



## Sunbrella® SeaMark Marine Fabric Care and Fabrication Guide

### Cutting

The vinyl backing gives enough stability to the fabric to eliminate the need for using a hot knife to seal the edges of the fabric. All that is needed is a sharp pair of shears.

### Sewing

- A lock stitch machine with a walking foot is ideal for hemming.
- For seaming and hemming the top thread should be a PTFE or solution-dyed polyester thread of a size comparable to Tex 138 or 12 for larger applications. Use a PTFE or solution-dyed polyester comparable to Tex 9/16 for standard-size tops and covers. Use light to medium tension on both top and bottom thread.
- Lock stitch machines should use the same size thread for the bobbin as for the top stitch.
- We recommend 4.5 to 5 stitches per inch for awning and marine applications.
- Use a size 22 needle with size or 138/12 solution-dyed polyester thread or comparable PTFE on lock stitch machine.
- For chain stitch machines (when joining awning/canopy panels) use a Tex 138/12 thread (or comparable) and 0.60 needle. For size 92/16 thread use a #18 or .054 needle.
- It is always recommended to use the smallest size needle with which the machine will stitch properly. Inspect and change needles for best results. Thread breakage is often related to a burr in the needle and not necessarily the size of the needle itself.
- For marine work, more commonly an R (regular round point), RG (round point, rounded tip) or FFG (light ball point) needle would be used. If when using an R point you notice that you are puncturing/cutting some of the warp or fill yarns in the fabric you may consider changing to an RG, FFG or other ball point needle. The ball point will tend to "push" between yarns instead of cutting them.
  - When sewing through clear vinyl or polycarbonate, a Diamond Tri Point point needle may be considered.
- The use of acrylic braid or centerfold binding is recommended.
- Maintain tension in front of and behind the needle during the sewing process to minimize puckering/gathering of fabric when seaming.
- Balanced tension between the top stitch and bobbin should be maintained in order for the stitch to be locked in between layers of fabric.
- Avoid too much back stitching because this technique can weaken the fabric and cause the fabric to tear more easily.

### Seaming

- The use of a seam tape is strongly recommended when sewing panels together. This may also help to reduce seam leakage.
- When creating a "false fell" seam on a top, we recommend a minimum of 3/4" seam allowance. Seamark is thicker than standard Sunbrella; When folding and top stitching this is necessary for there to be enough fabric for the stitch to "hold onto" on the bobbin side.
- For a more water-repellant seam, an anti-wick thread or one that "swells" when wet may be used to reduce seam leakage.

### Heat Sealing

Traditionally, Sunbrella Seamark has been used in marine applications where sewing is the most common method of fabrication. However, with its waterproof properties, it is also a strong candidate for use on residential canopies where a common method of fabrication involves heat sealing. Sunbrella Seamark can be heat sealed with the use of a heat sealing tape. Testing has been done on:

- Wedge welders – it is recommended that you heat seal it with the vinyl side facing up
  - This will put more heat on the fabric which is the top portion being sealed
  - Adjustments may be necessary when going from standard Sunbrella to Sunbrella Seamark
- Impulse welders have been tested and work well
  - It should be pointed out that since the heat is applied from the top and bottom sides and not from between the fabrics, it is likely that the embossed side will be "flattened" and that the knap on the face side will lay flatter than when using a wedge welder. This could cause a change in the way light is reflected off of the seam.

### Cleaning

Sunbrella SeaMark does not promote mildew growth, however, mildew may grow on dirt and other foreign substances that are not removed from the fabric. This is especially true in warm, humid and dark environments. A program of keeping the fabric clean through regular washings, before mildew appears, will enhance the life and beauty of the acrylic and make successive cleaning easier. Full cleaning instructions are available on the Sunbrella website.

We recommend 303 Fabric Guard for re-treating the fabric surface of Seamark for water repellency and 303 Aerospace Vinyl Protectant for protecting the underside after cleaning.

Bird and tree droppings, as well as other loose particle soils, should be removed immediately. Vacuum with a brush attachment and rinse thoroughly with water to remove. This will prevent the soils from being redeposited during cleaning. Once the fabric has been rinsed, thoroughly spray a recommended cleaning solution over the entire surface and allow the cleaner to soak for 10 to 20 minutes. Then scrub lightly with a soft nylon brush, (one that you would feel safe in using on your car) or a terry cloth rag. Rinse thoroughly, until no remaining soap foam is observed. Additional cleanings may be required. It is best to determine the need for additional cleanings after the fabric has dried completely. Air dry only. Once it is completely dry the fabric can then be treated with 303 Fabric Guard.