Lampshade and *diffuser* materials

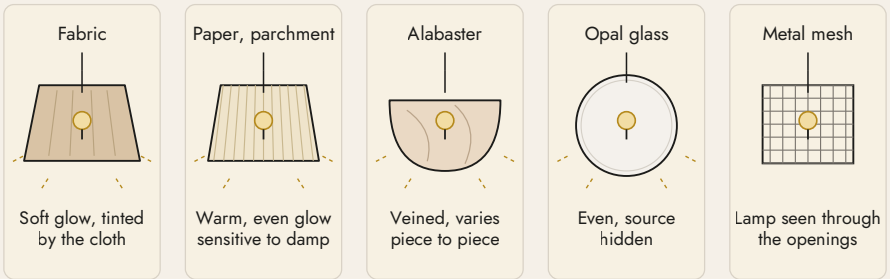
Fabric, paper, parchment, alabaster, glass and metal mesh compared for light, ageing and cleaning, and the heat and fire evidence to ask for. It gives no wattage, temperature or distance: the maker states them.

Compliance guidance. Heat and flammability limits are set by the luminaire maker and its test evidence; none is given here. Standards are named as the editions we saw listed, and their clauses were not read. This is guidance, not legal, fire-engineering or electrical advice: confirm with the maker, your fire consultant and your building control body or fire risk assessor.

AT A GLANCE

Material	Light effect	Ageing and wear	Cleaning	Typical use
Fabric (silk, linen, cotton, pleated)	Soft glow, tinted by the cloth; lamp hidden or shadowed	Light fades some colours; dust and marks show; hand and weave vary	Dry cleaning or vacuum only if the maker says so	Table lamps, wall lights, pendants
Paper (folded or laminated)	Warm, even, soft	Yellows and weakens over time; damp and handling mark it	Dust off; no wet cleaning	Pendants in dry, protected places
Parchment (vellum)	Warm, slightly mottled, even glow	Reacts to humidity and light; can cockle or darken	Dry soft cloth only; ask the maker	Wall lights, table lamps, pendants
Alabaster	Veined, glowing stone; every piece differs	Heavy; can chip; some alabaster marks with water	Dry cloth; ask for the maker's regime	Bowls and pendants
Glass (opal, frosted, clear)	Opal: even, source hidden. Frosted: soft. Clear: lamp visible	Does not fade; scratches and shows marks; can fracture from heat difference	Wipes clean; see cleaning and glass-type sheets	Globes, cups, domes, bowls
Metal mesh or perforation	Lamp seen through the openings; sparkle and shadow	Finish can mark or change with heat; open to dust	Brush or vacuum; finish dictates the rest	Cylinders, cages, sculptural pieces

Descriptions are general practice, in words. We found no measured transmission data and no fire data for these materials; the maker supplies both for the shade as built.



Light effect in words only. Heat limits, fire evidence and fading come from the maker, shade by shade.
Schematic, not to scale.

One lamp inside five shade materials. The light effect is in words only; nothing on the drawing is a measurement. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio.

FIVE QUESTIONS FOR THE MAKER

1 Which lamp type and maximum rating was the fitting assessed with? 2 What is the clearance between lamp and shade, and is the shade open or closed? 3 What fire evidence exists for the shade as built (the method, what was tested, date and

laboratory), or has none been done? 4 What does any treatment do to colour, handle and cleaning? 5 What is the replacement shade, and who supplies it?

SPECIFICATION WORDING

SHADE MATERIAL AND CONSTRUCTION

Shade [fabric / paper / parchment / alabaster / glass / metal mesh] to the approved lit sample [ref], in [colour], with [lining / diffuser] and [trim]. The maker is to state the construction of the shade as supplied (material, lining, adhesive, treatment) and its maximum lamp rating [W], and is not to change them without written approval.

HEAT, CLEARANCE AND LAMP

The maker is to state, for each fitting tag, the lamp type [ ] and the maximum lamp rating [ ] it was assessed with, the clearance between lamp and shade [ ] mm shown on the shop drawing, and whether the shade is open or closed. The fitting is to carry the markings required by the luminaire standard [BS EN 60598-1 family; edition to be confirmed]. The lamp is not to be changed without the maker's written approval.

FIRE EVIDENCE

Where the shade is cloth, paper, parchment or another combustible material, the maker is to supply [a test report for the finished shade] naming the test method [ ], the laboratory [ ] and the date [ ], or a written statement that no test has been done. Treatment, if any, to be named [ ] and approved on a lit sample. No claim of fire performance is to be made without the report.

REPLACEMENT AND SPARES

Replacement shades are to be the same material and construction as approved, supplied by [the partner workshop / from the approved spares]. Spares of [quantity] per [ ] fittings from batch [ ] are to be supplied with the handover pack, with the cleaning regime [ ].

TERMS USED

Lattimo
An opaque white glass; in lighting it diffuses the lamp so there is no visible source.

Diffuser
Any material, such as opal glass, paper or fabric, placed over a light source to spread its light and hide the source.

Lamp-to-shade clearance
The distance between the lamp and the shade, set by the maker for the lamp and fitting. It limits heat on the shade and is shown on the shop drawing.

Normally flammable surface
In the luminaire standard, a surface such as wood or wood-based board over 2 mm thick, as summarised by the IET. A luminaire to be fixed on it is marked as suitable. Check the current edition.

STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- BS EN IEC 60598-1:2024+A11:2024, Luminaires, general requirements and tests: BSI Knowledge: Current, Edition 10.0, 31 Mar 2025; clauses not read; confirm the edition your maker tested to.
- BS 7671 Section 559 (IET summary, Wiring Matters, Autumn 2008): a 2008 article on the 2008 edition; regulation 559.5.1 headings used; later editions not read.
- Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988, SI 1988/1324: Schedule 1 read (foam tests); scope for shades not established.

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/lampshade-and-diffuser-materials. Make Bespoke Studio coordinates manufacture through its partner workshops. Figures are guidance only and your specification governs; some may be superseded, so contact the studio to verify.