

How To Avoid
**NIGHTMARE
CARPET CLEANERS**



STEPHEN JAENCHEN

How to Avoid...
Nightmare Carpet Cleaners!

by Stephen Jaenchen

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How To Avoid Nightmare Carpet Cleaners
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This book is dedicated to everyone...

because we all deserve

“the most outstanding service experience ever”™!

How to Avoid...

Nightmare Carpet Cleaners!

7 Questions to Ask

Before Selecting a Professional Carpet Cleaner

WANT TO AVOID A NIGHTMARE IN YOUR HOME?

This book is all about how to avoid a nightmare in your home and how to have an outstanding service experience instead. Having this book is like having a trustworthy expert in your back pocket, ready to advise you and protect you from getting burned by hiring a bad service company.

All smart, successful people have two things in common: 1) They know “stuff” and 2) they know “people.” These two resources help successful people determine if the project under consideration is something they can handle or if they should enlist the skills of a better informed, trustworthy person. Having “*people*” means you don’t have to spend the time and resources learning everything about a subject in order to make a good decision.

My father was a great auto mechanic—skilled, honest, and well-informed. When I was young and it came time for me to buy a used car, it was fantastic to have him “in my back pocket.” He knew “stuff” about a particular car I was thinking of buying that the salesperson wouldn’t share, or the private seller perhaps didn’t even know. Knowing him saved me a lot of money...and grief!

WHY IS HIRING A PROFESSIONAL CLEANER SUCH A STRESSFUL EVENT?

When you shop in a store and they don’t have what you want, or the clerk is rude, or the product is bad, or whatever the problem might be, you can just turn around and leave. But when the place of service is *in your home*, you have lowered the drawbridge to your castle. Getting your new “guest” to leave when they begin to make you uncomfortable is not as easy as just leaving a store.

Remember this fact when you read the “Hand Grenade Job” story that follows.

Another reason for stress is ignorance. Consider that we generally hire a service expert for jobs we don’t possess the knowledge or the desire to do ourselves, right? When we know little about the service we seek help with or the persons providing the service, that ignorance makes us vulnerable. Even worse is when we *think* we know something that we really don’t know. That’s why the saying goes “it’s not *what* you know but *who* you know that’s important.” We can’t know everything, but when we know “good people,” it’s as good as knowing what they know!

Having a family member who was a skilled mechanic meant I didn’t have to know everything about cars to pick out a good used one. Dad knew which ones had poor braking systems or weak transmissions. He knew what to look for *under* the car or what to listen for *in* the car to determine how it was maintained before I even went on a test drive. And he was able to teach me what I needed to know to have great success buying and maintaining cars—without having to become a mechanic to do so.

Successful people always have “good people” they can rely on. This book provides you with more “good people” to have in your back pocket; people who know the secrets about the carpet cleaning industry. Apply the specific information in this book when you hire your next cleaning professional and you’re on your way to having the most outstanding service experience ever.

As you will find in this book, actually caring for your carpet and selecting the right professional cleaning company will provide the following benefits:

1. Your carpet will last longer.
2. Your carpet will look better.
3. Your indoor environment will be healthier.
4. You will have a better experience.

BUT...

Have you ever gotten a coupon for carpet cleaning for something like \$39.95 for three rooms of cleaning? Have you ever wondered what *happens* when you actually hire someone from one of those ads?

If you're "lucky," a guy that looks a little like Charles Manson shows up...overcharges you, and does a lousy job on top of it! When you're "not so lucky," well...read on!

HOW BAD CAN IT BE? AN "INSIDER'S" PERSPECTIVE...

Every service industry has its dirty little secrets, its nightmare stories. After being in this business over 27 years, I have heard a lot of "horror stories" from clients and other cleaning professionals. The following stories are true and actually happened to unsuspecting customers. One of my goals is to make sure they never happen to you!

