

GUIDE '10 TO A SHATNEZ-FREE HOME

INTRODUCTION

This Information is current only at the time of publication

Frequently Asked Questions:

- What types of clothing need shatnez testing?
- Garments from which countries should I avoid?
- Can I tell from the label if a garment is non-shatnez?

When shopping for clothing, the Jewish consumer wants to be sure that his purchase is shatnez –free.

Unfortunately, the information generally available to the consumer is very limited and occasionally misleading. Outlined below are the sources of this information and an explanation of their inadequacies.

Content Labels

By Federal law, all garments are required to have a label listing the content of the fabric. However, only the main shell fabric of the garment is included in this requirement. The content of linings, reinforcements, and internal components of the garment are not listed on the label. In addition, any fiber making up less than 5% of the content is not identified by name, but listed as “other fibers”. Even decorations and embroidery on the outside of the garment are only referred to as “exclusive of ornamentation”.

Besides the deficiencies in the labeling law, the problem is further compounded by the government’s laxness in enforcing these laws. Many companies, knowing that they have nothing to fear from an enforcement agency, do not bother to accurately identify the fibers used in their products, and may even deliberately misrepresent their content in order to boost sales. Consumers should make a habit of reading the content label in order to avoid obvious shatnez.

Retailer’s claims

A storeowner or salesperson cannot possibly be familiar with all of the components and fabrics incorporated in the garments they sell. Even the factories that manufacture clothing are often unaware of, and are not required to know, the content of internal reinforcements used in their products. Because of this lack of

information, even a shomer shabbos retailer or manufacturer cannot be relied upon to claim that his merchandise is shatnez-free. This applies even though the clothing was manufactured especially for him, and even if he was present at the factory during production. In addition, many retailers will falsely testify that a particular garment was tested and found non-shatnez. All garments pre-tested by an authorized shatnez laboratory will carry an official label.

Tailors and unqualified testers

There are some tailors and other people who claim to know shatnez testing. While they may be familiar with the basic elements of testing, they have not been trained in the complexities of garment construction and identification, and they do not keep up-to-date with the constant stream of new developments in the field. Only a certified shatnez tester, who has received extensive training and who is informed of the latest problems and procedures, can be relied upon to ensure that one’s clothing is shatnez-free.

Since all these sources cannot be relied on for information about shatnez, where can one obtain the knowledge to avoid shatnez problems? To address this need, the International Association of Professional Shatnez Testers and Researchers has compiled a chart of clothing and household items, the shatnez problems they can have, and their testing requirements. This information, presented on the following pages in chart form, is based on years of experience and input from our network of expert testers all over the world. The information contained in this guide is current at the time of publication. Changes are constantly occurring and it is important to keep up to date. Updates via email will inform you of all the latest changes and new alerts. You can also contact your local shatnez tester for advice on these issues. To receive the emails, contact: shatnezhedqtrs@yeshivanet.com

ITEM	DETAILS	REQUIRES TESTING?	COMMENTS
Alterations/Tailoring	See “Tailoring”		
Army/Navy Surplus	Military-type garments, especially European, including coats, hats, uniforms, etc, are likely to contain extensive shatnez due to their durable construction.	Testing is required.	When purchasing these items, which are usually non-returnable, bear in mind that the shatnez may be so extensive that the garment cannot be repaired.
Bandages		Do not require testing.	
Baseball gloves	May contain felt pads of recycled material. However some are filled with pure virgin synthetic fibers.	Halachic opinions on this complex issue vary widely.	
Bed linens		Do not require testing.	
Bekeshes	Even though the external fabric is usually silk or synthetic the internal construction could contain wool. Linen has also been found on occasion. Testing is recommended.		Tish bekeshes that do not have a lining do not need to be tested.
Belts, leather		Do not require testing	
Belts,Fabric		If has a linen-look, reprocessed look, or if it lists wool or “other fibers”, it should be tested.	
Blankets/Quilts		Blankets made of wool or “mixed fibers” or has an appliqué, should be tested. Down and polyester-filled quilts do not need testing.	Hand-made blankets, such as those made in India or purchased in an Arab shuq, should be tested.
Blouses/dresses/jumpers (including children’s)	All wool or wool blend, linen or linen blend, linen-look fabric, lists “other fibers,” or has an appliqué, trimmings etc requires testing. Cottons and poly-cottons do not need testing. Rayons and silks that have a linen-look require testing.		In the case of a snap-on linen collar on a wool dress, consult your Rov.
Boots (men’s, women’s and children’s)	Felt or fleece boot linings may be wool, while stitching may be linen.	Boots require testing if they are lined with wool or fleece.	Removable boot liners may contain recycled materials.
Caps & Berets	Caps may contain shatnez in the fabric or lining.	Have it tested when fabric is wool, tweed, linen or linen-look.	
Capes- See sweaters			
Cardigans – see sweaters			
Carpet/Rugs	Carpet manufactures are producing carpets and area rugs made of wool and linen.	Non-woollen carpets do not require testing. House calls are available at most shatnez laboratories for those who wish to have their carpets tested.	There are many halachos pertaining to the use of a shatnez carpet. Generally, one may not be covered by it nor touch it with their bare skin (lying on it or walking barefoot).
Chairs – see couches			

