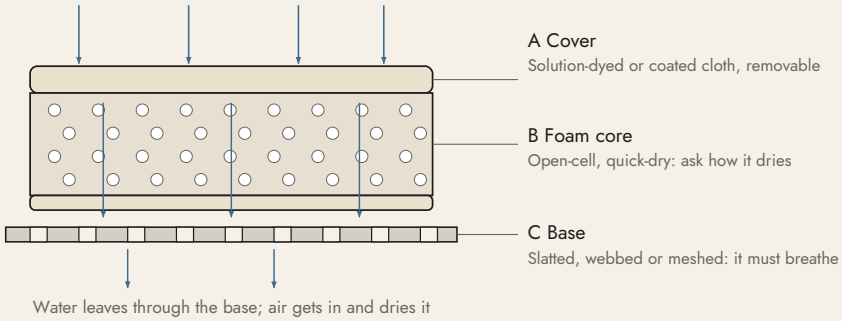
Outdoor *cushion fabrics* and foam

What to ask for in an outdoor cushion: the cloth, the foam, the base and the fire route.

AT A GLANCE

Property	Test named	2025 ACT outdoor deck	Ask for
Light fastness, woven or knit cloth	AATCC 169 (option 3 or 4) or AATCC 16.3 (option 3)	Grade 3 minimum at 1,000 hours	The method, the grade, the hours and the colourway. A blue wool grade on ISO 105-B04 is a different scale.
Light fastness, coated cloth	AATCC 169, or ASTM G155, D4329 or G154	Grade 4 minimum at 650 hours	Which of the four methods, and the grade per colour.
Mould and mildew, coated cloth	ASTM G21	Zero growth	The report. ACT names no mould test for woven or knit cloth: ask for one anyway.
Hydrolysis, polyurethane coated cloth	ISO 1419	10 weeks	The report and the weeks reached. Not asked of vinyl in the deck.
Abrasion, pilling, seams, rubbing	As for indoor cloth	Same as the indoor guideline	See the fabric performance tests sheet.
Foam drying and ageing	No standard named in anything we read	None	How it drains and dries, and its compression-set and ageing results: ask the foam supplier for data.
Fire	A separate composite test	Not part of the ACT guideline	The level from your Responsible Person's risk assessment. See the BS 7176 sheet.

From the ACT outdoor webinar deck of 29 April 2025 (a summary, not the guideline text). A voluntary US guideline that uses US test methods; it is not a UK requirement, and the figures are an example of a published threshold, not a recommendation. Check the current ACT document.



Section through an outdoor cushion: cover, open-cell foam and a base that breathes, with the water path. Schematic, not to scale. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio.

REMEMBER

- Ask for the light-fastness report for the colourway, with method, grade and hours.
- Coated cloth: ask for mould and hydrolysis reports too.
- The foam and base must drain: ask for the supplier's drying data.
- Outdoor is not exempt from fire: test the whole composite.

SPECIFICATION WORDING

COVER CLOTH

Outdoor cover cloth [woven solution-dyed / coated] in colourway [ ], with a test report for light fastness by [AATCC 169 / AATCC 16.3 / BS EN ISO 105-B04] stating method, grade and hours or exposure, for the colourway supplied. Where the cloth is coated, reports for mould by [ASTM G21] and, if polyurethane, hydrolysis by [ISO 1419] for [10] weeks. Supplier's cleaning instruction for the colourway to be supplied.

FOAM AND BASE

Cushion foam [open-cell, quick-drying], with the supplier's data on drying after soaking and on compression set after [stated wet and dry cycles]. Cushion rests on a [slatted / webbed / meshed] base that drains freely. No wrapped layer that holds water against the cover unless the supplier shows its drying data. Mock-up cushion soaked and dried before production approval.

FIRE AND SPARES

Outdoor upholstery composite (cover, any interliner, filling) tested to [BS 7176, hazard level from the project fire risk assessment], report on the exact composite, with the water soak and cleaning cycles stated, from a [UKAS-accredited] test house. [One] set of spare covers per [10] cushions, from the same dye lot.

TERMS USED

Solution-dyed

Colour added to the polymer before the fibre is spun, so it runs through the fibre and not just on its surface.

Reticulated (open-cell) foam

Foam whose cell walls are open so that water and air pass through; suppliers describe it as quick-draining. A trade term, not a standard.

Light fastness

How well a dyed cloth resists colour change in light, graded by comparison with standard references after laboratory exposure.

Hydrolysis

The breakdown of a polyurethane coating by water and heat; the ACT outdoor deck asks for a ten-week accelerated test.

Coated fabric

A textile with a vinyl or polyurethane layer on one face; tested for wear and ageing differently from an uncoated woven cloth.

Water soak

A 30-minute soak of a flame-retardant-treated cover before it is conditioned and fire tested, to show the treatment survives wetting.

STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- ACT Outdoor Fabrics: Voluntary Performance Guidelines (work group webinar deck, 29 Apr 2025): Summary slides read; the guideline document itself was not. US voluntary guideline.
- BS EN ISO 105-B04:2024: Colour fastness to artificial weathering: xenon arc fading lamp test. Current (BSI Knowledge search result); replaces the 1997 edition. The standard was not read.
- ISO 1419:2019: Rubber- or plastics-coated fabrics: accelerated-ageing tests. Fourth edition, confirmed in 2024 (ISO page, via search result); the text was not read.
- ASTM G21-15(2021)e1: Resistance of synthetic polymeric materials to fungi. Active (ASTM store listing, via search result); the text was not read.
- BS 7176:2007+A1:2011 and BS 5852: Fire tests for upholstered seating. Named only; see the library's fire sheets. Not read.

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/outdoor-cushion-fabrics-and-foam. 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.