Source: My friend and colleague of 27 years. Just several days before this happened, he was hired to "clean house" (pun intended) and restore order to a company that had lost control of its employees:

The "Hand Grenade Job" of Wisconsin. Mrs. (Jones) called a popular Wisconsin cleaning company to come out and clean her living room, dining room, and hall carpets. When the technicians arrived they hit the overhang of her house backing up their van, creating a huge hole in her wall. To add insult to injury, when they set up their hoses they realized it was shorter and more convenient to run their hoses to their van through the newly created hole instead of the front door, which is precisely what they did! The homeowner had recently spent over \$10,000 on a new dining room set, including antique chandelier, custom glass dining room table set, wood and glass china hutch, and custom wallpaper. She expressed her concern about these items to the technicians to be sure they were not dinged or chipped or marred in the cleaning process. (After all, they just rammed a hole in her house with their van!)

It came time to clean the dining room. Lacking any judgment, one of the technicians decided he should move the china hutch to clean

under it. To save effort (and lacking more judgment still), he held his cleaning wand with one hand while lifting the shimmed-up hutch with the other. Big mistake. The loaded, glass-shelved china hutch lurched forward, tipping and crashing onto the edge of the glass table which forcefully flipped up, smashing into the chandelier, then crashing down onto the floor—glass flying everywhere and destroying everything, including the newly done, custom wallpaper around the room!

My colleague received the call from the hysterical homeowner and raced to the job site. When he arrived, he saw the cleaning crew...asleep on the front lawn! Just then, the husband pulled up and quickly made his way to the trunk of his car. Suspecting the husband might be going for a weapon and not wanting to witness a possible homicide, the newly-hired manager worked quickly to calm down the situation and reassure the distraught homeowners that things would be made right.

Epilogue: The husband did *not* shoot the technicians, but they were promptly fired. The damages were reimbursed (fortunately), and the company was turned around by implementing new policies and procedures and removing the bad technicians.

NOT ISOLATED INCIDENTS? YOU'RE KIDDING!

While the “Hand Grenade Job” may have been an isolated incident, uneducated, uninformed, and sometimes downright unscrupulous carpet cleaners create damage, injure people, and cause distress with regularity. Here are common practices from dubious to downright dangerous that I hear about regularly from clients and other cleaning professionals.

1. Cutting Corners (vs. cleaning them!). Un-rinsed carpets that re-soil rapidly, no extraction stroke, resulting in over-wetted carpets, too fast, too few and/or strokes to do any real cleaning.

2. Fraud. Many companies spray on water...and call it “Scotchgard.” I knew the owner of a local company who found he could save money by buying ready-to-use solvent-based protector and then diluting it with water. Of course, we all know water and oil don't mix—except for this “professional,” apparently!

3. Damage. Failure to take precautions like using corner protectors, furniture tabs, or tarps, along with clumsy, rushed motions, result in more property damage than you could imagine.

4. Scary. Drunk, smelly, dirty, drugged-up, dishonest, perverted, careless...you get the idea.

5. Gross! A technician I knew told me about a time he and the owner of the company were called on a “re-do” to take care of a spot that came back. When the customer wasn’t looking, the owner spit on the spot, rubbed it with his foot, and then informed the customer it was gone! Another company’s technicians pushed so hard for sales that they carried little bottles of urine with them to apply to unsuspecting customer’s carpets in order to sell urine removal services!

6. Dangerous. Recently, I was called on to correct a serious problem for a family who had their upholstery cleaned the week earlier. The chemicals the company used sent family members to the hospital, and when I arrived one week later, the strong solvent fumes made my eyes water! From dangerous chemicals, to slips and falls, to carbon monoxide and other hazards, including mold, fires, and theft, a bad carpet cleaner can create a much greater nightmare than getting ripped off!

THE BEST, MOST CONSISTENT WAY TO ENSURE THAT YOU GET A NIGHTMARE CARPET CLEANER IS TO SEEK OUT A DEAL THAT’S TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE!