ITEM	DETAILS	REQUIRES TESTING?	COMMENTS
Coats (men's, women's and children's)	<p>Down coats, anoraks, and parkas do not require testing if lining is polyester or down-filled.</p> <p>Windbreakers, Shearlings do not require testing.</p> <p>Children's coat manufactures use reprocessed material in shell fabrics, linings and internal components.</p>	Wool coats require testing.	Raincoats - See Raincoats
Coats-Fur	May be stitched, lined, or padded with wool and/or linen.	Testing is required.	
Costumes	<p>Homemade costumes are often made of many fabrics and can contain shatnez.</p> <p>Military uniforms often contain shatnez. See "Army/Navy Surplus."</p> <p>Costume rentals [including Tuxedos] often contain shatnez.</p>	<p>All clothing bought from consignment shops for Purim or performances should be tested.</p> <p>Children's manufactured clown and animal costumes for example, do not need testing.</p>	Use caution when sewing costumes for performances, etc. Since the fabrics used are often remnants, care should be taken to ensure that they are not shatnez.
Couches, sofas and chairs	<p>Upholstery fabric – is usually made of synthetic materials or cotton.</p> <p>Stuffing – may contain reprocessed material.</p> <p>Most sofas manufactured in Israel prior to 1980 contain shatnez.</p>	If the upholstery fabric is wool, linen or has a linen look the item should be tested for shatnez.	In the case of furniture found to contain shatnez, the halacha regarding its use varies according to the circumstances.
Curtains		<p>Textured or linen-look curtain fabrics may contain linen and/or wool and should be tested for shatnez.</p> <p>Smooth or plain fabrics do not require testing.</p>	Halacha dictates that curtains in one's home cannot be shatnez, since one may wrap oneself in it. (See Yoreh Deah 301:11)
Custom-made clothing	Any lined custom-made garment, such as skirts, suits, jackets, and coats, require extensive testing.	Shatnez testers around the world constantly report custom-made garments that were guaranteed non-shatnez by the tailor, yet were subsequently found to contain shatnez.	
Earmuffs		Do not require testing.	
Embroidery kits – Needlepoint's	Embroidery, crewel, and needlepoint sets can contain a linen canvas. Wool yarn is also commonly used.	A needlepoint that is shatnez one should refrain from draping over one's lap while making it.	A picture mounted in a frame, may be hung on one's wall even if it contains shatnez.
Fabrics and trimmings	Fabrics and trimmings sold at fabric stores could be mislabelled, since they are often transferred through many dealers (such fabrics are usually factory leftovers sold through jobbers in odd lots).	All fabrics, trimmings etc. used in sewing of a garment should be tested to ensure that wool and linen are not combined in the same garment.	Stores located in Orthodox Jewish neighbourhoods have been found to carry shatnez fabrics.

