

More Information...

Have You Been Bamboozled by Bamboo Fabrics? is an FTC consumer alert aimed at educating consumers that the soft “bamboo” fabrics on the market today are really rayon.

How to Avoid Bamboozling Your Customers, an FTC issued Business Alert, educating businesses that sell clothing and other textile products on how to label their rayon products.

For more information on advertising and labeling rayon and other textile products, see Threading Your Way Through the Labeling Requirements Under the Textile and Wool Acts.

These and other business guides, including Complying with the Environmental Marketing Guides, are at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/business.shtm>.

This Brochure is a Collaboration of:

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Texas State University-San Marcos
and

Coral Rose
Eco-Innovations Sustainable Textile Services



“With the tremendous expansion of green claims in today’s marketplace, it is particularly important for the FTC to address deceptive environmental claims, so that consumers can trust that the products they buy have the environmentally friendly attributes they want,” - David Vladeck, Director of FTC’s Bureau of Consumer Protection

“The FTC regulated labeling is only of value to consumers if it is seen to be truthful. The FTC will lose an important opportunity if it fails to clearly and publicly enforce its own standards in regards to the correct labeling of fibers to include generic fiber types,”- Dr. Gwendolyn Hustvedt, Textile Scientist and Consumer Advocate

For a copy of this brochure or more information on sustainable textiles contact:

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Are you Being Bamboozled?



How to Avoid Mislabeling

Guidance from
Consumer
Advocates

THE TRUTH ABOUT “BAMBOO”

The truth is, most “bamboo” textile products, if not all, are really rayon. Rayon is a manufactured polymer. Rayon is typically made using environmentally toxic chemicals in a process that emits hazardous pollutants into the air. While different plants, including bamboo, can be used as a source of cellulose to create rayon, there’s no trace of the original plant in the finished rayon product.

“No one would dream of labeling a product as “spruce” or “pine”, but because it seems vaguely credible that bamboo plants could be made into fiber with minimal processing, the process is never discussed.”

– Dr. Gwendolyn Hustvedt, Comment before the FTC #536013-00005 (6/30/2008)



Labeling Your Products

If you sell clothing, linens, or other textile products, Federal Regulations make you responsible for making truthful disclosures about the fiber content. If your product isn’t made directly of “bamboo” fiber — but is a manufactured fiber for which “bamboo” was the plant source — it must be labeled and advertised using the proper generic name for the fiber, such as rayon, or “rayon made from bamboo.”

To make claims about rayon from bamboo, like eco-friendly, antimicrobial or biodegradable, you must have substantiation. Competent and reliable evidence such as scientific tests and analyses from credible sources must be obtained to show that the claims are true.

The rayon manufacturing process uses toxic chemicals and results in the emission of hazardous air pollutants. This process is not considered eco-friendly by the FTC.

The FTC considers rayon products not biodegradable because they will not break down in a reasonably short time after customary disposal. Most clothing and textiles are disposed of either by recycling or sending to a landfill. Neither method results in quick biodegradation of rayon.

According to the FTC rayon made from “bamboo” has not been shown to retain any natural antimicrobial properties of the bamboo plant. The rayon chemical manufacturing process eliminates any such natural properties of the bamboo plant.

Update: FTC Press Release 8/11/09- Recently The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) charged four sellers of clothing and other textile products with deceptively labeling and advertising these items as made of “bamboo” fiber, when they are made of rayon.

