Abrasion resistance: Ability of a fiber, yarn, or fabric to maintain physical properties or appearance despite surface friction.

ACT® Performance Guidelines: In order to make fabric specification easier, ACT member companies adopted a body of popular tests that measure important performance criteria (abrasion, flame resistance, wet and dry crocking, etc.) for fabrics in the contract interiors market. www.contracttextiles.org

American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists (AATCC): The world’s largest society devoted to the advancement of textile chemists, particularly in textile wet processing. www.aatcc.org

Angora: The soft hairs of the Angora goat or the Angora rabbit, often blended with wool for soft hand and added luxury.

Antimicrobial finish: Chemical treatment applied to a fabric to combat growth of disease-causing microbes, general bacteria, infectious diseases, and various targeted organisms.

Backing/back-coating: A polymer or resin treatment applied to the back of a fabric to provide enhanced performance characteristics, including stability, seam integrity, reduced fraying and curling, and better physical performance.

Barrier cloth: 1. A nonporous layer of nonwoven material laminated to the back of a fabric during finishing; the layer will not allow fluids to pass through and is most commonly used in healthcare applications. 2. A flame-retardant material used to create an FR barrier between fabric and foam in upholstered furniture.

Basket weave: A variation on plain weave in which two or more warp yarns interlace with two or more filling yarns, creating a fabric that resembles the surface texture of a woven basket.

Batch dyeing: A dyeing process in which textile materials, usually 100 to 1,000 kilograms by weight, are loaded into a dyeing machine and dyed together in a batch.

Bio based product: A commercial or industrial product (other than food or feed) that utilizes biological products or renewable domestic agricultural (plant, animal and marine) or forestry materials.

Blanket: A blanket, also called a sample blanket, is a selection of various warp and filling combinations woven in small sections for the purpose of selecting color combinations for a given yarn-dyed or stock dyed fabric design or construction.

Blend: A yarn created when two or more staple fibers are blended and spun into yarn or when two or more single-fiber yarns are woven together to form a fabric. Fibers are often blended to achieve desired performance characteristics or a heathered aesthetic.

Blending: The process of taking raw fiber and combining different amounts of various colors in order to achieve the desired yarn color once it is carded and spun.

 BLOCKaide®: The name of True Textiles in-house water and oil stain repellent finish.

Bouclé: A novelty yarn with bumps and loops; it is used to create a fabric that exhibits a knotty, loopy surface texture.

Box motion: The map of how many yarns and in what order are used in each specific pattern.

Breaking strength: The load required to rupture fiber, yarn, or fabric during a tensile test. Breaking strength is commonly referred to as the “tensile strength” of the material. The most commonly cited breaking-strength test for contract fabrics (ASTM D5034 the ‘grab’ method) consists of mounting rectangular fabric specimens in the jaws of a suitable tensile testing machine, and moving the jaws apart in the same plane as the fabric under specific conditions until the fabric ruptures. Breaking strength is reported as the average amount of force required to cause rupture of the specimens. Note that “breaking strength” is not a term used to describe the tear resistance of a fabric.

Brush pill test ASTM D3511: One of several test methods designed to assess the propensity of a fabric to form fuzzy balls on the surface due to abrasion during use. The Brush Pill test consists of first rubbing fabric specimens in a circular motion against a standard nylon brush under specific load conditions in order to raise fibers from the surface of the fabric. The second part of the test consists of rubbing pairs of brushed specimens against each other using the same motion and the same load conditions to induce the formation of pills. The specimens are then rated for pill frequency by comparing them to a series of reference photographs representing a five-step scale: Class 5 = No pilling Class 4 = Slight pilling Class 3 = Moderate pilling Class 2 = Severe pilling Class 1 = Very severe pilling. See also pilling.
cabled yarn: A yarn formed by twisting two or more plied yarns together.

CAD: Computer Aided Design.

calendering: A finishing process in which fabric is passed through heated rollers to produce special effects such as high luster, glazing, moiré, and embossed surfaces.

