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WORKWEAR FABRICS · CANVAS VS RIPSTOP

Canvas vs Ripstop Specification Checklist

The fields to demand from a supplier, the standard each property is measured to, and which cloth fits which trade — for bulk workwear programs.

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DISCLAIMER

This resource is practical procurement guidance written from a China-side workwear factory's perspective. It is not legal, safety or compliance advice. Fabric performance, melt behaviour and certification vary by fiber content, weave, finish and seam construction; confirm exact standards against an approved sample and the current official texts before you commit funds.

Canvas vs ripstop specification aid | Document ID: SPEC-FABRIC-CANVAS-RIPSTOP-001

Short Answer

Canvas wins where sustained abrasion is the main failure mode — kneeling on concrete, masonry, grinding sparks. Ripstop wins where the risk is snagging, heat and constant movement, because its reinforcing grid stops a tear from spreading instead of letting it run. Ripstop is a weave, not a fiber: the grid can be woven into cotton, poly-cotton or nylon, and nylon- and polyester-rich ripstop melts under spark contact while cotton ripstop chars. Neither cloth replaces certified FR clothing where arc or flame exposure is possible.

Parameter Comparison

FACTOR	COTTON DUCK CANVAS	RIPSTOP (COTTON / POLY-COTTON / NYLON)	REFERENCE METHOD	ADVANTAGE
Weight	10–12 oz/yd² (339–407 g/m²)	5–7 oz/yd² (170–237 g/m²)	oz/yd² spec	Ripstop
Tear propagation	Tear runs once started	Grid arrests the tear	ASTM D1424	Ripstop
Rotary abrasion	50,000+ rubs	25,000 rubs	ASTM D4966 / EN ISO 12947-2	Canvas
Concrete drag	Face fuzzing, then knee shine	Surface yarns break up	Field observation	Canvas
Tensile strength	Higher at 10–12 oz	Lower at 5–7 oz	ASTM D5034 / EN ISO 13934-1	Weight-dependent
Spark / flame	Smolders and chars	Synthetic-rich melts; cotton chars	Field observation	Canvas
Seams, 50 washes	Puckers	Stays flat	EN ISO 15797	Ripstop
Shrinkage	About 4% (untreated cotton)	Less than 1% (synthetic blend)	EN ISO 5077	Ripstop
Drying time	About 45 minutes	About 15 minutes	Field observation	Ripstop
Custom-dye minimum	Lower cloth minimum	Higher cloth minimum	Mill terms	Canvas
Cost premium	Base rate	+15–20%	Mill terms	Canvas

Figures are indicative values for the constructions named in the column headers, not a substitute for a report from your own supplier. The reference-method column names the standard each property is normally measured to; where it reads “Field observation”, the property is not a bench test. Tear, abrasion and tensile results all move with fabric weight and fiber content, so ask for numbers measured at the same GSM.

Specify by Trade

TRADE	FAILURE MODE	SPECIFY	WEIGHT	REINFORCEMENT
Welding and hot work	Molten metal, sparks	Cotton canvas or cotton ripstop — never synthetic ripstop	10–12 oz/yd² canvas, 5–7 oz/yd² cotton ripstop	Certified FR garment or double layer

TRADE	FAILURE MODE	SPECIFY	WEIGHT	REINFORCEMENT
Concrete, masonry, formwork	Abrasion, kneeling	Cotton duck canvas	10–12 oz/yd²	Double knees, crotch gusset
Roofing	Snagging, movement at height	Ripstop (cotton or poly-cotton)	5–7 oz/yd²	Knee and seat overlays
Landscaping and grounds	Snags, heat	Ripstop	5–7 oz/yd²	Double knees
Warehouse and logistics	Heat, constant movement	Ripstop	5–7 oz/yd²	Bartacked pockets
Mechanical and maintenance	Mixed abrasion and movement	Canvas or poly-cotton ripstop	10–12 oz/yd² canvas, 5–7 oz/yd² ripstop	Double knees
Electrical and utilities	Arc flash	Certified FR or arc-rated garment only — neither cloth qualifies	Per the arc rating	Per the arc rating
Field service and inspection	Weather, movement	Coated ripstop	5–7 oz/yd²	Taped seams

Spec Sheet Fields to Demand

- Fabric weight in both oz/yd² and g/m² (GSM)
- Fiber composition stated explicitly — a weave name is not a fiber
- Tear strength to ASTM D1424 or EN ISO 13937-2
- Abrasion resistance to ASTM D4966 or EN ISO 12947-2
- Tensile strength to ASTM D5034 or EN ISO 13934-1
- Dimensional change to EN ISO 5077, washed to EN ISO 15797 conditions
- Finish and DWR coating details, including whether the finish survives 50 washes

Cloth Minimum vs Garment Minimum

A custom dye lot is the single biggest reason a small order gets more expensive. Mills generally want a full dye lot before they will run a custom shade, and that lot is larger on ripstop than on cotton canvas. LantaoWork's quoted floor is 100 units per style, and on a fully custom program the effective minimum often lands at 200–300 units once dye-lot and trim minimums are added. Below that, a stock shade on canvas is usually the cheaper route.

Before You Approve Bulk

- ☐ Fiber composition stated explicitly — "ripstop" alone is not a fiber
- ☐ Melt behaviour verified against the intended hazard, not the weave name
- ☐ Test method named next to every numeric claim
- ☐ Tear and abrasion figures quoted at the same GSM on both cloths
- ☐ Reinforcement specified — double knees, gussets, overlays
- ☐ Wash conditions and cycle count stated for the shrinkage figure
- ☐ Both cloths sampled on the same pattern before the bulk commit

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Specify the failure mode, not the fabric name.

Send the trade, the crew size run and the failure mode — a fabric specification with the matching test methods is returned with the quote.

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