

**LABELLING OF TEXTILE PRODUCTS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE
OF QUALITY, MAINTENANCE, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT**

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Abstract

Fundamental right of all consumers is the availability of necessary information to protect their own health. Information should be obtained from the marks referred to the product which they come into contact with. Marks are integral parts of everyone's life. We can see various types of marks at home, in stores and everywhere around us. Symbols indicate to the consumer the importance assigned to them in an opinion system (labelling scheme).

Key words

labelling, textiles, symbol

INTRODUCTION

Marks declare the level of quality (it should be stable) and the reliability of the product (commodity or service, respectively), and thus help the consumers to make more comfortable decisions what to buy. Among other things, they also contribute to increased loyalty of customers. Marks make the cooperation and communication between sellers, distributors and producers more effective. Label may be one of the instruments of sustainable development, environmental and safety policy. In the field of environment and safety, there is an effort to make the marks universal, i.e. to have the same meaning in different social cultures. Their symbols have the form of a geometric element. They represent a medium of receiving relevant information to mediate the specific knowledge. The symbols indicate to the consumers the importance assigned to them in an opinion system (labelling scheme) (14).

Labelling of textile products is an option to reduce the risk and it approaches the certainty that the product is safe. The basis for safe use of each product is to obtain adequate information about the product. This information should be provided by the manufacturer because he is responsible for introduction of the product to the market. To ensure high-level protection of

consumer, the community must contribute to the protection of consumer's health and safety. Products which are intended entirely to be used and got on the consumers' market should meet the requirements of Directive 2001/95/EC. Every product which is being launched to the market must be labelled (1).

The fundamental legislation in question is:

- Act No. 250/2007 Coll. on Consumer Protection and amendment of the Slovak National Council No. 372/1990 Coll. on misdemeanours as amended
- Slovak Government Regulation No. 404/2007 Coll. GPSD.

Another very important labelling of products placed on the market is:

- CE marking
- Slovak conformity mark C_{SK}
- Quality brand SK.

The CE mark certifies compliance of the product with the EU legislation and thus enables free movement of product within the framework of the European market. By placing the CE marking on a product, its producer declares his responsibility that the product complies with all the legal requirements for CE marking, which means that the product can be sold throughout the European Economic Area (EEA): 28 EU Member States, and the countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), namely Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein. The Slovak conformity mark C_{SK} of particular product certifies that the properties of the product meet the technical requirements for the product and, in the case of construction products, also complied with the technical requirements, and the conformity assessment procedures were observed. The Quality brand SK is owned by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the SR, and was released to its use in 2004, when the National program of the promotion of agricultural products and foodstuffs was established (2, 3).

CARE SYMBOLS OF TEXTILE PRODUCTS *GINETEX*

Care symbols of textile products arose at the end of the 50's of the last century after several international symposia on labelling the care of textile products. Impulse for the emergence of these symbols was particularly huge development in fibres and associated care of textile products. In the mid 50's of the last century, mainly natural fibres were used. At that time, maintenance was far easier; washing machine used mainly two programs: 95 °C for white textile and 60 °C for coloured textile. The other products were administered mostly with complementary information and washed by hands. The very dynamic development of chemical fibres called for the need for information of consumers about proper maintenance to prevent permanent damage of the product. The above mentioned symposia stimulated the need for symbols. There were only 4 symbols and they had a completely different look than today (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 The original Care symbols on textile products

In 1963, the international association of GINETEX registered the symbols as an international trade mark under the number 211 247. Since then, GINETEX has defined and disseminated the labelling system of care symbols and coordinated technical base at the international level. The rights to use the trade mark symbols of treatment are granted

exclusively by the GINETEX national committees in each country. Member States of 19 countries including Slovakia are represented in the GINETEX by so-called National Committees. Later changes concerned the symbols of maintenance and design; the symbol for tumbler drying was introduced under the influence the American market. Also, a highly precise and complex system of correct labelling of textile products with symbols of maintenance was elaborated and distributed in the GINETEX member states as a Technical Guide for labelling with the maintenance symbols. GINETEX enabled the emergence of the ISO 3758 International Standard – Textiles – The symbols for care, where the symbols, their principle and philosophy are thoroughly described, thus enabling the wide professional public to get familiar with them (15).

The current appearance and order of the symbols used for the labelling are shown in Fig. 2.



Fig. 2 Design and sequence of the symbols used for the maintenance of textile products at present

TECHNICAL DIRECTIONS REGULATING THE LABELLING OF TEXTILES

Application of safety markings in the field of maintenance and care of textiles implies not only from the efforts and requirements of state authorities, but also from the interests of producers and consuming public. Pictograms are generally the same, not only in Europe but also throughout the world. They have established the order in which they are stated: washing, bleaching, drying, ironing and professional textile treatment (Fig.1), (4, 5 and 6).

In 2012, the ISO 3758: 2012 International Standard Textiles - Care labelling code using symbols entered into force on.

On 1 September 2012, STN EN ISO 3758 Standard on Textiles. Treatment symbols was issued.

This International Standard establishes a system of graphical symbols intended for the use in the labelling of textile products, which provide information on the most demanding process, which will not cause irretrievable damage to the product during the treatment of textiles, and specifies the use of these symbols in the labelling of treatment. It is a matter of each manufacturer, importer and of the seller to ensure this obligation. It is important that the information required for the maintenance of the textile product was sufficiently comprehensible and unambiguous for the consumer, for example by its graphical representation. If the information is in the form of text, it must be referred to the national language.