California Technical Bulletin 133 (CAL TB 133): A large, open-flame test for upholstered seating developed by the California Bureau of Home Furnishings and Thermal Insulation. The test is required for seating in certain California, Boston, NY/NJ Port Authority, and other occupancies. The test is intended to qualify upholstered furniture for use in “high-risk” occupancies such as healthcare facilities, penal institutions, daycare facilities, and buildings where free and easy egress is not always possible during a fire evacuation. CAL TB 133 is a test for furniture; it is not a fabric test. The test method consists of exposing the seating area of upholstered furniture to an intense flame from a square-shaped burner for 80 seconds. The testing takes place in a standard room instrumented to record the mass loss of the test object, the temperature at the ceiling and at the 4-foot level, and smoke opacity at the 4-foot level. Exhaust gases are collected and analyzed for carbon monoxide (CO) generation and to determine both the peak heat release and the total heat release of the burning furniture. Pass/fail criteria apply to each of these measurements. www.bhfti.ca.gov

carding: The process in the manufacturing of spun yarns in which the staple fiber is aligned and formed into a continuous strand called “sliver.” The production of sliver is the first step in the textile operation that brings staple fiber into a form that can be drawn and then twisted into spun yarn.

chenille: A yarn of any fiber made by locking short cut fibers onto a core yarn to create a caterpillar-like pile. Usually used as a filling yarn in fabric that is also referred to as chenille.

chip: The solid form of a polymer before being melted or dissolved for extrusion.

colorfastness: The ability of a material to resist color change or color transfer when exposed to various physical and environmental conditions during processing, storage, or use. Although dozens of tests evaluate aspects of colorfastness, panel and upholstery fabrics are most commonly tested for Colorfastness to Light (AATCC 16) and Colorfastness to Crocking (AATCC 8).

colorways: The number of colors in a color line for any given fabric pattern. Also see sku.

COM: See customer’s own material.

combing: The yarn manufacturing process that follows carding, further refining, removing short fibers and waste, and aligning the fibers in preparation for spinning.

commercial match: The commonly used term to describe acceptable color variation from a color standard.

construction: How a particular pattern is woven and which components are used. For example, jacquard, plain weave, basket weave, dobby.

cotton: A highly absorbent natural vegetable fiber composed of almost pure cellulose from the cotton plant. Takes color well, especially in mercerized form, which swells the fiber and increases its luster.

creel: A rack that holds spools and bobbins of yarn.

crepe: A fabric with a pebbled texture created either by a crepe weave construction or by hard-twist filling yarns, chemical treatment, or embossing.

crocking: Transference of color from a yarn or fabric onto another fabric or surface by rubbing. Fabrics or yarns may be tested for colorfastness to crocking by AATCC Test Method 8 for woven fabrics or AATCC Test Method 116 for printed fabrics. These tests consist of rubbing a dry piece and a wet piece of white cotton fabric against the test specimen for 10 double strokes under prescribed loading conditions using a Crockmeter. The white fabric is then examined for color transfer and evaluated against one of two scales: the AATCC Chromatic Transference Scale (preferred), or the AATCC Gray Scale for Staining. On both scales, Grade 5 is equivalent to no color transfer, while Grade 1 represents a very severe degree of color transfer.

cross-dyeing: A method of dyeing yarn or fabric constructed from two or more fiber types by using dyes with different affinities for the different fibers.

customer’s own material (COM): A customer’s choice of any material other than the standard fabric offered by the furniture manufacturer.

cut yardage: Fabric in less than full-bolt or roll increments (average 50 yards). Cut yardage orders are determined by the yardage required for the specific project.
damask: A jacquard or dobby woven construction with floral or geometric designs characterized by contrasting warp-faced and filling-faced satin weaves resulting in a reversible fabric.

dealer: A company which sells one or more brands of furniture (Herman Miller, Haworth, etc... through their company. They do not manufacture anything, they just sell it for the OEM.

denier: A numbering system that indicates yarn size in filament and staple yarns, with low numbers representing finer yarns and higher numbers representing heavier yarns. The mass in grams of a 9000 meter length of yarn. Also used to denote the size of a filament fiber.

