

*Chemistry & Technology  
of Fabric  
Preparation & Finishing*

*by  
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# CHEMISTRY & TECHNOLOGY OF FABRIC PREPARATION & FINISHING

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## PREFACE

Global competition has caused the US textile industry to modernize and become cost competitive because developing nations have discovered that exporting textile products to the USA is an attractive way to enhance their economic growth. Their low labor costs have pressured domestic producers into replacing labor intensive manufacturing equipment with automated, sophisticated, efficient, high-technology machinery. The industry has focused on reducing costs, improving quality and developing quick turnaround and response scenarios. These forces have impacted the number and quality of the technical work force. Graduates with a background in computers and information management are making up a larger portion of the entry-level technical staff. Process engineers dedicated to improving quality and efficiency make up the rest. Most of the entry level work force has little or no exposure to textile education or training, they have to rely on experienced technologists to guide and train them. Unfortunately as the older technologists retire, they take with them valuable technical knowledge and know-how leaving the skeletal remains technically unsupported. Most of the technical information is in the form of supplier technical bulletins or in the files of one or two key old-time technologists. Very little is in written form, and what does exist, is not easily accessible to others needing the information. The new-hires are expected to perform their job assignment without the benefit of having trained under a technologist who understands the fundamentals of the process.

There are many references dealing with the subject of textile wet processing. Some are text books describing particular aspects of bleaching and dyeing. There are also a few volumes describing chemical finishing. These books, while filled with valuable information, are old and limited to fibers, fabrics and processes important at the time they were written. Some up-to-date information can be found in specific, single topic papers or bound compilation of research and technical conferences papers. Other sources are specific technical support bulletins issued by chemical or fiber companies. The literature is devoid, however, of books that survey the whole field in one volume and stress fundamentals rather than specific recipes and procedures.

The idea for this book started with the need to provide students in textile chemistry written material to support courses in dyeing and finishing, in particular fabric preparation and fabric finishing. I was disappointed that there was no single volume reference book which adequately covered the information I deemed important. In the beginning, course material was a compilation of class notes gathered from a multitude of sources. It soon became clear that a more complete, written monograph was needed to adequately convey the important chemistry and technology. There have also been numerous requests from industrial contacts for single volume reference material for people entering the field.

At the urging of my colleagues and industry peers, I have been persuaded to publish this collection of information so that anyone may have access to it without the laborious and time-consuming efforts required of me. As a reference source, I have used published information where possible. The book is arranged in two parts, preparation and finishing. In both sections, I have attempted to describe both the mechanical and process parameters, as well as the underlying chemistry behind each process. The major focus in describing the underlying chemistry is the fiber/chemical interaction; however, where possible, I have provided a brief review of the appropriate chemistry behind the various classes of chemical auxiliaries. Each part of the book is subdivided into a part that describes equipment and a part that describes unit operations. Some attempt is made to describe the stages in sequence, one that a typical greige fabric may follow. However, it is important for readers to understand that there is no one single correct way to perform textile wet processing. Each dyehouse has its own character, depending largely on the type of equipment and type of fabric it processes. This makes the selection of operating parameters dyehouse-specific and one may be faced with having to select from several options to achieve the desired end-product. Regardless of which option selected, the same final fabric properties must be met. To this end, I have stressed the objectives and fundamentals of each process. It has been my opinion over the years, that those operations with a technical staff well grounded in the fundamentals, ran more smoothly than one who relied on trial and error as a means of setting up their process.

Fabric preparation has been subdivided into singeing, desizing, scouring, bleaching, mercerizing, carbonizing and heat setting. Finishing is broken down into chemical and mechanical. Chemical finishing covers those treatments that alter the performance of the textile fabric where the chemical is the major component of the change. Mechanical finishing refers to certain types of mechanical devices that physically alters the fabric.

Contributing to the existence of this monograph is the age of computers and word processing. I would have never undertaken this task without the convenience and ease of compiling and moving the information about, something I would have never done by hand. It is my sincere hope that you will find the book valuable, and I welcome comments and suggestions for future revisions.

