# DRY CLEANING & CARE LABELS:
## *When you don't get what you paid for!*

*Consumer Traps & Tips*

## Trap

Sharon from Palm Beach Gardens was quite distraught. The designer business suit she planned to wear to the shareholders meeting had shrunk after being dry-cleaned.  Although her dry cleaner said the suit was handled according to the care label, he was willing to compensate her for the damage, but at only a fraction of what the suit cost! Unbelievable!

## Tips

How could a suit be cleaned properly – according to label instructions, but still shrink?  Clothing is covered by the Federal Trade Commissions' (FTC) Care Label Rule. Consider the following tips:

- Clothing sold in the United States must have a permanent, legible care label attached in a conspicuous place stating accurate cleaning instructions.

- The FTC's Care Label Rule allows businesses to use a registered identification number, or RN, instead of its name on the fabric label. The FTC has an RN search page [Registered Identification Number Database | Federal Trade Commission (ftc.gov)](https://ftc.gov) to obtain the manufacturer's name and address.

- If the garment purchased doesn't have a care label, contact the FTC at [http://www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) or call 1-877-382-4357 to file a complaint.  Provide the name and location of the retailer where the garment was purchased.

- Ask the dry cleaner if they have a loss/damage policy before risking damage to your clothes. Look for it to be posted at the store or on the back of the receipt.

- The Dry Cleaning & Laundry Institute (DLI) recommends contacting the cleaner promptly when there is a problem.  If the care label procedures were not followed, the damage claim can be resolved by the dry cleaner.  Dry cleaners will often use the "Fair Claims Guide" published by the DLI which considers the age and condition of a garment to help determine its value.

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