

OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

4-H Fabrics & Fashions

Beginning Level - Simple Construction

GARMENT BAG

A garment bag is handy for protecting clothing while you travel or for storing them during off-seasons.

Choosing a Fabric

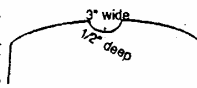
The fabric should be a sturdy cotton, like denim or sailcloth. Some permanent-finish cottons may be finished off the true grain line. When buying a printed fabric with this type finish, select one with the design printed at right angles to or in line with the selvage edge.

Deciding on the Size

The finished garment bag may be between 20 and 24 inches wide and should be about four inches longer than the longest garment you plan to put into it. Allow one inch extra for seams. For example, a garment bag with finished measurements of 25 by 43 inches, when cut, will measure 26 by 44 inches when finished.

Making a Pattern

Cut a paper pattern by lying a coat hanger across the 26-inch width of butcher paper or brown paper to shape the top. With the hanger centered and the neck of the hanger extending beyond the edge, draw a line along the top edge of the hanger. Cut along these lines, as shown above. At the center top of the paper, cut a shallow curved opening three inches wide and 1/2 inch deep to fit around the hook of the



hanger, as shown.

Measure down the paper the length you want the bag to be, including seam allowances. Cut straight across the paper at the bottom edge.

Cutting the Material

Back Section: Place the straight edge (side seam) of the paper pattern on the grain line of the fabric to cut the back of the garment bag to the desired size and shape.

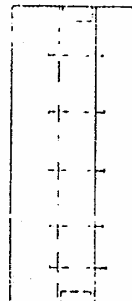
Front Section: If you are using plain fabric, cut the front section as long as the center back, and add eight inches to the width. Cut this rectangular front piece down the center, lengthwise, making two equal widths.

Do not shape the top of the front pieces until after the hems are finished and the two sections are overlapped. If you are using a fabric with a design, be sure the design will match in the completed overlap.

Now Sew the Bag

Hem the edges of the two front sections, which will be overlapped to make the front opening. Turn a 1/4-inch seam to the wrong side for the first turn of the hem. Turn under another one-inch hem, then baste and machine-stitch close to the edge.

Spread the back section of the paper pattern flat on a table surface. Lay the sections of the front on top of the paper pattern back, with the sides and bottom edges even, and provide a center

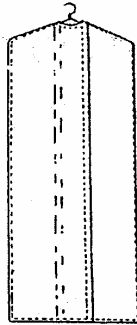


overlap (right over left, as for a blouse opening).

With the front sections now in position, pin the overlapped area along the same one-inch hems and across the tops and bottom to keep the overlap in exact position at the top and bottom. Baste as shown by the dotted lines in the drawing at right.

Lay the fabric with back and front together (wrong sides out), and pin together along outside edges.

Shape the front section at the top to match the back piece. Now you are ready to machine-stitch.



Machine-stitching

With the right sides of the front and back basted together, start at the opening for the neck of the hanger, and machine-stitch a 1/4-inch seam around the outside edge of the garment edge.

Careful pressing of the seam you just stitched will make it easier to fold or turn the seam exactly on the line of stitching when the garment bag is turned right side out. It is easier to press the seam before it is trimmed.

To press, slip the bag onto the ironing board with the raw edges to the outside. This will put the seam allowance in an upright position. Use an iron set at the correct temperature, and hold the bag tight and free from wrinkles as you press the seam allowance open, using the point of the iron.

Trim the seam allowance to about 1/8 inch so the raw edge will be enclosed when you stitch a 1/4-inch outside seam. Turn the bag right side out. If seams have been well-pressed, the edge should crease directly on the seam line. Press. Pin-baste around the outside edge.

Finish the edge of the bag by machine-stitching a 1/4-inch seam on the outside (right) side of the bag. This encloses the 1/8-inch seam so no raw edges are left on the

inside. You have just completed a French seam.

Finishing the Opening

Center the paper pattern on the fabric grain line, and cut two fitted facings the same shape as the curved neck opening. Cut the facings 5/8 inch deep. Cut two facings. The front and back should be the same size.



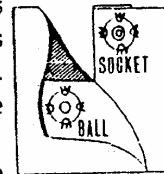
Sew the shoulder seams of the facing together with a 1/2-inch seam. Trim the seam to 1/4 inch, and press open. Finish the outside edge of facing with a zigzag or serged stitch.

Lay the right side of the facing on the right side of the opening to be faced, matching the shoulder seams. Keep the shoulder seam open as the neck opening is stitched.

Pin facing to the edge, and stitch, using a 5/8-inch seam allowance. Trim seam to 1/4 inch. Clip curved edge of neck opening enough so facing will be smooth when turned to the outside. On wrong side, press seam allowance toward facing. On right side, understitch the facing to the seam allowances, close to the seam line. Turn facing to inside of garment, and hand-sew (tack) at seams.

Front Opening

Fasten the front opening with enough snaps to keep the bag securely closed. A snap placed every 12 inches should be enough. Use snaps large enough for easy closings. A number two snap will be suitable for most bags.



To sew on snaps, place the ball part of the snap on the wrong side of the upper edge of the bag. The lower side of the snap will be placed directly opposite. Refer to the sample card on snaps for complete instructions on sewing snaps.