Charles Tomasino

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PART I</b>	
<b>FABRIC PREPARATION</b> .....	1
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	
<b>PREPARATION PROCESSES</b> .....	2
I. YARN PREPARATION EQUIPMENT .....	2
Slasher .....	3
II. FABRIC PREPARATION EQUIPMENT .....	4
A. Batch Machines .....	4
1. Becks .....	4
2. Jet Machines .....	5
3. Jig .....	6
B. Continuous Preparation Ranges .....	6
1. Continuous Rope Range .....	7
2. Continuous Open Width Range .....	9
a. <u>Applicators - Pads</u> .....	9
b. <u>Steamers</u> .....	9
c. <u>Open Width Washers</u> .....	10
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	
<b>CHEMISTRY OF YARN AND FABRIC PREPARATION</b> .....	13
I. YARN PREPARATION .....	13
A. Warp Size .....	13
1. Requirement of a Good Size .....	13
a. <u>Spun Yarns</u> .....	13
b. <u>Continuous Filament Yarns</u> .....	14
c. <u>General Requirements of a Good Size</u> .....	14
II. FABRIC PREPARATION .....	14
A. Warp Size and Desizing .....	14
1. Sources of Sizing Compounds .....	14
III. STARCH .....	15
A. Sources of Starches Used as Textile Size .....	15
B. Chemical Constitution .....	15
Amylose .....	15
Amylopectin .....	15
C. Starch Solutions .....	16
1. Retrograding .....	16
D. Modified Starch .....	17
1. Thin Boiling Starch .....	17
2. Dextrin .....	17
3. British Gum .....	17

4. Oxidized Starch .....	18
5. Starch Ethers .....	19
E. Desizing Starch .....	19
1. Enzyme Desizing .....	19
a. <u>Alpha and Beta Amylase</u> .....	20
b. <u>Effect of Temperature, pH and Electrolytes</u> <u>on Enzymatic Desizing</u> .....	20
2. Desizing with Acids .....	21
3. Desizing with Oxidizing Agents .....	21
4. Test for Starch .....	21
5. Typical Procedures .....	22
IV. CARBOXYMETHYL CELLULOSE (CMC) .....	22
A. Synthesis .....	22
B. Advantages and Disadvantages over Starch .....	22
V. POLYVINYL ALCOHOL (PVA) .....	23
A. Synthesis of Polyvinyl Alcohol .....	23
1. Polymerization of Vinyl Acetate .....	23
2. Hydrolysis to Polyvinyl Alcohol .....	23
B. Commercial Method of Manufacture .....	23
C. Solution Properties .....	24
D. Grades of PVA Available as Textile Size .....	25
E. Film Properties .....	26
F. Desizing PVA .....	26
1. Effect of Heat-Setting on Removal of PVA .....	26
a. <u>Dehydration of PVA</u> .....	26
2. Size Recovery .....	27
VI. ACRYLIC SIZES .....	28
A. Polyacrylic Acid .....	28
1. Synthesis of Polyacrylic Acid .....	28
2. Desizing Polyacrylic Acid .....	28
3. Acrylic Acid Co-Polymers .....	28
4. Effect of Heat-Setting on Removal .....	29
a. <u>Anhydride Formation</u> .....	29
VII. POLYESTER RESIN SIZES .....	29
VIII. OTHER ADDITIVES .....	30
<b>CHAPTER 3</b>	
<b>SCOURING</b> .....	31
I. COMPOSITION OF NATURAL FIBERS .....	31
II. CHEMISTRY OF OILS, FATS AND WAXES .....	32
A. Fats .....	32
B. Triglycerides .....	32
1. Hydrolysis of Triglycerides .....	33
a. <u>Acid Hydrolysis</u> .....	33



