

Whether you are constructing or selecting a garment, details of construction are important. If you make a garment for a contest, you want it to be attractive and acceptable in the judges' eyes. Those judging a contest seek to be impartial and fair as well as critical and discriminating; personal preferences must be set aside so entries can be evaluated objectively.

There are a number of construction techniques that can be used to achieve an acceptable end product. In general, the result should be an area, finish, or detail that is:

**Functional**—Use is unhampered by the construction technique utilized.

**Durable**—Stitching is secure and garment is made of quality materials (fabrics, interfacing, notions, trims).

**Inconspicuous**—Area is free from bulk and is flat and smooth; stitching is straight and a uniform distance from the edges or folds.

The following standards are commonly found in garments of quality construction.

## APPEARANCE OVERALL

- Notions compatible in color, fiber, weight, and design.
- Fabric used correctly—plaids, stripes, checks, or other designs attractively planned for matching.
- Fabric nap correctly used.
- Pressed to give a smooth look to finished garment.
- Loose ravellings, basting threads, and thread ends removed.

## BELTS

- Style of belt suitable to garment design, uniform width.
- Ends well finished.



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- Closures appropriate.
- Durable and attractive.

## BUTTONS

- Neatly and securely fastened.
- Appropriate in size and design.
- Placement accurate and attractive, uniform distance from edge and in spacing between.
- Appropriate shank provided.
- Stitching started and ended under button.

## BUTTONHOLES

- Flat and securely stitched.
- Even in width and length.
- Placed at points of strain.
- Attractive and accurate in distance from edge and in spacing between.

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- Cut on grain.
- Appropriate in size.
- Appropriate interfacing used.

#### **For fabric (bound) buttonholes**

- Lips an attractive size and even in width.
- Lips meet exactly at the center of the buttonhole.
- Corners are square.
- Facing securely and appropriately fastened to the back of the buttonhole.

#### **For machine-made buttonholes**

- Stitches evenly spaced and smooth in appearance on front and back of buttonhole.
- Center cut neatly with all loose threads trimmed off.
- Interfacing is an appropriate color.

### **COLLARS**

- Free from bulk—seams graded, clipped, or notched.
- Understitching holds undercollar in place so it does not show.
- Appropriate interfacing used.
- Shape symmetrical on right and left.
- Curved edges smooth, points sharp and flat.
- Rolls smoothly or lays flat according to design.

### **CUFFS**

- Flat, smooth, free from bulk—seams graded and understitched, where applicable.
- Even in width.
- Undercuff does not show.
- Appropriately interfaced.

### **DARTS**

- Tapered and smooth—free from pucker or bubble at point.
- Securely fastened at ends.
- Symmetrical in shape, length, and spacing.
- Attractive placement.
- Pressed correctly—vertical darts pressed toward center, horizontal darts pressed down.

### **FACINGS**

- Flat, smooth, free from bulk.
- Seams graded, clipped or notched, and understitched, as needed.
- Securely tacked in place at seams, darts, and openings.



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- Facing edges free from raveling.
- Any edge finish flat, smooth, and free from bulk.

### **FIT**

- Adequate ease for comfort.
- Fitting details (neckline, armhole, waistline) properly located on body.
- Silhouette lines follow silhouette of body.
- Lengthwise grainline perpendicular to floor; crosswise grainline parallel to floor.
- Darts point to and stop short of the fullest part of the area they fit.
- Free from strain and/or excess fullness.

### **GATHERS**

- Uniform and evenly distributed. Stitched so pleats are not formed.
- Adequately full—do not look skimpy or bulky.

### **HEMS**

- Flat and inconspicuous, unless meant to be decorative.
- Seams pressed as required and graded to reduce bulk.
- Hem fold pressed so hem hangs smoothly at lower edge.
- Hem edge smooth, flat, and free from raveling.
- Excess fullness evenly eased, free from pleats.
- Seams aligned.
- Hem edge finish should not create ridge or add bulk.
- Hem even in width.
- Width appropriate for garment style and fabric type.
- Topstitching is straight and attractive in size and placement.

- Hand stitches uniform, secure, and inconspicuous.
- Fused hems securely fused and flat.
- Hem hangs parallel to floor.
- Length attractive for wearer and appropriate for garment.

### **INTERFACING**

- Enhances body and wear of garment.
- Color and care requirements compatible with outer fabric.
- Free from bulk and raveling.
- Not visible on inside or outside of garment.

