

ColorProse™

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Communicating Color Expertise To Color Professionals Worldwide

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Taking Care Of Standards

A retail company has asked that this edition of *ColorProse* address the issue of properly caring for fabric standards.

It's easy to overlook the tremendous creative energy that goes into developing seasonal fashion palettes, and to underestimate the importance of those small pieces of fabric distributed as standards to the financial and brand prosperity integrity of the retail company.

Until orders are filled and shades become obsolete, standards should be treated respectfully.

■ Standards should not be cut into smaller pieces. Engineered Color StandardsSM from Archroma Global Services are designed to allow four folds of fabric to be presented to a 1-inch spectrophotometer port. For most substrates, four thicknesses are the minimum necessary to give solid spectral data.

■ Keep the standards in a protected area until they are actually used. Avoid putting them in places where spills are likely to occur. Sometimes, the top of an office desk can be unhealthy for standards. One color office received a submit against a standard that had coffee spilled on it. The only good standard is a clean standard.

■ Some Engineered Color Standards from Archroma may have a slightly wrinkled appearance, especially those on woven cotton fabric. By agreement with the retail company, Archroma may, or may not, hot press standards to remove wrinkles. Hot pressing can affect some shades, compromising quality control if surface appearance is altered, or proper conditioning is not done prior to using the standard.

As a matter of practice, recipients of standards should never apply a hot press.

■ Avoid excessive handling with “dirty” hands. Light, bright shades are more susceptible to soiling, but blacks, navies, and darker shades are not immune. One major non-apparel industry, where color is critical to the final product, requires that all standards are kept in plastic bags until used, that handling is minimized and hands of the “handlers” are scrupulously clean.

■ Keep standards away from strong light unless they are actually being used. Textile dyes are not like ceramic tiles! Even the best dyes will fade after long exposure to strong light. A windowsill is not a good storage area for textile standards. Neither is the dashboard of a car. Desk drawers are better.

Thankfully, textile standards are much more stable to light than other substrates.

At Archroma we have seen a surprising number of cases in which quick-fading *paper* standards created on ink-jet printers were submitted to create *textile* standards. While some paper inks have excellent life, others fade on the briefest exposure to light.



Archroma Global Services, 4331 Chesapeake Drive,
Charlotte, NC 28216 Tel: 704.395.6502
www.archroma.com

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