b. <u>Saponification</u> .....	33
C. Fatty Acids .....	33
Saturated Fatty Acids .....	34
Unsaturated Fatty Acids .....	34
III. SOURCES .....	34
A. Vegetable Sources .....	34
Castor Oil .....	35
Coconut Oil .....	35
Corn Oil .....	35
Cottonseed Oil .....	35
Olive Oil .....	35
Palm Oil .....	35
Linseed Oil .....	35
Tall Oil .....	35
Bayberry Wax .....	35
Japan Wax .....	36
B. Animal Sources .....	36
Tallow .....	36
Lard .....	36
Whale Oil .....	36
C. Chemical Wax .....	36
1. Fatty Alcohols .....	37
a. <u>Sources of Fatty Alcohols</u> .....	37
D. Mineral Wax .....	38
1. Paraffin .....	38
2. Microcrystalline Wax .....	38
E. Synthetic Wax .....	38
Fatty Acids .....	38
Fatty Alcohols .....	38
Polyethylene Glycols .....	38
PEG Esters .....	38
III. SOLVENT SCOURING .....	39
A. Advantages and Disadvantages .....	40
B. Common Solvents .....	40
1. Solvent Properties .....	40
Boiling Point .....	40
Specific Heat .....	40
Latent Heat of Evaporation .....	40
2. Non-flammable Solvents .....	41
IV. AQUEOUS SCOURING .....	41
A. Typical Formulation for Scouring Specific Fibers .....	41
1. Cotton .....	41
a. <u>Batch Scouring Procedure</u> .....	42
b. <u>Continuous Scouring Procedure</u> .....	42

2. Wool	42
a. <u>Wool Raw Stock Scouring</u>	43
3. Silk	43
4. Blends	44
Cotton	44
Rayon	44
Wool	44
Acetate	44
Polyester	44
B. Test for Effective Scouring	44
1. AATCC Test Method Number 79	44
V. WATER AS A RAW MATERIAL	44
A. Water Softening	45
1. Lime Soda Process	45
2. Cation Exchange	45
3. Sequestration or Chelation	45
VI. CLASSES OF SEQUESTERING AGENTS	46
A. Polyphosphates	46
1. Formation of Polyphosphates	46
2. Important Polyphosphates	46
Tetrasodium pyrophosphate (TSPP)	46
(Tripoly)sodium phosphate (TSP)	46
Sodiumhexameta phosphate	46
3. Advantages of Inorganic Phosphates	46
B. Organophosphonic Acids	46
1. Ethylenediaminetetra(methylenephosphonicAcid)	
EDTMP	46
a. <u>Advantages and Disadvantages:</u>	47
C. Aminocarboxylic Acids	47
1. Disodium-Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA)	47
a. <u>Advantages and Disadvantages:</u>	47
2. Nitrilotriacetic Acid (NTA)	47
D. Hydroxycarboxylic Acids	47
a. <u>Advantages and Disadvantages:</u>	47
VII. FORMATION OF COMPLEXES	48
A. Formation Constant	48
VII. SURFACTANTS	49
A. Physical Chemistry of Surfactant Solutions	49
B. Surface Tension	50
C. Critical Micelle Concentration	50
IX. CLASSIFICATION OF SURFACTANTS	51
A. By Use	51
Wetting Agents	51
Detergents	52

Emulsifying Agents .....	52
Dispersing Agents .....	52
B. By Ionic Charge .....	52
Anionic .....	52
Cationic .....	52
Non-Ionic .....	52
Amphoteric .....	52
X. NONIONIC SURFACTANTS .....	52
A. Ethoxylates .....	52
1. Typical Hydrophobes: .....	53
2. Water Solubility of Ethoxylated Nonylphenol .....	53
3. Cloud Point .....	53
4. Hydrophilic-Lyophilic Balance (HLB) .....	54
a. <u>Structure of Ethoxylated Nonylphenol</u> .....	55
b. <u>Effect of Ethylene Oxide on Solubility Balance</u>	
.....	55
4. Performance .....	56
a. <u>Wetting Times</u> .....	56
b. <u>Detergency</u> .....	57
XI. ANIONIC SURFACTANTS .....	57
A. Chemical Classification of Anionic Surfactants .....	57
1. Soaps .....	57
2. Sulfonates .....	58
a. <u>Alkylaryl Sulfonates</u> .....	58
b. <u>Sulfosuccinates</u> .....	58
c. <u>Sulfoethylesters</u> .....	58
d. <u>Sulfoethylamides</u> .....	58
3. Sulfates .....	58
a. <u>Sulfated alcohols</u> .....	58
b. <u>Sulfated ethoxylated alcohols</u> .....	58
4. Phosphate Esters .....	58
a. <u>Monoesters and diesters</u> .....	58
XII. CATIONICS .....	58