dimensional stability: The ability of a fabric to retain its original geometric dimensions when subjected to various stresses and environmental conditions. Stresses may include wetting, stretching, or impacting the fabric. Environmental conditions consist of changes in temperature and humidity. Two common test methods for testing dimensional stability are ASTM D3597 para. 7.5 (dimensional stability to wetting) and ASTM D6207 (stability to temperature and humidity changes).

directional fabric: Used to describe a fabric that has a specific orientation due to pattern, nap, construction or weave that needs to be considered when the fabric is being applied. See also non-directional.

dobby: An attachment to a loom that controls the warp threads through the raising of harnesses. Usually used for small textures.

duck: A term for a broad range of very durable plain weave fabrics available in a variety of weights. Usually made of cotton, it has a range of uses from industrial to home furnishings. “Number 10 cotton duck” is specified as the abradant material to be used in performing the Wyzenbeek abrasion test.

dye lot: A quantity of textile fiber, yarn, or woven goods dyed in one production run. Lot size can vary greatly depending on the mill or finishing plant’s dyeing processes and equipment.

dyestuffs: A natural or synthetic substance that adds color to fabrics, fibers, or yarns, incorporated by chemical reaction, absorption, or dispersion. Various types are used, depending on results desired and method of application.

dynamic seam test ASTM D4033: A seam slippage test that consists of repeatedly dropping an 8.25-pound wheel from a height of 6 inches onto a simulated upholstered cushion. The wheel strikes the cushion about 1 inch away from a standard seam that has been sewn into the fabric. This test is typically run for 5000 or 7000 drops, depending on the specification cited, and failure occurs if the seam exhibits more than 1/8” slippage in any direction as measured from the center of the seam.

embossing: The process of passing fabric through engraved, heated rollers to impart patterns onto the surface of the fabric.

end: A single warp yarn. Warp ends are counted by the number of ends in an inch of cloth, hence the term “ends per inch.”

face: The front side of the fabric as opposed to the back. This is the side of the fabric that is normally treated and tested to meet commercial standards. See id cord.

felt: A nonwoven or woven fabric with a dense construction that is face-finished through a process that shrinks and entangles the fibers to make the structure of the fabric indistinguishable.

fiber: Term for a unit of any natural or synthetic textile raw material used for manufacturing fabric.

filament: A fiber of continuous indefinite length. Man-made examples are rayon, nylon, polyester, and polypropylene. Silk and hair are examples of natural filaments. Filaments can be used in their entirety, manipulated, or chopped into staple fibers that are then spun into yarn. Unmanipulated filament is called continuous filament.

filling: Also called weft. In woven fabrics, the filling yarns are the yarns that run in the horizontal direction, at right angles to the warp.

finishes: Any processes or treatments applied to a material to alter or change the look, feel, or performance. Some examples are calendering, coatings, embossing, fire resistance, heat treatments, laminations, moisture barriers, soil and stain repellents, washing, and ultraviolet protection.

finishing: How fabric is processed after weaving.

flammability: Measurement of a fabric’s performance when exposed to specific sources of ignition.
**flannel:** A woven fabric that has been face-finished by lightly brushing or napping the surface. Usually flannel is a medium-weight plain or twill structure in wool, wool blends, or cotton fibers.

**float:** Portion of warp or filling yarn covering two or more adjacent warp yarns or filling picks in a woven cloth.

**FR:** Abbreviation for flame resistant, which indicates a fabric’s ability to resist burning. Fabrics that are not already inherently flame resistant may be treated with various processes to provide certain levels of flame resistance.

**greige goods:** Woven fabric not yet dyed or finished. Also referred to as “grey” goods.

**hand:** The “feel” of a fabric when handled. Factors that may contribute to the hand of a fabric include content, weight, construction, and finishing processes.

**harness:** A frame holding the heddles in position in the loom during weaving.

**heat setting:** The process of taking a material and exposing it to a certain temperature for a specific period of time to set and better control the dimensional stability of the fabric.

**heather:** A blend of stock-dyed colored fibers used to create a multicolored or multi-toned effect, most often in woolens.

**heddle:** A cord or wire with an eye in the center, in which the warp is threaded through.

**hydrophilic:** “Water loving” materials that absorb water readily. Examples of hydrophilic fibers include cotton and rayon.

**hydrophobic:** “Water hating” materials resist the absorption of water. Examples of hydrophobic fibers include polyester and olefin.

