

# COUNTER Sense

INTERNATIONAL FABRICARE INSTITUTE BULLETIN

## INSPECTION AT THE COUNTER

Many of the difficulties and complaints that arise between the drycleaner and the customer could be prevented by adequate inspection and communication at the counter. The following list may help when receiving and inspecting customer clothes at the counter:

- ❑ Be ready to meet and greet the customer when he/she enters the store.
- ❑ Counter, windows, floor, rails, and shelves clean and neat.
- ❑ Invoices, tags, pins, staples, swift tagger, and all necessary supplies are readily available.
- ❑ Properly dressed and groomed.

### INSPECTION CHECKLIST

When accepting clothes from the customer, if at all possible, the garments should be inspected in front of the customer. The following tips may assist the Customer Service Representative as he/she inspects the garment:

- ❑ Lay or spread the garment out flat; this will ease the inspection process and minimize the possibility of missing any stains or damage.
- ❑ Be sure to turn the garment over so that you check both sides.
- ❑ Check for rips, tears, snags, missing or damaged buttons, damage from use and wear, and color loss or fading, and note any of these conditions on the invoice.
- ❑ Ask the customer if he/she is aware of any stains that need special attention.
- ❑ When visible stains are present try to determine what they are by questioning the customer and complete a stain tag following company policy.
- ❑ Check the care label and follow any guidelines set by your company regarding specific types of garments and trims, such as beads or sequins, fancy buttons, and garments made from coated fabrics such as pleather.
- ❑ Suggest any extra services that may help the customer, such as repairs, water repelling, alterations, or any other service your plant offers.
- ❑ Make your customer aware of any specials your company is offering like spring discounts for household items.
- ❑ Invoice the garments while the customer is present so you both agree on the count and type.



- ❑ In the event the customer cannot wait to invoice and inspect the clothes with you, confirm his/her daytime phone number where you can contact him/her in the event that you discover any stains or damage that may harm the garment and would necessitate the customer's permission to process or repair the garment, or if there is any difference in the count and what the customer thought he/she brought in.
- ❑ When invoicing the garments be certain you are accurate. If the invoice is handwritten be sure it is legible. If there are any special concerns or requests be sure to flag that garment and make a note on the invoice.

### TROUSERS AND SLACKS

Inspect for:

- ❑ Loose or missing belt loops.



*Always check pants pockets for hidden objects and look for loose or missing belt loops. The pants pictured here have a broken belt loop.*

- ❑ Pull all pockets out: Check for holes and any items or objects left behind. If the customer is not present and anything of value is found, secure it in a safe place and indicate that on the invoice.
- ❑ Check cuffs to see if they are properly fastened and not untacked. If there are no cuffs check for fraying at the bottom.
- ❑ Inspect all zippers for proper operation; follow company policy about cleaning slacks with the zipper up or unzipped.
- ❑ If the trousers are lined turn them inside out so you can check for any stains or damage on the lining.

### SUIT COATS, BLAZERS, AND COATS

Inspect and perform the following:

- ❑ Pull all pockets out to be certain that nothing remains in them; also check for any holes that may need repair. If there are any make a note on the repair tag.
- ❑ Spread the coat out so the lining is exposed (see Fig. 1); check for any rips, tears, and worn or frayed areas (see Fig. 2).
- ❑ Pull sleeves so they are inside out and check for torn or frayed areas.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

- ❑ Turn the coat over and if there are belt loops check their condition.

### BLOUSES, DRESSES AND SKIRTS

Inspect and perform the following:

- ❑ Lay the garment out flat so all areas are exposed.
- ❑ Check the neckline for stains in the collar area. Also check the seams and fasteners.
- ❑ Check the bodice and waistband for stains and any damage.
- ❑ Check the skirt and hem for stains and any damage present.
- ❑ Turn the blouse, dress, or skirt inside out and repeat the above inspection.

### UPON THE CUSTOMER'S DEPARTURE YOU ARE READY TO TAG OR IDENTIFY THEIR GARMENTS

- ❑ Place the tag or identifying marker in a standardized location for each type of garment following company policy. This way anyone in the plant will be able to locate it.
- ❑ Re-check the count for accuracy.
- ❑ Re-examine garments for stains or damage.
- ❑ Check and empty all pockets and be sure to pat all linings at the bottom on coats and jackets for any hidden objects that may have fallen through the pockets.
- ❑ Remember specialty or flag tags for any special instructions.
- ❑ If tagging is the only responsibility, an individual using premarked strip tags with little writing can tag 103 garments per hour.

All of this may seem like a lot to do with each customer, but with proper training and practice it becomes very quick and easy. When new employees are hired make certain they completely understand the inspection process and how important it is to check the garments. You will be surprised how many complaints can be avoided by asking a few questions and thoroughly examining the items at the counter. ❑