<b>CHAPTER 4</b>	
<b>BLEACHING .....</b>	<b>60</b>
I. MAJOR BLEACHING AGENTS .....	60
II. SODIUM HYPOCHLORITE .....	61
A. Bleaching Mechanism .....	62
B. Effect of pH .....	62
C. Effect of Time and Temperature .....	62
D. Effect of Metals .....	62
E. Antichlor .....	63

F. Uses	63
G. Typical Batch Procedure	63
a. <u>Formulation</u>	63
b. <u>Bleach Cycle:</u>	63
III. HYDROGEN PEROXIDE	63
A. Mechanism	64
B. Effect of pH	64
C. Effect of Time and Temperature	64
D. Stabilizers	64
1. Sodium Silicates	64
2. Organic Stabilizers	65
3. Phosphates	65
E. Uses	65
F. Typical Bleaching Procedures	66
1. Batch	66
a. <u>Bath Formulation</u>	66
b. <u>Bleach Cycle</u>	66
2. Continuous	66
a. <u>Bath Formulation</u>	66
b. <u>Bleach Cycle</u>	66
IV. SODIUM CHLORITE	66
A. Effect of pH	67
B. Bleaching Mechanism	67
C. Effect of Temperature	67
V. OTHER OXIDATIVE BLEACHES	68
A. Persulfates	68
B. Perborates and Percarbonates	68
C. Peracetic Acid	68
V. REDUCTIVE BLEACHES	68
A. Sulfur Dioxide	68
B. Sodium Dithionate (Sodium Hydrosulfite)	69
VII. TEST FOR DEGREE OF BLEACHING	69
A. Whiteness	69
B. Fluidity	69
VIII. OPTICAL BRIGHTENERS	70
A. Stilbene Type OBA	71

## CHAPTER 5

OTHER PROCESSES	72
I. MERCERIZING	72
A. Chain Mercerizing	73
1. Procedure	73
2. Points of Concern and Control	74
B. Caustic Concentration Units	74

C. Test for Mercerization . . . . .	75
1. Barium Number . . . . .	75
D. Mercerizing Fiber Blends . . . . .	75
1. Polyester/Cotton . . . . .	76
2. Cotton/Rayon . . . . .	76
E. Yarn Mercerizing . . . . .	76
F. Chainless Mercerizing . . . . .	76
II. SINGEING . . . . .	77
A. Points of Control . . . . .	77
III. CARBONIZING OF WOOL . . . . .	77
IV. HEAT SETTING . . . . .	78
A. Points of Concern . . . . .	78

**PART II**  
**FABRIC FINISHING . . . . . 80**

**CHAPTER 6**  
**MECHANICAL ASPECTS OF CHEMICAL FINISHING . . . . . 81**

I. FINISH APPLICATORS . . . . .	81
A. Padder . . . . .	81
1. Location of Padded Liquid . . . . .	82
B. Vacuum Slots . . . . .	83
1. Advantages of Vacuum Slots . . . . .	84
C. Kiss Rolls . . . . .	84
1. Factors Affecting Wet Pick-Up . . . . .	85
D. Engraved Roll Applicator . . . . .	85
E. Foam Applicators . . . . .	86
1. Knife Coaters . . . . .	87
2. Horizontal Pad . . . . .	87
3. FFT Applicator . . . . .	88
F. Location of One-Sided Applied Finishes . . . . .	89
II. DRYING AND CURING . . . . .	90
A. Migration . . . . .	90
III. DRYERS AND OVENS . . . . .	90
A. Dry Cans . . . . .	91
B. Roller Ovens . . . . .	92
C. Loop Ovens . . . . .	92
D. Tenter Frames . . . . .	93
E. Other Dryers . . . . .	96