ITEM	DETAILS	REQUIRES TESTING?	COMMENTS
Gloves	<p>The yarn used in inexpensive knit gloves may have been constructed from reprocessed materials and therefore could contain threads of wool and linen.</p> <p>The inner lining of inexpensive work gloves can also be of reprocessed material.</p>	<p>If lining or outer fabric has a linen-look, reprocessed look, or if it lists wool or “other fibers” or has an appliqué, it should be tested.</p> <p>Impurities i.e. pieces of broken threads is a sign of reprocessed material.</p>	Ski-type gloves with Thinsulate linings or leather gloves that are fur lined do not need testing.
Handbags		If made from linen or wool or has a linen look testing is required.	
Hat’s, Felt [black] men’s & boy’s	Standard felt “black hats” are constructed of rabbit hair, beaver fur, and in rare cases wool.	No testing is needed.	
Hat’s, Felt women’s		Do not require testing, unless it has a pompom, piping, appliqué or embroidery.	
Hats, fur (men’s and women’s)	<p>Russian fur hats are commonly found to contain linen canvases and wool felts.</p> <p>Chinese fur hats are commonly found to be lined with reprocessed materials.</p>	All fur hats should be tested.	
Items that do not require testing	Bandages, bed linens, bow ties, cotton and poly-cotton shirts, doll’s clothing, earmuffs, jogging suits, knitted sport shirts, leather belts, pyjamas, all leather or vinyl sneakers, suspenders, tichels, towels, undergarments, wigs, yarmulkes,		
Jogging suits		No testing is necessary.	
Knit hats - children’s		All wool hats require testing. All other hats do not require testing, unless there is a pompom, piping or appliqué.	
Knitting yarn	May contain wool and linen.	Multi-coloured or linen-look yarns should be tested.	Content labelling on knitting yarn is usually accurate.
Linen garments		Require testing	
Material - see Fabric			
Mattresses	<p>Stuffing – may contain reprocessed material.</p> <p>Exclusive mattresses have been found to contain wool and linen</p>	Standard mattresses do not require testing.	
Mittens	.	Do not require testing, unless there is a pompom, piping or appliqué.	
Pants – see Trousers			
Pillows, bed		Do not require testing.	
Pillows, throw	<p>Embroidered throw pillows may have wool embroidery on a linen fabric.</p> <p>Inexpensive pillows maybe stuffed with recycled material, which may include wool and linen.</p>	Testing is required.	Pillows containing shatnez may not be used.
Pajamas		Do not require testing.	

ITEM	DETAILS	REQUIRES TESTING?	COMMENTS
Potholders & Oven mitts	<p>Oven mitts and potholders are often insulated or quilted with reprocessed materials that can contain shatnez (i.e., threads and scraps of wool and linen).</p> <p>Oven mitts and potholders made for kosher kitchens, marked “Milk”, “Meat” etc., have been found insulated with reprocessed material. The halacha clearly states that potholders and gloves, which serve to protect one’s hands, may not be shatnez. (Yoreh Deah 301:12)</p>	When purchasing oven mitts, the consumer can readily determine if there is a shatnez concern. The insulation material is usually exposed inside the mitt at the seam. A pure white or off-white stuffing is not a problem. If the stuffing material is colorful, i.e. contains colored threads and fibers, it is reprocessed material and should be avoided.	
Quilts		Polyester- and down-filled quilts do not need testing.	
Raincoats	An expensive raincoat may contain shatnez in its internal construction. In addition, any wool-blend liner may be made of reprocessed fabric.	Wool, as well as those with a woollen zip-out liner, requires testing. Inexpensive raincoats that do not contain any wool do not need testing.	Acrylic pile and “Thinsulate” zip-out linings do not contain shatnez.
Robes and housecoats		Wool or Linen robes should be tested.	Robes labelled as pure wool have been found to contain reprocessed fiber.
Russian clothing	The Russian garment industry makes extensive use of linen and wool in all types of garments. All Russian textile items must be carefully checked for shatnez before they are used.		
Scarves	Solid colour wool scarves generally do not contain shatnez. Multi-coloured, knitted scarves or ones that list “other fibers” require testing.		
Shirts (Cotton/Poly-cotton)	Consult your Rov regarding wearing a linen shirt with a wool sweater etc.	Do not require testing.	
Shoes (men’s)		Do not require testing.	
Shoes (women’s and children’s)		Shoes covered with tweed, plaid or linen-look fabric require testing.	
Skirts	The primary concern is the fabric. In addition, in European countries, linen may be used in the lining and reinforcements.	If made from linen or wool or has a linen look testing is required.	
Sleeping bags	Sleeping bags are often stuffed with shredded rags and textile waste, similar to the pillows mentioned earlier.	Testing is required.	
Slippers	Wool or linen slippers should be tested for shatnez. Non-wool slippers may contain reprocessed padding in their soles.		
Sneakers		Do not require testing unless covered with tweed, plaid or linen-look fabric	
Socks	Socks rarely contain shatnez, except for “Gold toe,” which approximately twenty years ago produced a line of wool socks with linen-reinforced toes.		
Sofas – see Couches			

