

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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