

Embroidery Terms

Appliqué - An Embroidery process that is economical. It reduces the amount of stitches needed to fill an area and/or creates a unique appearance by adding dimension and texture. The process uses cut pieces of fabric sewn into one another.

Backing - A material used underneath an embroidered item to provide stability and support, also referred to as a stabilizer. It can be a woven or non-woven material and is available in various weights and 3 types: cut-away, tear-away and wash-away. The backing can be hooped with the item, or placed between the machine throat plate and the hooped garment.

Digitizing - The modern term for punching. A method of electronically programming artwork into a series of commands that can be read by a computerized embroidery machine. This process will determine such things as the type of stitches, thread changes, thread trims and so on.

Embroidery - Decorative sewn needlework design on fabric, either made by hand or machine. Sometimes called, "thread art", the sewn pattern can also include lettering and/or monograms.

Embroidery Thread – A fine cord for sewing. Thread can be made of synthetic or natural material and can be made in one of three different construction methods; twisted multifilament, air entangled and spun. The main types of embroidery threads are made from cotton, polyester, rayon, acrylic and metallics, with each exhibiting different appearances, sheens and wearability.

Fill Stitch - One of the three most common stitches used in embroidery, typically used to fill large areas and generally has a flat appearance. Different patterns can be created by altering the angle, length, direction and repeat sequence of the stitches.

Hoop - Apparatus that tightly grips fabric and/or backing material between an outer and inner ring which keeps it taut while it is being embroidered. In machine embroidery, it also holds the fabric against the machine bed by pushing the fabric to the bottom of the inner hoop. A Hoop can be made from wood, steel or plastic.

Hooping - Procedure of loading the fabric to be embroidered into the hoop. This process is sometimes also called framing. Improper hooping is one of the most common reasons for low quality embroidery.

Push and Pull Compensation - Digitizing technique that compensates for the degree of distortion that will occur due to the push or pull on a fabric caused by the interaction of the embroidery stitches and the fabric. This process will help a

digitized circle from looking like an egg shape. In general, the horizontal elements are extended and the vertical elements are reduced.

Running Stitch - One stitch that goes between two points in embroidery. Most commonly used for outlining, fine details and underlay. Also referred to as a run stitch or walk stitch.

Satin Stitch - One of the three most common stitches used in embroidery, it consists of closely arranged zig-zag stitches, mostly used for lettering, outlining and fine details. Stitches can be done at any angle and varying lengths with normal width size ranging from 2 mm to 12 mm. It should be noted that the wider the stitch, the greater the possibility for there to be snagging and abrasion.

Stitch Density - The number of stitches used to properly cover an embroidered design, while avoiding the creation of a thick, hard area.

SPI (Stitches Per Inch) - In embroidery, a method for measuring the amount (density) of satin stitches in an inch. Modern machines measure needle movement in 1 mm increments. A thread space of 4 would be .4 mm in length.

Tackle Twill - A type of appliqué (lettering and/or logos) made from polyester or rayon twill fabric and attached to a garment by use of an adhesive backing and then zig-zag sewing the edges. Commonly used for sport team jerseys.

Underlay – Stitches used to help stabilize stretchy fabrics and/or create different effects. These stitches are made prior to any other design elements, that are under the final design.