

## FABRIC GUIDELINES



### FABRIC SELECTION

It is important to select fabrics based on the intended use of the space and to take into account what the core material will be in the finished system.

*Below is a summary guide of types of fabric that can be selected.*

### FABRIC CONTENT

**Polyester blends:** Preferred fabrics for Field Fabric Systems. Yarns are stable and if there is a predominant linear pattern it can easily be maintained on the wall allowing the pattern to be matched from panel to panel.

**Cotton blends:** Yarns are stable in most cases and they are easy to work with. They do not have the “stretch” that polyesters have but typically there is no problem working with the majority of 100% cotton fabrics or a cotton blend.

**Nylon and Rayon:** These fabrics absorb moisture and can cause the fabric to “grow” and sag within its own weave. Depending on the fabric it can have a memory and go back to its original weave. We can work with a fabric blend but the content of either Nylon or Rayon should not be more than 25%. However, depending on how the nylon or rayon is woven into the fabric or if it can be backed\* a larger percentage can be used.

**Linens:** Look beautiful on the wall but Linen has a memory. Therefore they will do the same thing on the wall as they do for your favorite shirt, which is to leave an elbow imprint. Linens can be backed\* to help stabilize the fabric but as a general rule should not be used in areas where people can lean against the wall or furniture will hit against the wall. With linens, the fabric “loosening” is within the fabric itself and is not due to the tensioning of the track.

**Wools:** Wool looks beautiful on the wall. When selecting or installing wool fabrics we want to install them after all the air systems are up and running. We do not want the wool to absorb excess moisture and become heavier. When selecting a wool fabric you need to look at the weight of the fabric. Your heavier wools may require narrower panels and your mid seams will be more predominant.

**Silk:** Silk blends are preferred, but if you select raw silk we will have to select a backing\* that is best suited for the application and the weave.

**Leather:** Leather is used quite often on the walls and looks great. Select Leathers that are thinner in comparison. They are easier to work with and allow for tighter corners and seams. The thicker hides cannot be used in a field-fabricated system. For obvious reasons, Leather has size limitations. If budgets are a concern, there are several “pleathers” that can be selected as well. Of all the finishes listed, when selecting leather or silk, craftsmanship is very critical.

**Vinyl:** In summary, put the binder back and reselect.

**Synthetic Blends:** There are many types of Synthetic Yarns used in fabrics. This will need to be reviewed on a “case by case” basis. Some synthetic blends will work fine if it is within a small pattern in the fabric, but not work at all if it is throughout the entire fabric.

## FABRIC TEXTURES

In addition to fabric content it is also important to take into consideration the fabric texture or weave.

**“Sleek” or “Thin” fabrics:** These fabrics have a tendency to loosen from the track easily when a person leans against the wall or furniture hits the wall or people push against the fabric where the track is installed. Some of the fabrics can have a backing\* applied that will improve the ability of the track to stay in the track.

**“Texture” or “Medium Weight fabrics:** These fabrics are ideal for a track system. The texture and/or heavier weight give the teeth in the track something to grab to hold the fabric tight.

**Upholstery Weight Fabrics:** Although these fabrics are typically not preferred, some of them can be ideal for a fabric wall system. Many of the manufacturers work with us to weave certain fabrics without the standard backing put on for use with upholstery.

## BACKING ON FABRICS

Backing on fabrics is necessary for certain types of weaves for stability. However, several fabrics can be made without backing. The following is a summary of situations where you need to consider the backing of a fabric.

**Heavy Acrylic Backing:** These fabrics are typically used for direct glue applications and should not be used in a fabric wall system unless the manufacturer can weave it without the backing. If backing is still needed for stability, a very light acrylic can be applied by the manufacturer or we will have it applied here.

**Paper-Backed Fabrics:** Fabrics with a paper backing are meant for direct glue applications. It may be available without the paper backing, but it is rare.

**Knit Backing:** Silk fabric will almost always require a knit backing for stability. We will also recommend this on other natural fiber fabrics for stability if a light acrylic backing is not applicable.

***IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT BACKING DOES AND WILL AFFECT THE ACOUSTICAL PERFORMANCE OF A FABRIC.*** In summary: if you can not breathe through the fabric, sound can not get through the fabric to be absorbed.

**WHEN IN DOUBT, Call AEC (972-488-1066). Let us get a yard of the fabric to make a mock-up with the selected core. We can evaluate how it holds up against the intended use of the finished product.**