**CHAPTER 7**  
**DURABLE PRESS FINISHES . . . . . 97**  
    I. WHY FABRICS WRINKLE . . . . . 97



a.	<u>Cellulose Hemiacetal</u>	110
b.	<u>Pendent N-Methylols</u>	110
c.	<u>Cellulose Crosslinks</u>	110
4.	Fabric pH and Formaldehyde Release	110
V.	METHODS OF REDUCING FORMALDEHYDE RELEASE	111
A.	Scavengers	111
B.	Modified DMDHEU	112
1.	Methylated DMDHEU	112
2.	Diethyleneglycolated DMDHEU (ULF)	112
C.	Important Features of Alkylated DMDHEU	113
VI.	NON-FORMALDEHYDE DP FINISHES	114
A.	Dimethyl-4,5, Dihydroxyethylene UREA (DMeDHEU)	114
1.	Synthesis	114
2.	Important Features	114
B.	Butanetetracarboxylic Acid (BTCA)	114
1.	Catalyst	115
a.	<u>Sodium Hypophosphite</u>	115
b.	<u>Sodium Phosphate</u>	115
C.	Reactive Silicones	116
D.	Liquid Ammonia	116
VII.	DURABLE PRESS CATALYST	116
A.	Bronsted Acids	117
a.	<u>Ionization Constant</u>	117
b.	<u>Hydrogen Ion Concentration</u>	117
1.	Latent Acids	118
a.	<u>Dissociation of Amine Hydrochlorides</u>	118
b.	<u>Dissociation of Ammonium Chloride</u>	118
c.	<u>Reaction of Ammonia with Formaldehyde</u>	118
B.	Lewis Acids	118
1.	True Lewis Acids	119
2.	Metal Hydrates	119
3.	Important Considerations	119
C.	Specific Catalyst and their Use	119
1.	Free Acids	119
2.	Latent Acids	120
3.	Metal Salts	120
4.	Hot Catalyst	120
D.	Buffers and Alkalinity	120
1.	Buffers	120
2.	Alkalinity	120
VIII.	CHEMICAL MECHANISMS	121
A.	Methylation	121
1.	Base Catalyzed Methylation	121
2.	Acid Catalyzed Methylation	122

B.	Alkylation of N-Methylol Compounds . . . . .	122
1.	Proton Activated Alkylation . . . . .	122
2.	Cellulose Crosslinking with Lewis Acids . . . . .	123
C.	Reaction of Alkoxylated Products . . . . .	124
1.	Crosslinking with Alkoxykated N-Methylol Compounds . . . . .	125
D.	Stability of Crosslink to Laundering . . . . .	125
1.	Hydrolysis of Cellulose Crosslinks . . . . .	125
IX.	FABRIC PROPERTIES . . . . .	126
A.	Durable Press Performance versus Add-on . . . . .	126
1.	Important Points . . . . .	126
B.	Effectiveness of Different Crosslinkers . . . . .	127
C.	Tensile, Tear and Abrasion Resistance . . . . .	128
1.	Points to Consider . . . . .	130
D.	Crease Recovery versus Curing Temperature . . . . .	130
1.	Points to Consider . . . . .	131
E.	Other Fabric Properties . . . . .	132
1.	Shrinkage . . . . .	132
2.	Yellowing . . . . .	132
3.	Chlorine Resistance . . . . .	132
a.	<u>Mechanism of Chlorine Damage</u> . . . . .	133
4.	Fabric Odor . . . . .	133

## CHAPTER 8

<b>HAND MODIFICATION</b> . . . . .	134
I. HANDBUILDERS . . . . .	134
A. Non-durable . . . . .	134
1. Starch . . . . .	135
2. Polyvinyl Alcohol . . . . .	135
B. Durable . . . . .	135
1. Thermosetting Polymers . . . . .	135
a. <u>Melamine/Formaldehyde</u> . . . . .	135
b. <u>Urea/Formaldehyde</u> . . . . .	135
2. Thermoplastic Polymers . . . . .	136
II. FABRIC SOFTENERS . . . . .	136
A. Coefficient of Friction . . . . .	137
B. Viscosity . . . . .	137
C. Other Points of Concern . . . . .	137
D. Softener Selection Summary . . . . .	138
E. Raw Materials . . . . .	139
1. Raw Material Sources . . . . .	139
a. <u>Fat Derived Raw Materials</u> . . . . .	139
b. <u>Petrochemical Derived Raw Materials</u> . . . . .	139



