Many of today's fashion garments feature decorative trim such as beads, sequins, and glitter. However, these kinds of decorative trim do not always hold up under the care procedures suggested on the care label. In fact, in recent years, the Federal Trade Commission has brought law enforcement actions against nine manufacturers and importers of women's clothing for allegedly violating the Commission's Care Labeling Rule by placing improper care labels on such garments. The companies paid $352,000 in total penalties. Some of the problems affecting garments involved in these cases included the following:

- Beads damaged in drycleaning solvent, sometimes also resulting in stains on adjacent areas of the garment;
- Loss of coloring on beads, sequins, or glitter;
- Removal of trim due to softening of adhesive.

The FTC’s Care Labeling Rule requires manufacturers and importers to attach care labels to textile clothing. The manufacturer or importer must have a reasonable basis for all the recommended care instructions. The label must:

- Recommend one safe cleaning method -- either washing or drycleaning (unless the garment cannot be safely washed or drycleaned, in which case the label must warn "Do not wash - Do not dryclean");
- Warn against any part of the recommended procedure that may harm the garment or other items cleaned with it;
- Warn if the recommended procedure must be modified.

For example, decorative trim such as beads, sequins, and glitter can be harmed in drycleaning, and the usual dry cleaning process (which is defined in the Rule) may have to be modified for garments containing beads, sequins, or glitter. So, labels for such items sometimes warn that a dry cleaner should use a short cycle, low moisture, low heat, or no steam finishing. In addition, if one or more of the drycleaning solvents used by drycleaners would harm the product, a solvent that is safe to use must be specified on the label. For example, because the solvent perchlorethylene can damage polystyrene beads, "dryclean" labels on garments with polystyrene beads may need to specify a solvent that can be used safely on the garments. (If all commercially available types of solvent can be used safely, the label need not mention any type of solvent.)

If your company manufactures or imports garments with decorative trim similar to that described above, we suggest that you carefully review your care instructions and ensure that you have reliable evidence to support them. The following documents are available on our website: (1) the Care Labeling Rule; and (2) a table listing cases under the Care Labeling Rule.

For more information about proper labeling of textile, wool, and fur products, see the Commission’s business guide, Threading Your Way Through the Labeling Requirements Under the Textile and Wool Acts, also available on this website.