

701—285.12(423) Maintenance or repair of fabric or clothing.

285.12(1) Sales of chemicals, solvents, sorbents, or reagents consumed in the maintenance or repair of fabric or clothing are exempt from tax. See rule 701—200.1(423) for definitions of the terms “chemical,” “solvent,” “sorbent” or “reagent.” This subrule’s exemption is mainly applicable to dry-cleaning and laundry establishments; however, it is also applicable to soap or any chemical or solvent used to clean carpeting. The department presumes that a substance is “directly used” in the maintenance or repair of fabric or clothing if the substance comes in contact with the fabric or clothing during the maintenance or repair process. Substances that do not come into direct contact with fabric or clothing may, under appropriate circumstances, be directly used in the maintenance or repair of the fabric or clothing but direct use will not be presumed.

The following are examples of substances directly used and consumed in the maintenance or repair of fabric or clothing: perchloroethylene “perch” or petroleum solvents used in dry-cleaning machines and coming in direct contact with the clothing being dry-cleaned. Substances used to clean or filter the “perch” or petroleum solvents would also be exempt from tax, even though these substances do not come in direct contact with the clothing being cleaned. The sale of soap or detergents especially made for mixing with “perch” or petroleum solvents is exempt. The sale of stain removers to dry cleaners is exempt from tax.

A commercial laundry’s purchase of detergents, bleaches, and fabric softeners is exempt from tax. A commercial laundry’s purchase of water, which is a solvent, is also exempt from tax if purchased for use in the cleaning of clothing.

The purchase of starch by laundries and “sizing” by dry cleaners is not exempt from tax.

285.12(2) The sale of property that is a container, label, or similar article or receptacle for transfer in association with the maintenance or repair of fabric or clothing is exempt from tax. In general, the sale of any article that protects dry-cleaned or laundered clothing from dirt or helps the dry-cleaned or laundered clothing to maintain its proper shape or form in the same fashion as a container does would be exempt from tax under this subrule. By way of nonexclusive example, the sale of plastic garment bags, which protect clothing from dirt, is exempt from tax. The sale of “shirt boards” and garment hangers, both of which help clothing to maintain its proper shape, would also be exempt.

A container, label, or similar article’s sale is exempt from tax only if the item is transferred to the customer of a commercial laundry, dry cleaner, or other retailer. Thus, “bundle bags” and “Meese carts,” used to transfer or transport clothing within a dry-cleaning establishment, are not subject to the exemption because these bags and carts remain with the dry cleaner and are not transferred to a customer.

Concerning labels, the sale of which would be exempt from tax, these labels must be affixed to the dry-cleaned or laundered clothing and transferred to the customer of the dry-cleaning or laundering establishment. By way of nonexclusive example, the sale to dry cleaners of “special attention,” “invoice” and “sorry” tags would be exempt from tax.

The sale of safety pins and other types of clips used to hang skirts and other garments from hangers would not be exempt from tax. These items do not sufficiently resemble containers or labels to the extent that their sale is exempt from tax.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 423.3(45) and 423.3(51).

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