III. SOFTENER CLASSIFICATIONS	140
A. Anionic Softeners	140
1. Sulfates	140
a. <u>Fatty Alcohol Sulfates</u>	140
b. <u>Sulfated Fatty Acid Esters</u>	141
2. Sulfonated Fatty Amides and Esters	142
a. <u>Sulfoethyl Fatty Esters (IGEPO N A)</u>	142
b. <u>Sulfoethyl Fatty Amides (IGEPO N T)</u>	142
3. Properties of Anionic Softeners	142
a. <u>Advantages</u>	142
b. <u>Disadvantages</u>	143
B. Cationic Softeners	143
1. Amine Functional Cationic Softeners	144
a. <u>Primary Fatty Amines</u>	144
b. <u>Difatty Amines</u>	144
c. <u>Fatty Diamines</u>	144
d. <u>Cationic Amine Salts</u>	144
2. Fatty Aminoesters	144
a. <u>Synthesis</u>	145
3. Fatty Amidoamides	145
a. <u>Synthesis of Amidoamides</u>	145
b. <u>Synthesis of Amidoamide Salt</u>	145
4. Imidazolines	145
a. <u>Synthesis</u>	146
5. Quaternary Ammonium Salts	146
a. <u>Synthesis of Monofatty Quats</u>	146
b. <u>Synthesis of Difatty Quats</u>	146
c. <u>Synthesis of Imidazoline Quats</u>	147
6. Properties of Cationic Softeners	147
a. <u>Advantages</u>	147
b. <u>Disadvantages</u>	147
C. Nonionic Softeners	147
1. Polyethylene Emulsions	148
a. <u>Composition of Polyethylene Emulsions</u>	148
2. Ethoxylated Nonionic Softeners	148
a. <u>Ethoxylation with Ethylene Oxide</u>	148
b. <u>Esterification with Polyglycol</u>	149
c. <u>Typical Ethoxylates</u>	149
3. Silicone Chemistry	149
a. <u>Formation of Organofunctional Reactive Silanes</u>	149
b. <u>Reaction of Monochlorosilanes with Water</u>	150
c. <u>Reaction of Dichlorosilanes with Water</u>	150
d. <u>Reactions of Trichlorosilanes with Water</u>	150

e. <u>Reaction of Hydrogen Silanes with Water</u> . . . . .	151
4. Silicone Softeners . . . . .	151
a. <u>Dimethyl Fluids</u> . . . . .	151
b. <u>Methylhydrogen Fluids</u> . . . . .	152
c. <u>Amino Functional Silicones</u> . . . . .	152
d. <u>Epoxy Functional Silicones</u> . . . . .	152
5. Properties . . . . .	153
a. <u>Advantages</u> . . . . .	153
b. <u>Disadvantages</u> . . . . .	153