### **LINING**

- Conceals inner construction of garment without adding excess bulk.
- Color and care requirements compatible with outer fabric.
- Fits smoothly inside garment with seams aligned.
- If attached at hems, has pleat for ease.
- If free hanging, is attached at seams with French tacks.
- Hemmed shorter than garment—1/2 inch shorter than sleeves and 1 inch shorter than skirt or pants.

### **NECKLINE**

- Free from bulk.
- Facings flat and inconspicuous—graded, clipped, and understitched.
- Design symmetrical.

### **NEEDLEWORK (HAND STITCHING)**

- Uniform stitches, secure, inconspicuous.
- Correct technique used—stitch with single thread.
- No bulky knots at thread ends.
- Correct stitch used for purpose.

### **PLACKET**

- Flat and free from excess bulk.
- Inconspicuous unless meant to be decorative.
- Correct technique used for purpose—faced, bound, hemmed.

### **PLEATS AND TUCKS**

- Uniform in width (unless design varies).
- On straight grain of fabric when design allows.
- Neatly pressed, as required.
- Stitching straight.
- Spacing attractive and accurate.

### **POCKETS**

- Flat, smooth, and free from bulk.
- Stitching straight.
- Pressed neatly.

#### **For patch pockets**

- Upper corners reinforced.
- Square corners mitered, round corners symmetrical.
- Hem appropriate width and neatly finished.
- Attractive placement.
- If in pairs, coordinated in size, shape, and fabric design (if applicable).

#### **In-seam pockets**

- Interfaced, understitched, lay flat when worn.
- Inconspicuous unless meant to be decorative.

### **PRESSING**

- Garment smooth and free from wrinkles.
- Free from sheen and scorch.
- No ridges from seams or facings.
- Seams pressed flat and inconspicuous.
- Darts pressed to shape of garment.
- Pleats, tucks, and creases pressed, as design requires.

### **SEAMS**

- Securely stitched, straight, flat, free from bulk.
- Stitches appropriate in size and tension.
- Fullness eased, as required.
- Crossed seams intersect correctly.
- Pressed in correct direction.
- Graded or trimmed and understitched, where appropriate.
- Fabric design matched, as possible.
- If finish used, no added bulk or tension.
- Construction notches trimmed off after seams are sewn.
- Free from raveling.

### **SLEEVES**

#### **Set-in sleeves**

- Fullness evenly distributed.
- Seam smooth and even in width around cap.
- Underarm section of seam trimmed and double stitched.
- Seam pressed toward sleeve cap.
- Free from raveling.

#### **Kimono or raglan sleeves**

- Seams pressed open.
- Clipped and reinforced, as needed.

## SNAPS, HOOKS AND EYES, AND OTHER FASTENERS

- Applied with small, neat stitches that do not show on right side.
- Reinforced with interfacing.
- Placed at least 1/8 inch from garment edges.
- Inconspicuous from right side of garment.
- Garment lays flat when fastened.

## STITCHING

- Stitch length and tension appropriate for fabric.
- Straight; free from tangles, knots, and skipped stitches.
- Beginning and ending of stitching locked in appropriate way.
- Loose threads cut off.

## TOPSTITCHING

- Straight.
- Attractive in placement.
- Stitch length and tension appropriate for design and fabric.

## UNDERSTITCHING

- Even distance from seam and inconspicuous.
- Holds seam against facing or under collar or cuff without wrinkles.
- Prevents facing, undercollar, or cuff from rolling to right side of garment.

## WAISTBAND

- Smooth, even width.
- Free from bulk.
- On grain.
- Interfaced.
- Stitching straight.
- Corners square.

- Unless band is a design feature, the overlap is even with the placket and a 1-inch extension is on the underlap of band.
- Skirt or pants eased to fit band.
- Sets exactly at top of zipper.

## WAISTLINE SEAM

- Inconspicuous, smooth, and flat.
- Seams and darts match, if appropriate.
- Secured by waistline stay to prevent stretching.

## ZIPPER

- Placket smooth, flat, and free from puckering.
- Stitching straight and even.
- Placket appropriate length and width.
- Seams and neckline edges match.
- Zipper completely covered.
- Zipper slides easily.
- Inconspicuous unless meant to be a design feature.
- Skirt and zippers end at band.
- Neckline zippers end 1/2 inch from neckline so fastener (hook and eye or snap) can be attached above zipper.

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