

## CHENILLE

### “RENEWED INTEREST IN TEXTURES CREATING HUGE CHENILLE REVIVAL”

The above title was an article found in Furniture World that goes on to say, “In the past we’ve done some safe neutrals in chenille, and now we’re getting very deep and rich in colored chenille.”

As if we didn’t have enough problems with neutral chenille, now we are about to encounter a lot of colored chenille.

### WHAT IS CHENILLE?

One definition of chenille is “A fuzzy, caterpillar-like yarn, produced by locking short, cut fibers at right angles to the core thread. It creates a pile surface much like velvets, but not as dense.”

Chenille is an extremely difficult fabric to deal with when it comes to maintenance, spotting and cleaning. The pile fibers can dislodge and fall off with the mildest of agitation. Some chenille fabrics have a high percentage of rayon in them, which distorts dramatically when water-based substances come in contact with them. White and off-white chenille fabrics will often display varying shades of color from bleach white to light yellow on the same piece.

### COLOR CHANGES?

Many times what appears to be a color change or bleach spots is nothing more than nap distortion. This can also be seen on many kinds of velvets.

Off-white chenille fabrics as seen below, can take on anywhere from a yellowish cast to a bleached-white cast. Water-based chemicals can often bleach the off-white chenille.



Sunlight, back-coatings, nap distortion, and improper spotting techniques can all contribute to these apparent and sometimes permanent color changes.

### SPOT CLEANING

**TEST! TEST! TEST!** Without testing, spot cleaning will often result in unsatisfactory results, which could lead to purchases. Both wet-side and dry-side spotting chemicals can cause irreversible damage.

Water-based cleaners will usually distort or crush the nap, leaving a bleached appearance that may be impossible to restore.

Dry cleaning chemicals are generally safe as far as color and bleaching are concerned.

However, dry cleaning chemicals can be more destructive because they deteriorate back-coatings, which are often found on chenille fabrics. They loosen the chenille causing the pile fibers to fall out more readily.

## **CLIENT CARE**

Unless the fabric is thoroughly tested for compatibility with water-based product, Kleen-Tec or other mild dry-cleaning chemicals should be the only after-care products that should be used for spotting.

Damp dusting should also be done on a regular basis using dry-cleaning chemicals.

Cushions should be rotated monthly with light vacuuming. Caution needs to be used when vacuuming, not to over agitate the fibers due to the possibility of unwanted fiber loss.

If a water-based spill occurs it is usually better to wick-up the spill with the corner of a paper towel. Pressure form blotting can only help distort the pile fibers.

## **CLIENTS WITH CHENILLE NEED OUR HELP!**

Clients who have chenille need all the help they can get. Reducing absorbency with a FIBER-SEAL Brand protector can help limit the amount of nap distortion from spills.

Frequent damp dusting and vacuuming can prolong the useful life of the fabric and will lengthen the time needed between cleaning. Once a chenille fabric has become over soiled, it may be impossible to restore it to an acceptable level, so it is very important to do the maintenance.

## **ON THE BRIGHT SIDE**

Many manufacturers are finding better ways to construct chenille so the pile fibers are less likely to fall out. But remember the fiber used in construction is the determining factor of how the pile will react to water-based substances. Always test!

**AS WITH ALL FABRICS AND FINISHES...  
ALWAYS TEST THE CHEMICAL AND/OR  
PROCEDURE FIRST IN AN  
INCONSPICUOUS PLACE!**