ITEM	DETAILS	REQUIRES TESTING?	COMMENTS
Sports gear	Boxing gloves, hockey equipment, and other padded sports gear are usually stuffed with recycled shredded textile waste.	Testing is required.	
Stuffed toys	Teddy bears and other stuffed toys may contain reprocessed stuffing. If they do testing is required.		
Suits and jackets (men's & boy's)	Suits can contain shatnez. Even 100% synthetic and 100% silk suits may contain wool and linen in their internal construction.	Testing is required.	An experienced tester should do both testing and removal of shatnez.
Suits (women's)	Linen-look fabrics have been found to be mislabelled and to contain wool and linen. Fabrics containing "other fibers" should be tested to determine their content.	Testing is required same as men's suits.	Increasing numbers of suit fabrics are mislabelled, and may contain wool and linen in the shell fabric.
Suspenders		Do not require testing.	
Sweaters	Any sweater that its content label lists any percentage of wool, cashmere, mohair, alpaca, cashgora, angora, linen, or ramie, and those that list "other fibers" can have shatnez in its fabric or construction. Therefore testing is required in all of the above. However 100% Silk, Acrylic or Cotton sweaters do not need testing, unless they have an appliqué, pompoms, embroidery or those that are knitted with novelty yarns.		
Tablecloths		Linen tablecloths with embroidery should be tested for wool.	Tablecloths of shatnez may not be used.
Tailoring and alterations	Tailors in Europe may use linen threads. American tailors do not use linen thread. Any shoulder pad, piece of material etc added by a tailor or seamstress should be tested to determine their true content.		
Talleisim, cotton	There are no shatnez problems. However, many "cotton" begodim are actually made of a polyester/cotton blend. This raises a shailoh regarding the requirement of tzitzis on such a garment, with consequent problems of brocho levatolo and of carrying on shabbos. Consult your Rov regarding this matter. A shatnez tester can verify the actual content of the beged.		
Talleisim, wool	Turkische talleisim manufactured in Tunisia were found to contain linen. There have been isolated incidents a number of years ago of fancy attorohs from Israel being made with linen thread. Currently no such problem exists.	If the Talis has a hashgochah no testing is necessary.	Incidents have occurred of wool talleisim being mended with linen threads or linen patches. All materials used in repair should be tested to ascertain their content.
Thread	Normal sewing machine thread cannot be linen.	Button thread, upholstery thread, and thread which appears a little thicker than normal sewing machine thread may be linen.	They should be checked so as not to sew into a wool garment.
Tichels		Do not require testing.	

ITEM	DETAILS	REQUIRES TESTING?	COMMENTS
Ties	Tie linings often contain wool. Therefore, linen ties always need testing. Polyester ties with a textured surface may also contain linen in the fabric. Silk ties are generally free of shatnez, except those from Spain, E.E.C. or Italy that could have a wool/ linen blend in their inner lining.		
Towels		Do not require testing.	
Trousers/slacks		All trousers made of wool or linen should be tested.	Any trousers that have a linen-look fabric should be checked.
Tuxedos		Require testing.	If one is unable to have a tuxedo tested, a local shatnez laboratory should be consulted.
Undergarments		Do not require testing.	
Upholstery fabric	Usually made of synthetic or cotton materials.	If made with wool or linen, the fabric should be tested (see couches).	
Vests/waistcoats (men's/women's)		Require testing if made of wool or linen.	
Wigs		Do not require testing.	
Yarmalkas		Do not require testing.	
Yarns – see Knitting yarns			

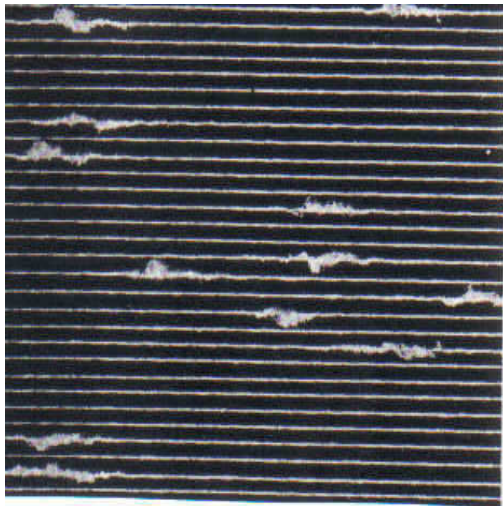
The Basic Guidelines: What Linen look fabrics look like