**id cord:** An identification cord of longer floats woven into the right selvage of a roll of fabric to clearly mark the face and direction of the fabric. Also known as a “truth mark”. Part of BIFMA Standard for Woven Textile Characteristics. www.bifma.org

**Jacquard:** (a) Fabric woven on a loom with a jacquard patterning mechanism, which allows complex designs to be woven. (b) Jacquard loom: a loom where individual warp ends can be independently controlled with a jacquard mechanism for unlimited design capabilities.

**jobber:** A distributor of textiles who either purchases fabric directly from a mill or creates a proprietary line by working with a mill in the manufacture of an end product.

**knit:** A fabric produced by continuous interlooping of one or more yarns. Specialty knitted fabrics are mostly used for casements and upholstery.

**latex:** A flexible, rubber-like, durable polymer material that is used in backings or coating systems in fabric-finishing processes. See backing/back-coatings for more information.

**lightfastness:** A textile’s degree of resistance to exposure to sunlight.

**loom:** An apparatus for making fabric by weaving yarn or thread.

**loom state:** The state of woven fabric after being taken off the loom and before being dyed or finished.

**man-made fiber:** Also referred to as manufactured fiber, it is a fiber that is chemically produced rather than occurring naturally, e.g., acrylic, nylon, polyester, polyethylene, polyurethane, polyvinyl, acetate, and rayon.

**Martindale:** Refers to a fabric abrasion test method that employs the Martindale machine to test fabric using worsted wool as the abradant. This is an oscillating test in which pressure is specified, fabric samples are mounted flat and rubbed in a figure-eight motion, and the results are measured in the number of cycles achieved before noticeable wear is apparent. Number of cycles determines abrasion rating.
memo: A sample of a fabric supplied by a fabric company for reference and selection purposes. For True Textiles, this is an 8” x 9” sample.

mohair: The lustrous hair of the Angora goat used predominantly in cut-pile fabrics.

moisture barrier: A protective barrier finish applied to a fabric that does not allow a liquid to pass through.

monofilament: One strand of extruded continuous filament of a man-made fiber.

multifilament: A yarn made up of multiple continuous filaments.

muslin: A plain weave cotton fabric, light to medium weight, usually unbleached and undyed. The name is derived from Mosul, the city in Mesopotamia where the fabric originally was produced.

N

nap: The soft downy surface of a cloth created when part of the fibers are raised by a brushing technique called napping.

natural fiber: Any fiber that comes from animal, vegetable, or mineral sources.

needling: A finishing process in which the fabric is poked by hundreds of needles to give it more bulk.

NFPA 260: Refers to the National Fire Protection Association standard test method and a related classification system for cigarette ignition resistance of components of upholstered furniture.

NFPA 701: Refers to the National Fire Protection Association test methods for small-scale (curtain and drapery fabrics weighing under 21 oz. per square yard) and large-scale (drapery fabrics over 21 oz. per square yard) vertical flame tests.

non-directional fabric: A fabric that has a 100% balanced construction. Meaning it is identical whether it is viewed up the roll or railroaded and can be applied either direction and appear the same.

nonwoven: Textiles constructed by interlocking or fusing fibers using adhesives, pressure or heat.

novelty yarn: A yarn with special color effects such as space-dyed yarn, or textural effects such as nubs, slubs, or built in irregularities.

needle-punched: The process of passing a fabric through a series of needles that penetrate the fabric to fill in the gaps by entangling the fibers.

nylon: A manufactured fiber also known as polyamide. Nylon is known for excellent strength, elasticity, and abrasion resistance.

O

olefin: A manufactured fiber composed of ethylene, propylene, or other olefin units, also known as polypropylene. The fiber has excellent properties for cleanability, abrasion resistance, and resistance to deterioration from chemicals and mildew. Color may be achieved only through solution dyeing.

ombre: A color effect with a gradual change or fade from light to dark or from one color to another.

open line textiles: A non proprietary group of textiles that are available to buy by anyone. Guilford of Maine is the open line brand of True Textiles.

oxford: A plain woven fabric with a basket weave effect used most often in shirting. Often two colors are used to enhance the weave characteristics.

