting as a national system it evolved into an international Textile Care Labelling Scheme (TCLS). The evolution that followed pushed the emphasis from boil washing cottons to remove germs, to the low temperature washing of synthetic fibres to freshen and reshape garments. The new requirements of the modern fibres revolutionised the laundry process as well as the machines and detergents associated with the process.

The need for a TCLS led to the establishment of a British aftercare Organisation: the Home Laundering Consultative Council. To achieve the standard, the council collaborated with national and international standards and aftercare organisations, as well as the textile and laundry industries.

Fact Sheet

The reverse shows a table of symbols used on textiles at different periods in time starting in 1966 and changing in 1976, 1980, 1982 and 1994. British and International standards evolved for several reasons with symbols being updated and added. The fact sheet was created with the aim to assist those caring for Textile Collections as another tool to date objects in their care. It is a result of a Master's dissertation at Southampton University entitled "Standards of Cleanliness: Caring for synthetic fabrics in Britain since the 1950".

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