

# IAC

## Unscentored



The International Antimicrobial Council is dedicated to promoting the safe, effective use of antimicrobials and odor-control technologies in industries where microbial contamination is of concern. The IAC educates antimicrobial producers, treated product manufacturers, brand owners and consumers. IAC conducts research on the market demand for the odor control feature while keeping abreast of regulatory issues that affect the industry. The IAC laboratory has refined and continues to develop antimicrobial test procedures for standardized test methods that provide more uniform test results between laboratories. [www.amcouncil.org](http://www.amcouncil.org)

### Webinars

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### Industry Events

TexWorld USA, NYC, **July 17-19**  
Outdoor Retailer, SLC, **July 26-29**

## Laundry and Odor — The impact on apparel, home fashions, and the consumer

Apparel, sheets, and towels stink now more than they have in years and consumers have noticed. One major factor that has resulted in increased textile odors is that home laundry practices have lowered the wash water temperature and reduced the amount of water used when washing clothing. High efficiency washing machines save water and energy and that is great but if apparel or home textiles aren't treated with an antimicrobial they will pick up bacteria in the wash, develop biofilms, and have a funky odor right out of the laundry.

How can this happen? Part of the answer can be found in a 2003 European study reported by the NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONSUMER RESEARCH in Oslo, Norway<sup>1</sup>. That study showed that, even though the soil is removed from textiles, the bacteria load, when washed at normal high efficiency temperatures, isn't reduced that much but is spread around in the washing machine. The result is that the textiles being laundered can develop biofilms that actually make the newly washed shirts, towels, and jeans become smellier more quickly.

Is it any wonder that apparel consumers rated odor control as the second most important feature, second only to fit? Recent studies show that 90% of consumers who have purchased apparel or home fashions with an odor control feature will repurchase those products. Unfortunately, most consumers don't appear to recognize the odor issue as a laundry problem. This development presents an

opportunity for apparel and home fashion brands to create brand loyalty by fulfilling an unmet consumer need. Brands are recognizing that incorporating a durable antimicrobial into their home textiles



and apparel will control the odors that would otherwise develop in the textiles due to the biofilms generated in the laundry. Some brands have tried to add odor absorbing technologies or moisture management but those measures are band aid approaches that simply don't solve the biofilm formation problem. It's the biofilm formation that quickly takes bacteria levels over the sensory limit.

There is a lot more science to this problem than can be listed in this brief article. For more information on how the International Antimicrobial Council can help your company work toward a successful odor control feature for your products contact Jaime Rutledge, IAC Technology Director at (989) 492-8795.

<sup>1</sup> Arlid, A. et al. "An Investigation of Domestic Laundry in Europe – Habits, Hygiene and Technical Performance." SIFO, Report No. 1, 2003.