P

package dyed: See yarn dyed.

panel fabric: Typically 66” wide and used on office cubicle panels, acoustic panels and other vertical surface applications.

pick: Refers to each individual filling yarn of any fabric. Fabrics are often described by the number of picks per inch.

piece: A standard full length of fabric, generally 50 to 60 yards; also called a bolt.

piece-dyed: Fabric that has been dyed in piece form after weaving, as opposed to dyeing in yarn form or stock dyeing.

plied yarn: A yarn formed by twisting together two or more singles yarns.
pilling: The formation of small fuzzy balls of fiber, called pills, on the surface of a fabric by abrasion in wear. It is considered a defect when excessive. Refer to ACT voluntary textile performance guidelines under physical properties for specific pilling test information.

polypropylene: A manufactured fiber made from polymers that is strong and resilient, relatively inert, and does not absorb water or dirt. See olefin.

polyurethane: A synthetic chemical compound used to make foam coatings, composites, and cushions.

polyurethane fiber: A lightweight, durable, elastomeric filament composed of at least 85% of a segmented polyurethane. Also known as spandex.

plain weave: Simplest weave structure in which one warp end weaves with one filling yarn producing a flat-surfaced fabric with the smallest possible floats. Quality and strength depends on yarn quality, yarn size, and fiber content.

polyester: A high-strength manufactured fiber that is washable, resistant to stretching and shrinking, and is naturally flame resistant.

purchasing group: An entity that is created to leverage the purchasing power of a group of businesses to obtain discounts from vendors based on the collective buying power of the members. FF&E’s are one type of purchasing group that operate in the Healthcare market.

railroad: An term that describes the technique or process by which a fabric is turned and used horizontally when it is applied to furniture, thereby requiring less yardage and fewer seams. A fabric can also be used vertically. See up the roll.

rapier: A metal piece that carries the weft half way across the fabric and is caught by a second rapier and pulled the rest of the throw. This is an alternative to using a shuttle.

rayon: A man-made fiber of regenerated cellulose with a natural luster and soft hand. Viscose and Cuprammonium are types of filament rayon. A high absorbency characteristic gives the fiber excellent affinity for color and 11 percent moisture regain.

recycled polyester: Reclaimed polyester made from either post-industrial or post-consumer resins.

repeat: A single unit of a pattern that is duplicated or repeated over and over to create an overall fabric or wallcovering design.

refurbisher: A company that takes old, existing office panel systems and chairs, repaints and recovers them with new fabric and typically markets them as a more eco-friendly alternative.

rovings: A roving is a long and narrow bundle of fiber that is the end result of the process of carding. From here the roving is spun into yarn.

Scotchgard™: The original branded name for a soil and stain-repellent finish. Soil and stain-repellent finishes are now applied to fabrics in various manners using different generic chemicals in place of Scotchgard. Soil and stain repellents provide protection against staining, moisture, and mold and mildew to improve the ease of care and cleanability of materials.

seam slippage: Seam slippage refers to the condition that occurs when a fabric pulls apart at a seam. Refer to the ACT voluntary textile performance guidelines under physical properties for specific seam slippage test information.

devil: The finished edge of a roll of fabric. It keeps the fabric from unraveling or fraying.

sheer: A transparent or lightweight fabric often used for window treatment.

shuttle: A tool that carries the thread across the loom between the yarns of the warp while weaving.

silk: A fine, strong, continuous protein filament produced by the larva of silkworms and noted for strength, resilience, luster, and elasticity.

skew: A weave alignment condition in which filling yarns are not perpendicular to the selvage, the result of uneven tension in weaving or finishing. Generally no more than one inch of skew is acceptable.

silver: A continuous strand of loosely assembled fibers without twist.

solution-dyed: A method of dying fiber also known as dope-dyed. The pigment or dye is added into the spinning solution/polymer before it is forced through the spinneret, dispersing the color evenly throughout the fiber and producing excellent color-fastness and consistency.

spinning: The process of producing a spun yarn from staple fibers.
**standard**: The reference against which quality or color evaluations are made.