Garments made of “**linen look**” fabrics require checking

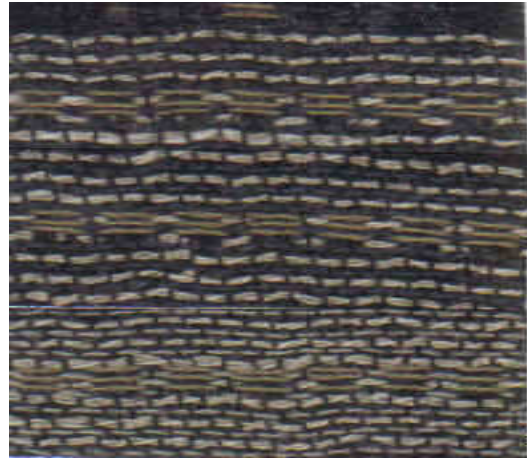
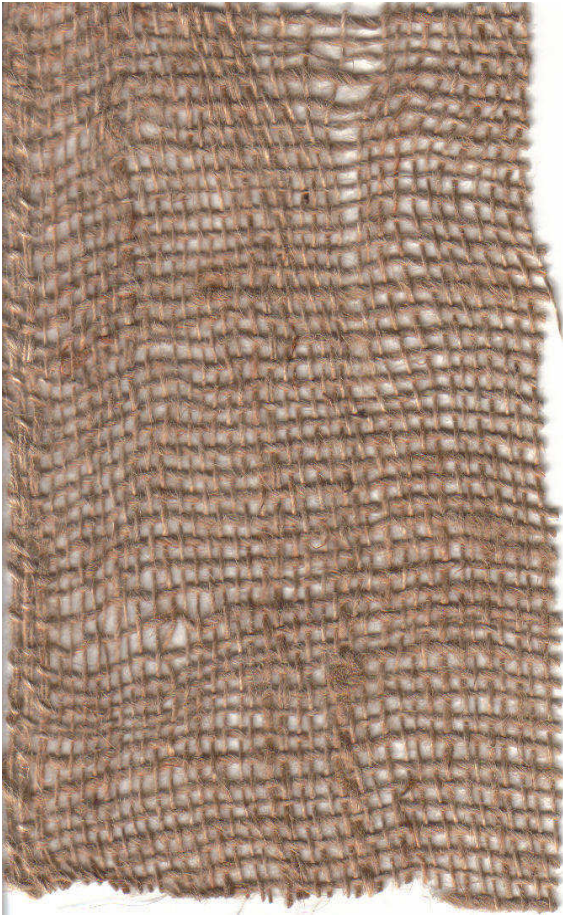
Disclosure of wool and linen is often missing on the label. Fabric dealers are also unaware of true fiber content. Therefore, linen-look fabrics may contain wool and linen and be intrinsically Shatnez even if no wool and linen is listed in its content label.

Linen-look fabrics can be recognized, by having one of the following characteristics:

- 1) Balls (I.E. Slubs) or streaks throughout the fabric



2) Yarns of uneven thickness



Tweed, textured and multi-colored fabrics may contain wool and linen and be intrinsically Shatnez even if no wool and linen is listed in its content label

1) Tweed and textured fabrics



2) Multi-colored fabrics



Reprocessed fabrics may contain wool and linen and be intrinsically Shatnez even if no wool and linen is listed in its content label

The opinions of the poskim vary regarding the use of reprocessed garments that have already been purchased. However, most rabbonim agree that it is preferable to avoid purchasing items containing reprocessed fabrics.

The term “other fibers” on content labels usually indicates the presence of reprocessed fiber. Testing of a reprocessed fabric will occasionally reveal wool and linen, which would make the garment shatnez.

In addition, it is recommended to repair items containing reprocessed components when this does not involve great expense (e.g. shoulder pads).

Shoulder pad filled with Reprocessed material



Pillow filled with Reprocessed material



Gloves padded with Reprocessed material



Slipper filled with Reprocessed material

