

The active sample method

Washfastness sample workflow

Morrow Vale Textile Lab is a fictional small laboratory that prepares fabric swatches for washfastness comparisons. Each swatch arrives with a sample card. The technician checks the card before placing the swatch on the preparation bench. A colour name written on an envelope is not sufficient to identify the sample.

The current sample workflow takes effect on 19 August 2028. Sample-room owner: Riva Pell.

The archived workflow took effect on 3 May 2026. It remains in the method binder for interpreting older worksheets. New sample work uses the current workflow. The technician writes the workflow date on the sample card before the first preparation step so later readers can distinguish the active method from the archived one.

A sample card follows the swatch through preparation, rinsing and drying. Staff do not copy a result into the next stage before that stage has been completed. If a card is damaged, the replacement is clipped to the original. The original remains readable wherever possible, with any uncertain text marked for review.

Rinse and dry settings

Washfastness sample workflow

The technician checks the bath and cabinet before a batch of swatches is started. A reading is written on the worksheet beside the equipment name. The equipment is not treated as ready merely because its indicator light is on. A damaged thermometer is taken out of use and entered on the equipment card.

The working settings are 18 degrees Celsius for the rinse bath and 43 degrees Celsius for the drying cabinet.

The bath setting belongs to the rinse stage and the cabinet setting belongs to the drying stage. They are not interchangeable target temperatures. The technician records which stage each reading describes. A sample waiting for the cabinet stays on the labelled tray so it cannot be mistaken for a sample already dried.

A laminated teaching sheet describes a warmer demonstration bath. It is used for showing students how to read the thermometer and does not set the working rinse temperature. Once settings are checked, the technician initials the worksheet and lays out the sample cards in the order the swatches will enter the bath.

Observation and transfer

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During a comparison run, the observation sheet stays beside the batch tray. The technician records any visible colour transfer in words before consulting the reference swatches. A reference swatch belongs to the comparison set and is not put into the rinse bath. The reference set is returned to its envelope after use.

The batch observation interval is every 8 hours.

The interval is the planned spacing between observations during an active comparison run. A missed observation is left visible on the sheet with a reason. Staff do not fill it later from memory. A changed batch order is also written down so the next reader can follow which sample was inspected at each observation.

After blotting, comparison swatches move to a named rack and a reweighing step. The rack entry appears below; the timing instruction continues on the following page.

For freshly blotted comparison swatches, the holding location is Rack Juniper.

Reweighing continuation

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The swatches are reweighed within 22 minutes after blotting ends.

The blotting step ends when the technician lifts the final absorbent sheet. Placing unused sheets on the bench does not begin the reweighing window. The technician notes the end of blotting on the batch card and carries the card to the balance with the swatches. The balance pan is checked before the first swatch is placed on it.

A reweighing entry includes the sample label and the stage of work. A surprising reading is retained while the technician checks the balance and the label. A repeat reading is written on a new line instead of being substituted for the first. The sample-room owner can then see the sequence of checks.

At the end of the batch, the technician returns the reference swatches to their envelope and puts used absorbent sheets in the marked bin. This continuation concerns freshly blotted comparison swatches. Incoming dry samples follow the preparation-bench procedure recorded on their sample cards.

Service entry

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The office creates a service entry for each fabric swatch accepted for the washfastness comparison. A set of swatches may share a project card, but each swatch keeps its own label. The office checks the labels against the project card before the technician begins the workflow. An unlabeled swatch waits in the review tray.

The comparison service charge is 12.75 Canadian dollars per fabric swatch, excluding tax.

The charge belongs to a fabric swatch accepted for the comparison service. It is not a project-wide charge and does not describe the cost of equipment. The office leaves a cancelled swatch line visible on the project card. This allows a later reader to distinguish a swatch that was withdrawn from one that completed the work.

An old exhibition invoice in the office file describes printing sample photographs. It is a separate service and is not the comparison charge. When the workflow is complete, the office attaches the technician's signed worksheet to the project card before marking the service entry ready for collection.

Worksheet retention

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Completed worksheets remain with the project card. A technician writes observations in permanent ink and leaves an incorrect entry legible beneath a single line. The replacement entry is written nearby with initials. The office keeps the original worksheet even when a clean copy is prepared for a customer.

Reference envelopes are checked before they return to the cabinet. A missing reference swatch is noted on the envelope and the sample-room owner is told through the handover book. The cabinet label is not changed to conceal a missing item. This preserves the record of which comparison set was available during the work.

A sample still awaiting a decision is stored with its card in the review tray. The handover book names the unresolved step and the person who last handled the swatch. The next technician checks that note before starting another stage. No result is inferred from the fact that a swatch has moved to another shelf.

This workflow covers sample handling for washfastness comparisons. Building maintenance and purchasing records remain outside the sample-room method binder.