## CHAPTER 9

<b>REPELLENT FINISHES</b> . . . . .	154
I. PHYSICAL CHEMISTRY OF WETTING . . . . .	155
A. Work of Adhesion . . . . .	155
B. Critical Surface Tension . . . . .	156
C. Contact Angles in Real Systems . . . . .	158
D. Repellent Finishes . . . . .	158
II. HYDROCARBON HYDROPHOBES . . . . .	158
A. Paraffin Waxes . . . . .	158
B. Fiber Reactive Hydrocarbon Hydrophobes . . . . .	159
1. N-Methylol Stearamide . . . . .	159
a. <u>Synthesis and Reactions</u> . . . . .	159
2. Pyridinium Compounds . . . . .	160
a. <u>Synthesis and Reactions</u> . . . . .	160
3. Resin Formers . . . . .	160
a. <u>Synthesis of Melamine Wax Type Water</u> <u>Repellents</u> . . . . .	161
4. Metal Complexes . . . . .	161
a. <u>Synthesis and Reactions</u> . . . . .	162
III. SILICONE WATER REPELLENTS . . . . .	162
A. Synthesis of Methyl Hydrogen Fluids . . . . .	163
B. Crosslinking Reactions . . . . .	163
1. Hydrolysis of Si-H . . . . .	163
2. Condensation of Silanols . . . . .	163
C. Application to Fabrics . . . . .	163
D. Advantages and Disadvantages . . . . .	163
IV. FLUORO-CHEMICAL REPELLENTS . . . . .	164
A. Commercial Products . . . . .	165
1. Synthesis and Reactions . . . . .	165
a. <u>Monomer Synthesis</u> . . . . .	165
b. <u>Emulsion Polymer Synthesis</u> . . . . .	165
3. Applied to Fiber . . . . .	166
B. Effect of Perfluoro Side-Chain . . . . .	166
C. Effect of Polymer Backbone . . . . .	167

D. Add-On	167
E. Extenders	168
V. REPELLENT FINISHING WITH FLUOROCHEMICALS	168
A. Rainwear	168
B. Stain and Soil Retardancy	169
1. Upholstery Anti-Soil Finishes	169
VI. CARPET ANTI-SOIL TREATMENTS	170
A. Fluorochemical Finishes	170
B. Other Carpet Antisoil Treatments	170
1. Light-Scattering Fibers	170
B. Stain Blockers	171

## CHAPTER 10

SOIL-RELEASE FINISHES	172
I. SOILS	172
A. How Fabrics are Soiled	173
II. SOIL REMOVAL	173
A. Particulate Soil	173
B. Oily Soils	173
1. Roll-up Mechanism	174
2. Roll-up Thermodynamics	174
III. SOIL RELEASE CHEMICALS	177
A. Acrylic Soil Release Finishes	177
1. Polymethacrylic Acid PMAA	177
2. Methacrylic Acid - Ethyl Acrylate Co-Polymers	178
a. <u>Mechanism</u>	179
3. Practical Considerations and Fabric Properties	179
D. Dual Action Fluorochemical Soil Release	180
1. Composition of Polyme	180
2. Mechanism	181
2. Practical Considerations and Fabric Properties	182
E. Hydrophilic Soil-Release Finishes for 100 % Polyester	182
1. Polyoxyethylene Co-Polymers	182
2. Sulfoisophthalic Acid Co-Polymers	183
3. Practical Considerations and Fabric Properties	184
IV. OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS	184
A. Non-Ionic Detergents	184
B. Soil Release Tests	185
1. AATCC Method 130	185
2. Release Point	186
a. Rp Determinations	186
b. <u>Application of Rp Measurements</u>	187
3. Geometry of Yarns and Fabrics	188

## CHAPTER 11

<b>FLAME RETARDANT FINISHES</b> .....	189
I. THEORY OF COMBUSTION .....	190
II. COMBUSTION OF CELLULOSE .....	191
III. FLAME RETARDANCY .....	193
A. Feedback Mechanism .....	193
B. Char Formation .....	195
1. Reactions Leading to Char Formation .....	196
C. How Certain Elements Work .....	196
1. Boron .....	196
2. Phosphorus and Nitrogen .....	196
3. Halogens .....	197
IV. FLAME RETARDANT CHEMICALS AND PROCESSES FOR CELLULOSE .....	198
A. Non-Durable .....	198
1. Boric Acid/Borax .....	198
2. Diammonium Phosphate and Phosphoric Acid .....	198
3. Sulfamic Acid and Ammonium Sulfamate .....	198
B. Durable .....	198
1. Tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)Phosphonium Derivatives .....	198
a. <u>Tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium Chloride</u> <u>(THPC)</u> .....	199
b. <u>THPC-Urea Precondensate</u> .....	199
c. <u>Tetrakis(hydroxymethyl)phosphonium Hydroxide</u> <u>(THPOH)</u> .....	200
2. N-Methyloldimethyl Phosphonopropioamide (PYROVATEX CP) .....	200
3. Fyrol 76 .....	200
4. Antiblaze 77 .....	201
5. Phosphonic and Phosphoric Acid Derivatives .....	201
V. RETARDANT SYSTEMS FOR SPECIFIC FIBERS .....	201
A. Rayon Additives .....	201
1. Thiophosphate (SANDOFLOM 5060) .....	202
2. Decabromodiphenyl Oxide (DBDPO) and Antimony Oxide .....	202
3. Phosphazines .....	202
B. Polyester .....	202
1. Decabromodiphenyl Oxide (DBDPO) .....	203
2. Tris-(2,3-Dibromopropyl) Phosphate (TRIS) .....	203
3. Antiblaze 19T .....	203
C. Nylon .....	204
1. Thiourea-Urea-Melamine .....	204
2. Halogenated Systems .....	204
D. Polyester /Cotton Blend .....	204
1. Decabromodiphenyl Oxide - Antimony Oxide .....	204