**staple fiber**: Natural or cut continuous filament fibers used to make spun yarns.

**stock-dyed**: Fiber that has been dyed before being spun into yarn.

**strié**: French word for an irregular or random stripping effect in a cloth, which is created by using varying shades of the same color.

**sueded**: An effect created in the finishing process. As fabric passes through abrasive rollers, the face of the fabric is napped, leaving the fabric with a soft hand resembling suede.

**synthetic fiber**: Fiber manufactured from chemical compounds, e.g., nylon, polyester, olefin, acrylic, vinyl.

**tensile strength**: The ability of fiber, yarn, or fabric to resist breaking under tension.

**tenter**: A framework on which fabric can be held taut for drying or other treatment during manufacture.

**Terratex®**: A registered trademark of True Textiles, Inc., for a classification of environmentally conscious fabrics that are comprised of 100% recycled content and are recyclable at the end of their useful life.

**tweed**: A term to describe woolen twill fabric woven from heathered or multicolored yarns. The fabric originated in Scotland and was named for the Tweed River.

**twill**: One of three basic weaves. Twill weaves give the appearance of a diagonal line created by the offset progression where weft yarns pass over one or more warp yarns, then under one or more warp yarns.

**twist**: The term used to describe the number and direction of turns (twists) put into a yarn during manufacturing for strength or effect; twists are identified as “S” or “Z”.

**Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL)**: An independent product safety, testing, and certification organization. www.ul.com

**up the roll**: A term that describes the way fabric comes off the roll. It is the direction in which a fabric is normally used when it is being applied as upholstery. A fabric used vertically or the way it comes off the loom is “up the roll.”

**velour**: a. A common term used to describe cut pile, plush, and velour fabrics. b. A fabric woven in a plain or satin weave with a dense low pile. c. A napped, knitted fabric that has similar characteristics to woven velour.

**velvet**: A warp pile fabric woven as a double cloth created by two sets of warp and fill yarns combined with a fifth set used to form the pile. Lateral cutting knives split the pile and separate the top and bottom warps on the loom.

**vinyl**: A nonwoven film that is derived from ethylene used for upholstery and wallcovering.

**warp**: The yarns running lengthwise in a loom or in a woven fabric. The warp is parallel to the selvage and is crossed by filling or weft yarns to create woven fabric.

**warp-faced**: A description of a fabric woven with a weave in which mainly warp ends are seen on the face of the cloth.

**warping**: The process in which yarns are wound, parallel onto a warp beam.

**weave**: The term used to describe the structure created through the interlacing of a warp and weft: Three basic weave structures are created: plain, twill and satin. All other weaves, no matter how intricate, are derived from these three structures.

**weaving**: The process by which a fabric is woven on a loom.

**weft**: The yarns running horizontally in a woven fabric, crossing the warp from selvage to selvage; also called filling yarns or picks.

**wool**: The natural fiber from sheep or lamb, or hair from a Cashmere or Angora goat. Highly textured when made into woolen spun yarns;
smooth and lustrous when made into worsted spun yarns. The fibers are resilient and naturally fire-resistant and may be blended with other fibers. The term is also used to describe hair from a camel, alpaca, llama, or vicuña.

**worsted:** A system of spinning long fibers that have been combed and processed into a smooth, uniform, high-twist yarn. Although originally developed to process wool yarn, many other fibers and blends are spun today on the worsted system. The term also is used to describe fabric created from worsted yarns.

**woven:** A term commonly used to describe a jacquard or dobby fabric to distinguish it from a printed fabric.

**Wyzenbeek:** Refers to a fabric abrasion test method that uses the Wyzenbeek machine to test fabric using cotton duck as the abradant. Samples of the test fabric are pulled tight in a frame and held stationary while the abradant is rubbed over the test fabric. Each back and forth motion is referred to as a “double rub.” Fabric is normally tested in both the warp and fill directions. The number of double rubs achieved depends on an assessment of both noticeable wear and the number of yarn breaks.

**yarn:** The term used to describe an assemblage of textile fibers or filaments twisted into a continuous strand.

**yarn-dyed:** The process of dyeing yarn prior to it being woven or knitted. Also known as package dyeing.

This glossary has been adapted from the Association of Contract Textiles glossary.