

BAMBOOZLED? FTC CRACKING DOWN ON DECEPTIVE BAMBOO CLAIMS

In August 2009, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) charged suppliers with deceptive labeling and advertising over the use of the word "bamboo".

Four US sellers of clothing and other textiles products have been charged by the FTC for claiming bamboo fiber content on products manufactured from rayon. The complaints also charge the companies with making false and unsubstantiated "green" claims that the products are manufactured using environment friendly methods, they retain the natural antimicrobial properties of bamboo and that they are biodegradable.



"BAMBOO" FABRIC IS NOT DIFFERENT FROM "RAYON" FABRIC

According to the FTC, the companies falsely claimed that their textile products were "100 % bamboo fiber" when they were essentially rayon.

Noted from the Commission (FTC), Rayon is a man-made fiber created from the cellulose found in plants and trees and processed with a harsh chemical that releases hazardous air pollutants. Any plant or tree could be used as the cellulose source, including bamboo, so once the cellulose undergoes the regenerating process (rayon or viscose processes) the generic fiber name would be Rayon.

According to the Rules and Regulations under the Textile Fiber Products Identification Act 16 CFR 303.7, the definition of Rayon is:

Generic name according to 16 CFR § 303.7 (d)	Definition
Rayon	A manufactured fiber composed of regenerated cellulose, as well as manufactured fibers composed of regenerated cellulose in which substituents have replaced not more than 15% of the hydrogens of the hydroxyl groups. Where the fiber is composed of cellulose precipitated from an organic solution in which no substitution of the hydroxyl groups takes place and no chemical intermediates are formed, the term <i>lyocell</i> may be used as a generic description of the fiber.

FABRIC MADE FROM “CELLULOSE FROM BAMBOO” IS NEITHER ANTIMICROBIAL NOR BIODEGRADABLE

There are no definitive studies to validate that the natural antimicrobial properties of the bamboo plant are retained in the resulting rayon fiber. The FTC noted that when bamboo is used as the cellulose source, the resulting rayon does not retain any natural antimicrobial properties of the bamboo plant. It is believed that the harsh and toxic chemicals used to dissolve the plant material would eliminate any natural antimicrobial properties of the bamboo plant.

In addition, according to the FTC information, there is no scientific evidence that indicates that “Rayon from Bamboo” products are biodegradable. These products will not break down and return to the elements found in nature in a reasonably short period of time after disposal. Although the growing use of bamboo is an environmental friendly process, the production of rayon from bamboo cellulose is not. The process requires strong chemicals that must be removed by multiple washes. The rayon process uses high amounts of water and energy and can cause air and water pollution.

The FTC has a publication “Complying with the Environmental Marketing Guides” which is designed to help businesses selling clothing and textile products labeled as containing fibers made from bamboo to market their products in ways that are truthful, non-deceptive, and in compliance with the law. Please visit the [FTC website](#) for more



Please also read our SafeGuards [Canada Enforces Accurate Labelling of Bamboo Products](#)

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