WASHING	MACHINE DRYING	PROFESSIONAL WET CLEANING
Normal wash	Normal tumble drying	Professional wet clean
Mild action	Mild tumble drying	As above with mild action
Normal action	Do not tumble dry	As above with mildest action
Mild action		Do not wet clean
Normal action	IRONING	
Mild action	Hot iron (max 200C)	NATURAL DRYING
Very mild action	Moderate iron (max 150C)	Line dry
Normal action	Cool iron (max 110C)	Line dry in the shade
Mild action	Do not iron	Dry flat
Very mild action	PROFESSIONAL DRY CLEANING	Dry flat in the shade
Hand wash	Dry clean in chlorinated or non-chlorinated hydrocarbon solvent	Drip dry
Do not wash	As above with limits on drying temperature and additions of water	Drip dry in the shade
BLEACHING	Dry clean in hydrocarbon solvent	
Any bleach	As with limits on drying temperature and addition of water	
Oxygen bleach only	Do not dry clean	
Do not bleach		

Fig. 3 The textile maintenance symbols according to ISO 3758

SYMBOLS OF QUALITY SOTEX

Symbol that are presented on textile products provide consumers with some specific information on the quality of the product. Symbols are simple images that guarantee the wholesomeness. Pictograms are divided into three groups:

- Wholesomeness / healthiness
- Utility properties
- Purpose of use (7).

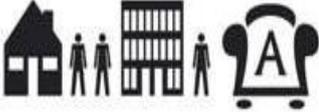
Group	Symbol	Description
Wholesomeness		This is statement of fulfilment of the requirements stemming from the law, taking into account the relevant limits for products designed for children under 3 years
Utility properties		The biggest problem is the colour of clothing, changing the dimensions and other mechanical properties like abrasability
Purpose of use		They characterize the intended use; from the aspect of consumer they are divided into products - home textiles and garments; of the household textiles there was most attention focused on the carpeting and upholstery fabrics

Fig. 4 Pictograms guaranteeing the wholesomeness of textile product

On the basis of the pictograms textile products can be divided depending on what activity the product is recommended.

Activity	Symbol	Activity	Symbol
Societal clothing		Biking	
Clothing employment		Fitness	
Outdoor		Winter sports	

Fig. 5 Distribution of textile products by activity (8)

LABELLING SCHEME FOR LABELLING THE ASPECTS OF QUALITY, ENVIRONMENT, SAFETY AND HYGIENE OF TEXTILE PRODUCTS

For the textile labelling some labelling schemes can be used which are aimed not only for quality but also safety, ergonomics, hygiene etc.

Fair Wear Foundation Verification in the sense Code of Labour Practices [9]		Oeko- Tex® Standard 100 [10]	
Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS); GOTS logo [11]		ECO SAFE [12]	

Fig. 6 Labelling scheme aimed at labelling of textile products

LABELLING SCHEME CONTROL UNION

Control Union offers a global one-stop-shop for a wide range of certification programs. It represents a wide variety of programs in agriculture, food, forest product, textiles and bio-energy (13).

OCS 100 – Organic Content Standard		IVN - Naturtextil	
OCS- Blended – Organic Content Standard		RDS- Responsible Down Standard	
CSS – Content Claim Standard			

Fig. 7 Labelling scheme Control Union

THE U.S. LABELLING REQUIREMENTS FOR TEXTILE

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) enforce labelling laws and acts in the United States. In general, textile and apparel products sold in the United States must be labelled with the following information: the fibre content, the country of origin, the manufacturer or dealer identity, and the care instructions. For a detailed description of these requirements and other important labelling information available on the FTC website – (17, 18).

Labels containing fibre content, country of origin, the identification of the manufacturer, importer, or other seller, and care instructions must be present at the time the end user takes possession of the good. Labels containing care instructions must be attached permanently to the item. While the labelling requirements do not apply until the product is ready to be sold to the end user, it is important to note that U.S. Customs and Border Protection may have different regulations, and the producing the labelling information for the goods being imported may be a determining factor in the clearance process. If goods are being shipped in an intermediate stage of manufacturing it is important that an invoice with the above information accompanies the goods (16).

CONCLUSION

Products available at the market should be health-safe and should not threaten human life and the overall safety of the consumer and must not pollute the environment. This means that there have to exist some security specifications and standards that each country has to adopt for any product. Consumers must be protected from any damage that could be caused by the product. Based on the knowledge, the consumer creates his/her own personal value of the product quality which helps him/her during the process of decision-making at buying the product. All external and internal features and characteristics of the product affect the

consumer's behaviour. Important role in consumer's behaviour is the safety and environmental labelling and brand. They provide some means of receiving the relevant information for the purpose of mediation of knowledge. Basic right of all consumers is the need for information enabling them to protect their own health. They obtain the information from the brands mentioned on the product which they come into contact with. Consumer market is increasing just like the competition between contractors. However, the supervision and inspection of the market are more and more difficult. It has to be clear that products situated at the market and stores are not absolutely risk-free. Insufficient or incorrect information can be presented on the product which can endanger the customer's health.

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