THE MAKING OF “A BETTER CARPET CLEANER”: MY STORY

The year Kennedy was assassinated was the year I was born: 1963. It was a different America I grew up in. You could still pray in school, neighbors knew their neighbors, and credit cards were just becoming the rage. Service stations fixed cars, and sold gas at \$.21 a gallon, not candy bars, sandwiches, and soft drinks. Motherhood was considered a respectable profession, and almost everything was closed on Sundays—most of America was at church.

Brookfield, Wisconsin, the suburb of Milwaukee where I grew up, was no different.

My father became an auto mechanic in Germany at the age of fifteen, a profession he carried on in America for 60 years. He was a man of great integrity, love, and patience, and he possessed a work ethic like none other I knew. My mom cared for the six of us kids, and believe me, that was more than a full-time job! As a family, God was the center and Christ was the head. Church participation was assumed and, for the most part, enjoyed.

In 1984, I discovered the profession of carpet cleaning. My first job was with a company called Holiday Quality Services in Brookfield, Wisconsin. The carpet cleaning industry was really taking off, since by that point most homes had wall-to-wall carpet installed. Shampooing had been the rage, but the newer “steam cleaning” process was rapidly catching on. Portables were king and truck-mounted machines were still a bit of a novelty. Processes, procedures, and technologies were being developed, but much of the basic science behind our fledgling industry was established by that point. So, with my little Timbucktoo portable in the trunk of my rusted Chevy Nova, I began what would become my career of 28 years.

The work of a carpet cleaner is hard, I discovered. I enjoyed it, though. Maybe it was the constant variety of new customers and situations. But I think what I liked most was the opportunity to make people feel good, to see them smile. There was nothing like the feeling of cleaning half a room and bringing in Mrs. Smith and watching the expression on her face when she saw how beautiful her home was becoming before her very eyes. It was a great feeling, and that the money was decent certainly didn't hurt either. It wasn't until later that I learned not all carpet cleaners were competent, or ethical for that matter. I was fortunate to learn the trade from some very good people, including Michael Kelly (known as “Kelly”), one of the first certified carpet cleaners in the U.S. He was the Operations Manager at Holiday, and many years later would work with my company in Carson City, Nevada.

About a year later, I purchased my own machine, and with it, helped put myself through college at Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota. I graduated cum laude with a BA in Psychology in 1989 and chose to get back into carpet cleaning shortly thereafter. I moved to Santa Barbara in 1994 and worked as Operations Manager for Star Rug Cleaners, Santa Barbara's only high-end rug-cleaning plant. I also worked for several other reputable firms, having the opportunity to clean for some famous individuals like Carol Burnett, Steve Martin, John Cleese, and Paul Hogan. I continued to educate myself through various trade publications and in 2001 took my first IICRC certification class in Carson City, Nevada, my new home. (The IICRC is the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification.)

We began our business here in September 2003 and decided to create a business with the mission to "create smiles by providing the most outstanding service experience ever." By 2006, I had obtained my IICRC Master Textile Cleaner certification, the highest level of certification in our industry. I began to publish articles online and in local papers to educate people about how to select a good carpet cleaner, and about what the difference is between great and not-so-great service. It is my goal to use this book as a means of elevating the professionalism of our industry in Northern Nevada, benefiting both carpet cleaners and their clients in the process.

I hope you find the material in this book both helpful and encouraging. And don't forget to take advantage of the FREE TRIAL OFFER in this book!

Stephen Jaenchen
SUMMIT CARPET CARE

Reno / Carson Valley
(775) 267-9960

Lake Tahoe Area
(775) 831-9495

www.abettercarpetcleaner.net

Summit Carpet Care

Northern Nevada's Most Experienced Residential and Commercial Cleaning Service

Carpets | Fine Rugs | Upholstery & Leather | Stone, Tile, & Grout

There are many reasons why we truly are “A Better Carpet Cleaner”:

For starters, **no one in Northern Nevada has the Reputation, Experience, Education, