

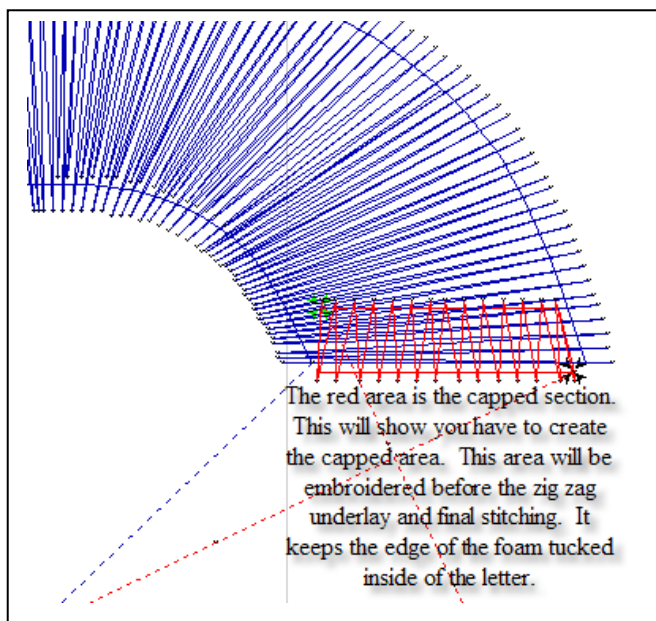
Puff/Foam Embroidery

Puff or Foam embroidery is a process that is done with the addition of a piece of foam added that is placed under the embroidery to give it a raised appearance. Foam embroidery works best on a cap. It is not usually recommended for a garment that will be washed frequently. It is also not recommended for a garment that will be dry cleaned. This will make the foam crumble during the dry cleaning process because of the chemicals that are used.

I will go over the steps and you can view the video for the actual process.

Create your design

1. Lay out your design so that the area that will have the foam will be embroidered last.
2. Increase your density in the area for the foam about 50 to 75%.
3. Increase the width of your stitches at least 25%. This will give you a higher puff and will help in not compressing the foam.
4. The Satin Path stitches will have to be capped at the ends.



5. Lay down a contour or edgewalk underlay to hold the foam in place. In my experience I have found that a small Running stitch such as a Bean stitch at 1.5 millimeters is ideal. This close stitch helps to cut the foam. If you are using a digitizer that digitizes for foam, they will understand this and it will be digitized into the design.
6. Lay down a zig zag underlay to hold the foam in place and then your increased density top stitching will embroider last. You must always use a Satin Path stitch. Complex fill stitches do not work on foam. They will compress it and you won't get the effect that you are looking for.

Materials Required

1. Good quality foam, not craft foam. It must be foam that is designed for embroidery. Many of the embroidery supply houses carry it. Always try to match the color of the foam to the thread color. Never use a contrasting color. It will not result in the quality job you are expecting.
2. Sharp needle – preferably 80/12 sharp. This will create larger holes that will help to penetrate the foam.
3. Embroidery spray tack, used only if it does not stay in place. (Optional)

Process

1. Place your garment such as a cap in the machine as usual. Embroider all of the areas that will not be part of the puffed area.
2. Program a stop in the machine after the last color or area that does not have the foam. The machine will stop to allow you to lay down the foam.
3. Cut each piece of foam considerably larger; at least one half to three quarters of an inch larger on all sides than the area that will be puffed.
4. Lay down the foam on top of the area that will be puffed making sure that you have all areas totally covered with extra hanging over.
5. Start the machine and let it continue sewing until it is finished. If the foam moves when you start the machine and does not want to stay in place, lightly spray some spray tack on the back of the foam to hold it in place. Do not try to hold in with your hands.

6. Remove it from the machine and carefully remove the foam. Trim away any foam that is left hanging out except for tiny hairs of foam.
7. Use a hair dryer or heat gun and hold it close to it, but not touching it, and this will help to shrink those tiny hairs of foam that are left. If you are using a heat gun, make sure that it is not too hot. You only want to shrink the foam.

It is a process that does take extra time in both the process time on the machine and the finishing time. This extra time must be considered when you are actually quoting a job. I have found that this total extra time is approximately 1.5 to 2 minutes per cap. You also have the addition of purchasing the foam and the design must be digitized with 50 to 75% more stitches, therefore adding more sewing time. The time for the extra sewing and the purchasing of the foam must also be added to your price.

Another tip, make sure that you clean out the hook area and bobbin of your machine when you are finished. The foam seems to create a lot of dust and collects in that area. If you are running a large job, you may have to do this each time you change your bobbin.

If you are using the spray tack, clean off your needles after a few runs using alcohol and a cotton ball or any cloth that will work. Just wipe down your needle and make sure that you remove the glue that may stick inside the eye of the needle.

Watch the video in the Special Techniques section of the embroiderytipsandmore.com site and you will see how simple the process actually is. If you will follow the above steps, you should end up with the quality product that will make both you and your customer happy.