sunbrella®

AWNING FABRIC

care and fabrication guide

Sunbrella® has been the leading brand of awning fabric for 50 years. Available in over 150 solids and stripes, Sunbrella awning fabric is guaranteed for 10 years against color or strength loss (see **www.sunbrella.com/warranty** for details). Sunbrella awning fabrics are breathable, water repellent and easy to clean.

Cutting

- **DO NOT TEAR FABRIC**. Cut with scissors or a knife. A hot knife (wire or blade) or ultrasonic cutting instruments may be used for a fused edge. Provide proper ventilation when cutting with a hot blade instrument.
- Under ordinary conditions, Sunbrella will not shrink provided the awning/canopy is undercut by approximately one half percent both in the length and the width.

Sewing

- A double needle machine, equipped with a puller, is ideal. Needle gauge should be wide, ¾ inch if possible. A chain stitch is preferable in seaming widths of the cloth.
- A lock stitch machine with a walking foot is ideal for hemming.
- For seaming and hemming, the top thread should be polyester or PTFE size F(16/92) or FF (12/138). Use light to medium tension on top and bottom thread.
- Use F (16/92) for the looper, bobbin thread on chain stitch machines.
- Lock stitch machines should use the same size bobbin thread as used on top.
- Use size 22 needle with size FF (12/138) on lock stitch machine.
- For chain stitch machines, when using FF (12/138) thread, the needle size should be 060. For thread size F (16/92), the needle size should be 054. Note: it is always advisable to use the smallest size needle with which the machine will stitch properly. Inspect and change needles for best results.
- Use of acrylic braid fringe – centerfold or flat woven – is recommended.
- Maintain tension in front of and behind the needle to minimize puckering when seaming.
- Use an acrylic seam sealer to minimize needle hole leakage.

Heat sealing

- Sunbrella can be heat-sealed using radio frequency, wedge, impulse, and hot air welding machines. When RF welding, attach a layer of Teflon to the bar to prevent fabric scorching. It may be necessary to experiment with temperature, speed and dwell time settings.
- Consult the heat-sealing equipment manufacturer to determine optimum procedures and the proper heat sealing tapes be used with a particular machine.
- Test bond strength when changing rolls of fabrics and tapes. Use a fish scale to test the bond's "peel" strength. Adhesion after 24 hours should be 4 pounds or higher. This should produce a side-to-side bond that is stronger than the fabric itself.

Installation and Fabrication tips

- Rope pull-ups are not recommended, but if necessary the pulleys should be offset two to three inches so that the ropes "wipe" the fabric rather than concentrate their wear in one line.
- Make sure the fabric does not flap or rub against walls posts or shrubbery, etc.
- There should be no sharp or rough spots on the framework. Reinforcements should be used where the fabric contacts the framework to reduce wear and minimize leakage.
- Rafters should be no more than 36" apart and LACING BANDS SHOULD BE USED.
- A double front bar should be used on canopy type applications.
- A minimal pitch of one-foot drop per three feet of projection is recommended. For less than optimum pitch applications, increase the number of rafters, install drain grommets (weepers) behind the front bar, and use a double front bar to insure maximum tension. Avoid flat or nearly flat installations.
- Installations that have underliners should have drain grommets.
- Use large enough pipe in framework to insure stable installation.
- The same general rules apply to marine applications. Avoid fabric rubbing by reinforcing areas where abrasion is likely. In high abrasion areas a reinforced vinyl may give added abrasion resistance. Do not place winter storage covers over Sunbrella fabric installations. This can result in abrasion and deterioration.
- Mooring poles are recommended for boat covers that span large areas to maintain adequate tension and drainage.
- Completed marine tops should be handled with care. These foldable tops have to be folded neatly with spacers between frameworks for transport, the mounts should be dismantled and laid on the floor for transport. Vibration should be minimized.

Staple in Systems

- Sunbrella is commonly used in staple-in awing frame systems. Consult your supplier for recommended staple guns, staples and staple cover.
- Ensure that the staple gun point is all the way to the bottom of the channel when stapling. This will prevent the staples from "blowing through" the fabric.
- Do not cover too much area between stapled portions. Wide spans over rafters without being fastened will lead to wind whip, abrasion, leakage and eventual fabric breakdown.

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