

Uniform Care Tips

UNIFORM CARE

You hand out uniforms with meticulous care and at the end of the year you inventory and store them in your school closet. But what happens to the apparel in between? Don't let it be a mystery! Provide proper washing instructions to team members and parents to ensure the longevity of the uniforms.

GENERAL TIPS

- Take the garment in for professional cleaning as soon as possible after staining occurs. If stains are left on the apparel too long, they can be impossible to remove.
- Minimize the use of deodorants, lotions, perfumes, hairspray and other chemicals in large amounts. Their compounds can fade colors on sequins and fabrics. Cover your shoulders with a towel before applying hairspray.
- Strong sunlight, artificial light, pressing (ironing) stains, excessive perspiration and water will all react with dyes causing fading or discoloration. Do not allow the students to store the uniforms in intense sunlight or heat, like the car!
- If food stains and oily substances are left to dry on apparel, it will eventually form a yellow or brown stain called oxidation. Clean any stain immediately.
- Do not place garment in airtight container or plastic bag. Use storage systems that allow fabric to breathe.
- Hang the uniform to dry.
- Be certain that the apparel is dry before cleaning.

DRY CLEANING

- Use professional dry cleaners only. Ask them to:
 1. Use a short, five minute cycle.
 2. Use Pechlorethylene ONLY.
 3. Use a maximum heat of 120 degrees.
 4. Do not steam or press garments.

SPOT AND STAIN REMOVAL (FOR WASHABLES)

- Lipstick and makeup: Put salad oil on the spot; launder after five minutes.
- Ink: Rub salt into the stain, soak overnight in buttermilk then launder. Or for ballpoint ink, spray with hairspray and rinse with water. For felt-tip ink use denatured alcohol in the immediate area and wash with dishwashing detergent.
- Blood: Immediately soak in cold saltwater. Make a paste with cold water and meat tenderizer. Or try hydrogen peroxide in the immediate area of stain.
- Grease: Use an oil solvent.

CLEANING METHODS

POLYESTER UNIFORMS (SHELLS & SKIRTS)

Machine wash cold, separately. No bleach. Tumble dry low. Most poly uniforms should not be dry cleaned. Check with your manufacturer about colorfastness for lettering and emblems, and specific care instructions.

BASIC DANCEWEAR

(These can include lycra styles without trim or fabrics.) Machine wash cold, separately. No bleach. Remove promptly from washer. (Plain water has chlorine in it to kill bacteria. Chlorine also acts as a bleach and soaking in plain water can cause fading.) Tumble dry low.

FRINGE-TRIMMED STYLES

Professional dry clean only. Use the dry cleaning instructions for sequin cloth garments. Fringe is extremely delicate and extreme care must be taken to ensure the garments stay in great shape. Fringe may look worn and possibly fray after repeated cleanings. This is the nature of delicate fabrics. Do not hand wash.

REFLECTION, HOLOGRAM AND FOIL STYLES

Place garment in cool water by repeated dipping. Use two tablespoons of mild liquid detergent in the cool water. Remove promptly. Hang to dry. Do not dry clean. NOTE: Metallic fabrics may dull with wear and repeated washings. Areas that incur abrasions may show some loss of foil, most notable under the arms and the seat area. Do not use hair spray, deodorant, or perfume while in costume as the agents will discolor and/or ruin the specialty fabrics.

VELVET GARMENTS

Machine wash cold separately. Hang to dry. No bleach.

SEQUIN COSTUMES

The two acceptable methods are dry cleaning (see earlier section) and hand washing. To hand wash, use cool water with a mild detergent. Hang to dry. Do not wash after dry cleaning the garment! Once a costume has been professionally dry cleaned, that process must always be used.

Care tips submitted by Sherise Ralston.

