

# Guide '07

## 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 labelling 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](mailto:Shatnezhedqtrs@yeshivanet.com)

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ITEM	DETAILS	REQUIRES TESTING	COMMENTS
Alterations/Tailoring	See "Tailoring"		
Army/Navy Surplus	All military-type garments, 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.	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. Testing is recommended.		Tish bekeshes that do not have a lining do not need to be tested.
Belts, leather		Do not require testing	
Blankets/Quilts	Down and polyester-filled quilts do not need testing.	Blankets made of wool or "mixed fibers" should be tested.	Hand-made blankets, such as those made in India or purchased in an Arab shuq, should be tested.
Blouses/dresses/jumpers (including children's)	The external fabric, as well as any trimmings, patches, collars, and cuffs, are all areas of concern. Any wool blend, linen blend, linen-look fabric, or any fabric containing "other fibers," requires testing. Cottons and poly-cottons do not need testing. Rayons and silks that have a linen-look require testing as they may be blended with wool or linen.		In the case of a snap-on linen collar on a wool dress, consult your Rov.
Boots (men's, women's and children's)	Usually do not require testing.	Boots require testing if they are lined with wool or fleece.  Felt or fleece boot linings may be wool, while stitching may be linen.	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, or linen look.	
Cardigans – see sweaters			
Carpet/Rugs	Non-woollen carpets do not require testing.  Carpet manufactures are producing carpets and area rugs made of wool and linen.	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			

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Coats (men's, women's and children's)	Down coats, anoraks, and parkas do not require testing if lining is polyester or down-filled. Windbreakers, Shear lings do not require testing. Children's coat manufactures use reprocessed material in shell fabrics, linings, sleeves, and internal components.	All wool coats require testing.	
Coats- raincoats - See Raincoats Fur- See fur coats			
Costumes	Homemade costumes are often made of many fabrics and can contain Shatnez. Military uniforms often contain Shatnez. See "Army/Navy Surplus." Children's manufactured clown and animal costumes do not need testing.	All clothing bought from consignment shops for Purim or performances should be tested.	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	Upholstery fabric – is usually made of synthetic materials or cotton. If the fabric is wool or linen the item should be tested for Shatnez. Stuffing – may contain reprocessed material. Check the labels on the article as in this case they are usually accurate.	In the case of furniture found to contain Shatnez, the halacha regarding its use varies according to the circumstances.	Most sofas manufactured in Israel prior to 1980 contain Shatnez. Those made more recently are mostly of synthetic fiber.
Curtains	Textured or linen-look curtain fabrics may contain linen and/or wool. Smooth or plain fabrics do not require testing.		Halacha dictates that curtains in one's home cannot be Shatnez, since one may wrap oneself in it. (See Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 176:7)
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 - Needlepoints	Embroidery, crewel, and needlepoint sets can contain a linen canvas. Wool yarn is also commonly used.  Needlepoint kits often contain a linen canvas and wool yarn. Once the project is completed, the canvas will not be visible and it will look like a wool fabric.	A needlepoint that is Shatnez one should refrain from draping over one's lap while making it.	A picture mounted in a frame, however may be hung on one's wall even if it contains Shatnez. (See Yoreh Deah 301: )
Fabrics and trimmings	Fabrics and trimmings sold at fabric stores are often mislabelled, since they are often transferred through many dealers (such fabrics are usually factory leftovers sold through jobbers in odd lots).	All fabrics, trimmings, thread, etc. used in a sewing project 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.

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Felt hats	Standard felt “black hats” are constructed of rabbit hair, beaver fur, and in rare cases wool.	No testing is needed.	
Fur coats	May be stitched, lined, or padded with wool and/or linen.	Standard testing required.	
Gloves	Inexpensive knit gloves that contain impurities may have reprocessed threads and could contain wool and linen.  Inexpensive work gloves could have impurities in their inner lining. The impurities may come from reprocessed threads and could contain wool and linen.	If lining or outer fabric has a linen-look or if it lists “other fibers” or has an appliqué, it should be tested.	Ski-type gloves with Thinsulate linings do not have any Shatnez problems.
Handbags		If made from linen or wool testing is required.	
Hats, fur (men’s and women’s)	Requires testing.	All hats from Russia/Eastern Europe/China should be tested.	
Items that do not require testing	Yarmulkes, earmuffs, undergarments, cotton and poly-cotton shirts, knitted sport shirts, jogging suits, suspenders, bandages, wigs, sneakers, leather belts, pajamas, bed linens, tichels, towels, doll’s clothing, bow ties.		
Jogging suits	In the rare cases where wool and linen were used in these items, the content was listed on the label.	No testing is necessary.	
Knit hats - children’s	Does not require testing, unless there is a pompom, piping or appliqué.		
Knitting yarn	Fancy textured yarns may contain wool and linen.	Multi-coloured or textured yarns should be tested.	Content labelling on knitting yarn is usually accurate.
Linen garments	Requires testing.		
Material - see Fabric			
Mattresses		Do not require testing.	
Mittens, woollen	Generally does not require testing, unless there is a pompom, piping or appliqué.	If yarn is fancy, textured or multi-coloured, it may contain wool or linen.	
Oven mitts and potholders	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>When purchasing oven mitts, the consumer can readily determine if there is a Shatnez problem. 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 colourful, i.e. contains coloured threads and fibers, it is reprocessed material and should be avoided.</p> <p>Oven mitts and potholders made for kosher kitchens, marked “Milk”, “Meat” etc., have been found insulated with reprocessed material containing Shatnez. The halacha clearly states that potholders and gloves, which serve to protect one’s hands, may not be Shatnez. (Yoreh Deah 301:12)</p>	
Pants - see Trousers			
Pillows, bed		Do not require testing.	

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Pillows, throw	Embroidered throw pillows may have wool embroidery on a linen fabric. Inexpensive pillows maybe stuffed with recycled material, which may include wool and linen.	Testing is required.	Pillows containing Shatnez may not be used.
Pajamas		Do not require testing.	
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, require 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 robes made in Europe occasionally contain linen in the belt.	Woollen 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 (men's) - Cotton/Poly-cotton		Do not require testing.	
Shoes (men's)		Do not require testing.	
Shoes (women's)	Shoes covered with fabric require testing.		
Ski caps	Those made in USA and Canada do not need testing. If they are made in Europe, they may have Shatnez in the stitching, and should be checked.		
Skirts	The primary concern is the fabric. See Blouses/dresses. In addition, in some European countries, linen may be used in the lining and reinforcements.	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.	
Socks	Socks rarely contain Shatnez, except for "Gold toe," which once produced a line of wool socks with linen-reinforced toes.		
Sofas - see Couches			
Sports equipment	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.		

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Suits and jackets (boys')		Testing is required same as men's suits.	Linen-look fabrics have been found to be mislabelled and to contain wool and linen. Fabrics containing "other fibers" must also be tested.
Suits and jackets (men's)	Suits can contain Shatnez. Even 100% polyester and 100% silk suits may contain wool and linen in their internal construction.	Both testing and removal of Shatnez should be done by an experienced tester.	Increasing numbers of suit fabrics are mislabelled, and may contain wool and linen in the shell fabric.
Suits (women's)		Testing is required same as men's suits.	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.
Suspenders		Do not require testing.	
Sweaters (men's)	See Women's sweaters	Wool & linen sweaters require testing.	The status of sweaters changes frequently. Consult your tester for updates.
Sweaters (women's)	Any sweater containing wool, linen, or ramie can have Shatnez in its fabric or construction. Especially suspect are sweaters with fancy embroidery or that are knitted with novelty yarns, as well as those that list "other fibers" on the label. 100% Silk, Acrylic or Cotton sweaters do not need testing.		The highest incidence of Shatnez sweaters is in those from the Far East.
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 threads. When a tailor adds a shoulder pad, it should be checked.		Patches of scrap materials used in tailoring should be tested to determine their 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 you Rov regarding this matter. A Shatnez tester can verify the actual content of the beged.		
Talleisim, wool	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.	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	Generally does not require testing	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.	

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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 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	See suits, men's		If one is unable to have a tuxedo tested, a local Shatnez laboratory should be consulted.
Undergarments		Do not require testing.	
Upholstery fabric	Generally does not require testing	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 with wool or linen.	Wool or linen fabric should be tested.	
Wigs		Do not require testing.	
Yarmalkas		Do not require testing.	
Yarns - see Knitting yarns			

## Notes

### **Linen-look fabrics:**

These fabrics may contain both wool and linen and be intrinsically Shatnez. Additionally, they can contain wool or linen, which is of concern when combining the material with other fabrics and components in a garment, or when mending a garment made from such fabric.

A linen-look fabric can be recognized by the following characteristics:

- Yarns of uneven thickness in the fabric.
- Presence of "slubs," i.e. little balls or fluffs throughout the fabric.
- Thick brown fibers in the yarn.

### **Reprocessed fabrics:**

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

Testing of a reprocessed fabric will occasionally reveal wool and linen, which would make the garment Shatnez.

The term "other fibers" on content labels usually indicates the presence of reprocessed fiber.

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