E. Wool	205
1. Dyebath Exhaustible Finishes	205
a. <u>Chlorendic Acid and Tetrabromophthalic Anhydride</u>	205
b. <u>Titanium Complexes</u>	205
c. <u>Hexafluoro-Zirconates</u>	205
VII. FLAMMABILITY TESTS	206

## CHAPTER 12

OTHER FINISHES	209
I. ANTIPILL FABRIC FINISHING	209
A. Mechanism of Pilling	209
1. Pill Formation	210
2. Pill Build-up	210
B. Factors Affecting Pill Formation	210
1. Fiber Variables	210
a. <u>Denier of Synthetic Fiber</u>	210
b. <u>Fiber Tenacity</u>	210
2. Yarn Variables	211
a. <u>Yarn Twist</u>	211
b. <u>Hairy Yarns</u>	211
c. <u>Yarn Spinning Methods</u>	211
3. Fabric Construction	211
C. Preparation and Dyeing	211
D. Fabric Finishing	211
1. Film Forming Binders	212
2. Durable Press Reactants	212
3. Fabric Softeners	212
4. Singing and Shearing	212
5. Heat-setting	213
E. Summary	213
II. ANTISTATIC FINISHES	214
A. Causes of Static	214
B. Problems Caused by Static Electricity	214
D. Mechanism of Control	215
1. Static Eliminators	215
2. Antistatic Agents	215
3. Fiber Polymer Modification	216
E. Non-Durable Antistatic Agents	216
1. Cationic Materials	217
2. Non-Ionic Materials	217
F. Durable Antistatic Finishes	217
1. Composition	218

<b>CHAPTER 13</b>	
<b>MECHANICAL FINISHING</b>	219
I. COMPACTING - SHRINKPROOFING	219
A. Why Fabrics Shrink	219
B. Sanforizer	220
1. Compactor Head	222
B. Friction Calendar Compactors	223
C. Overfeed Pin Tentering	226
II. CALENDARING	226
A. Types of Calendars	227
1. Swizzing Calendars	227
2. Chasing Calendars	227
3. Friction Calendars	229
4. Compaction Calendar	229
5. Embossing Calendar	229
6. Schreiner Calendar	230
B. Construction of the Rolls	230
1. Pattern Rolls	230
2. Bowls	231
3. Crowning	231
4. Auxiliary Equipment	232
III. RAISING	232
A. Sueding	232
1. Multi-Cylinder Sueders	232
2. Single Cylinder Sueder	233
3. Abrasive Covered Rolls	233
4. Advantages and Disadvantages	234
B. Napping	235
1. Nappers	235
a. <u>Double Acting Nappers</u>	235
b. <u>Knit Goods Napper</u>	236
c. <u>Single Acting Napper</u>	237
d. <u>Napper Wire</u>	238
IV. SHEARING	239
A. Shearers	239
V. POLISHING	241
VII. CORDUROY CUTTER	242
VIII. DECATING	243
A. Semi-Decating	244
B. Continuous Decating	244