Workroom Threads

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carolina custom draperies
Workroom to the Trade

Fearless Drapery Calculating 101

When it comes to calculating your drapery yardage do you rely on a good guess estimate, a yardage chart, or a workroom? Unless you know how to estimate the yardage yourself how can you be sure that your source of information has not inflated the yardage or made an error?

Last month I disussed how to calculate yardage for stationary side panels using fabric without a repeat. Now let's move to the next step, calculating yardage for drapes that will traverse. For my example I will again use fabric without a repeat. Next month we will advance to the next level - traversing drapes with a pattern repeat.

Determine Width

1. The first step is to decide how wide your rod will be. Standard fullness for pleated traversing drapes is 2.5 times the width of the rod. This is called the rod width, or face width. For our example, Jane's rod is going to be 58"W. Therefore, we multiply 58"W x 2.5 fullness = 145"W of fabric needed.
2. Traverse drapes need returns and an overlap at the center. Most rods use a 3 1/2" return and 2 1/2" overlaps. This is added to each panel and there are two panels in a pair for a total of 12" additional. 145" +12" = 157" fabric will be needed.
3. How many widths of fabric will that take? Our fabric is 54" wide and

we need 157"W. Dividing 157" by 54" = 2.9 widths of fabric. Whenever the fraction behind the decimal is .5 or more you round up to the next whole width. In this case it will be 3 widths of fabric to cover the 58"W space.

Determine Length

1. How long do you want the drapes to be? For our example Jane's drapes are going to finish at 98"FL (finished length).
2. Pinch pleat drapes use a double 4" hem at the top (8") and a double 4" hem at the bottom (8"). That's 16" extra inches that need to be added to our finished length of 98". 16" + 98"=114" cut length. This is the length that the workroom will cut each piece.
3. We determined that we will be using 3 widths of fabric. Each of those pieces will be cut at 114". Multiplying 3 X 114" = 342" which is the total amount of fabric needed for this project.
4. A yard of fabric is 36". 342" divided by 36" = 9.5 yds. This is the minimum amount that would be ordered.

Easy Enough?

If your eyes haven't started to glaze over and you aren't feeling a sense of paralysis you're on your way to success. Please contact me and I will gladly provide you with a fill in the blank worksheet for you to practice. Just as you learned to ride a bicycle you can confidently calculate drapery yardage. After a few practice rounds you can take off the training wheels and be in control of your estimates.

Images obtained from the internet.

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