businesscompanion
trading standards law explained

Labelling of textiles

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In this guide, the words 'must' or 'must not' are used where there is a legal requirement to do (or not do) something. The word 'should' is used where there is established legal guidance or best practice that is likely to help you avoid breaking the law.

Although the United Kingdom left the European Union (EU) in 2021, certain pieces of legislation (known as 'assimilated law') continue to apply until such time as they are replaced by new UK legislation, revoked or permitted to expire. This means that our guidance still contains references to legislation that originated from the EU.

This guidance is for England, Scotland and Wales

The Textile Products (Labelling and Fibre Composition) Regulations 2012 require all textile products to carry a label indicating the fibre content. If a product consists of two or more components with different fibre contents, then the content of each must be shown. Only certain names can be used for textile fibres, and these are listed in the Regulations along with a list of products that are not required to bear fibre content.

There is a general obligation to state the full fibre composition of textile products.

What is a textile product?

A textile product can be defined in any of the following ways:

- Raw, semi-worked, worked, semi-manufactured, manufactured, semi-made up or made up products composed of textile fibres
- Products containing at least 80% by weight of textile fibres (including furniture, umbrella and sunshade coverings)
- Textile parts of carpets, mattresses and camping goods
- Textiles incorporated in, and forming an integral part of, other products where textile parts are specified

Labelling a textile product

It is the responsibility of the manufacturer or importer into the UK to ensure that textile products carry a label indicating the fibre content. The label must be on the item or, in the case of multipacks, on the packaging.

The label must be in English.

The label must be durable, easily legible, visible and accessible. If the product is supplied to a wholesaler, then the indication may be contained within business documents - the invoice, for example. A textile product consisting of two or more fibres accounting for 85% of the finished product must be marked with the fibre followed by a percentage - for example, 'cotton 80%, polyester 15%, nylon 5%'.

If a product consists of two or more components with different fibre contents (for example, a jacket with a lining), then the content of each must be shown. Any decorative matter that makes up 7% or less of the product is excluded from the indication of fibre content. The word 'pure' must only be used where the garment is made up of only one fibre. The word 'silk' must not be used to describe the texture of any other fibre - for example, 'silk acetate' is not permitted.

Only certain names can be used for textile fibres; these are listed in Annex I to assimilated Regulation (EU) No 1007/2011 *on textile fibre names and related labelling and marking of the fibre composition of textile products* (see link in 'Key legislation' below). The list may be updated as technology produces new fibres. If you are using, buying or selling a fibre product with a name that does not appear on the list, contact your local Trading Standards Service for advice.

There are special provisions that relate to the required method of labelling for corsetry products, etch-printed and embroidered textiles, velvet and plush textiles (or textiles resembling velvet or plush), and floor coverings and carpets where the backing and pile are composed of different fibres.

Textile products sold in multipacks (such as floor cloths, cleaning cloths, handkerchiefs, bun nets and hair nets, wash gloves, face flannels, etc) of the same type and fibre composition may have inclusive rather than individual labelling (in other words, on the packaging of the multipack). The full list of products to which this allowance may be applied can be found in Annex VI to assimilated Regulation (EU) No 1007/2011.

Annex VII to assimilated Regulation (EU) No 1007/2011 contains information on textile product components that are not taken into account in determining fibre compositions.

Fur and other animal parts

Consumers must be made aware when textile products contain parts of animal origin, such as fur, leather, bone, etc.

The use of non-textile parts of animal origin must be clearly labelled or marked using the phrase 'contains non-textile parts of animal origin'. The label can contain further information on the parts of animal origin, such as mink fur or lambskin, but the mandatory phrase must always be used.

This also means that any mis-labelling (for example, labelling real fur as faux fur) is an offence.

Additionally, it is an offence to sell, import or export cat and dog fur, and products containing such fur. Similar provisions apply to the marketing of seal fur; these are enforced by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) rather than Trading Standards Services.

Vintage clothing

Second-hand clothes have to comply with the Regulations. However, it is rare for clothes made before, for example, World War II (many of which will have been handmade), to have the same detailed labelling as clothing made more recently. It is unlikely that sellers would be expected to provide that level of detail.

Advertisements, catalogues and e-commerce

Where products are advertised in such a way that they can be ordered by reference solely to the description in the advertisement, the Regulations require an indication of fibre content to appear in the advertisement. Advertisements include catalogues, the internet, circulars, price lists and trade literature.

Products that do not have to bear a fibre content indication

- Air-supported structures
- Animal clothing
- Artificial flowers
- Book covers
- Buttons and buckles
- Certain types of cordage, rope and string intended as components in other items
- Disposable articles (except wadding)
- Egg cosies
- Flags and banners
- Funeral products
- Gaiters
- Labels and badges
- Make-up cases
- Mobile phone and portable media player covers (with a surface area less than 160 cm^2)
- Muffs
- Old made up textile products
- Oven gloves and cloths
- Packaging (not new and sold as such - for example, used potato sacks)
- Painted canvas
- Pin cushions

- Protective requisites of sport (except gloves)
- Saddlery
- Safety items (for example, life jackets, parachutes)
- Sails
- Shoe cleaning cases
- Sleeve protectors
- Sleeve-supporting arm bands
- Slide fasteners
- Spectacle, cigarette and cigar, lighter and comb cases
- Stuffed pan holders
- Table mats having several components and a surface area not exceeding 500 cm^2
- Tapestries, including materials for their production
- Tea and coffee cosies
- Textile parts of footwear
- Textile products for base and underlying fabrics and stiffening
- Tobacco pouches
- Toilet cases
- Toys
- Travel goods
- Watch straps

Other legislation

In addition to the specific textile legislation, Part 4, Chapter 1 of the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 (DMCCA) prohibits misleading actions and omissions when describing products, as well as misleading prices. See 'Protection from unfair trading (criminal law)' for more information. For the time being, consumers' rights of redress are still covered by the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs); information on these rights can be found in 'Protection from unfair trading (consumers' rights of redress)'.

The Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA) is relevant to textile products, as it requires goods to be 'as described'. Any fibre composition claims made on labels, packaging, advertising or online listings must be accurate. Where textile descriptions are incorrect, this may constitute a breach of section 11 of the CRA, in addition to any breach of textile-specific labelling legislation. For more information on the CRA as it relates to goods, please see 'Selling and supplying goods'.

Trading Standards

For more information on the work of Trading Standards Services and the possible consequences of not abiding by the law, please see 'Trading Standards: powers, enforcement and penalties'.

In this update

Information about the Consumer Rights Act 2015 added.

Last reviewed / updated: July 2026

Key legislation

- Cat and Dog Fur (Control of Import, Export and Placing on the Market) Regulations 2008
- Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008
- Seal Products Regulations 2010
- Assimilated Regulation (EU) No 1007/2011 *on textile fibre names and related labelling and marking of the fibre composition of textile products*
- Textile Products (Labelling and Fibre Composition) Regulations 2012
- Consumer Rights Act 2015:
    - Part 1, Chapter 2
- Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024:
    - Part 4, Chapter 1

Please note

This information is intended for guidance; only the courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.

The guide's 'Key legislation' links go to the legislation.gov.uk website. The site usually updates the legislation to include any amendments made to it. However, this is not always the case. Information on all changes made to legislation can be found by following the above links and clicking on the 'More Resources' tab.

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