

SHIFT CHANGE DRESS

Seam Allowance = 4/8"

Fabric:

Pattern designed for woven fabric. You'll need 2-3 yards depending on your size and the width of the fabric.

Cut & Mark:

- Cut one front on the fold*
- Cut one back on the fold*
- Cut two sleeves (make sure you have a mirrored pair)*
- Cut three binding strips*
- Mark the front darts on the wrong side of fabric
- Clip notches on shoulders and sleeves

*Make sure folds and pattern grainline arrows are parallel to the straight grain in the fabric

Sew:

- Protect the necklines from stretching by stay-stitching (normal stitch length) at 3/8"
- Stitch darts and press the excess downward.
- Stitch the front dress to the back dress, right sides together, along the shoulders and side seams using a 4/8" seam allowance. Make sure the notches match. Clean finish and press open the seams.
- Neckline Binding
 - You can either choose to have the bias binding show on the outside of the neck (my preference) or have it be hidden on the inside of the neck. If you choose to have it show on the outside, trim down the neck edge by 4/8". If you choose to have it hidden on the inside, trim the bias binding strip down by 4/8" so that it is only 1 4/8" wide.
 - Fold and press one long edge and one short edge inward by 4/8" on the binding.
 - Pin the long unfolded edge of the binding to the neck edge of the dress, right sides together. Start by placing the short folded edge of the binding on one of the shoulder seams (or center back) and when you get all the way around the neck back to your beginning, the short raw edge of the binding will overlap the folded edge by 4/8". The binding will be longer than needed, so just trim off the excess.
 - Stitch the binding to the neck, using a 4/8" seam allowance. Once sewn, trim the seam by half to reduce bulk and press it toward the binding.
 - If you want your binding to be hidden on the inside, press the entire binding inward. If you want the binding to show on the outside, press only half of it to the inside. In either case you will cover the seam edges with the long fold of the binding and pin it in place. Stitch it down by hand or by machine.

*****The neck might feel too small until you are finished with the binding step!*****

- Sleeves
 - Run two rows of long stitches (basting length) on the sleeve cap between the front and back notches. Keep the two rows parallel to one another and don't backstitch, leaving long thread ends to gather up the volume in a later step.
 - Stitch the underarms seams, right sides together, using a 4/8" seam allowance. Clean finish and press open the seams.
 - Turn the dress inside out. Turn the sleeve right side out. Put the sleeve inside the dress, making sure it is on the correct side (double notches on the back). Pin the sleeve to the armhole, matching the top sleeve notch with the shoulder seam on the dress. Gather the top of the sleeve by pulling gently on the bobbin threads of your previous basting stitches and adjust most of the gathers toward the top 4-5" of the armhole.
 - Stitch using a 4/8" seam allowance. Clean finish and press the seams toward the sleeve.
 - Use the remaining two pieces of bias binding to bind the hem on the sleeves using the same method as you used for the neckline.
- Hem the dress as desired

Alternatives

- Use french seams on the shoulders, side seams and sleeve underarm seams.
- Create a neckline facing instead of binding the neck edge with bias.
- Create a full lining for the dress - just cut and sew another one like the first and attach them wrong sides together along the neck and armholes before finishing those edges. Another option would be to stitch the lining to the dress along the neck only, right sides together. Then trim, clip, press and flip it all right sides out and that way you won't have to bind the neck.
- Change the size and shape of your neck (V neck, scoop neck, square neck, boat neck, etc.), just make sure the front and back necklines are moved equally out from the neck along the shoulder.
- Go sleeveless! Just bind the armholes using the multi-purpose binding pattern or create armhole facings.

****If you plan to embellish your dress, it might be easier to do so before sewing it all together. Just make sure to protect your raw edges with stay-stitching.****

Share your finished dress with the Shift Change Dress community!

https://www.flickr.com/groups/shift_change_dress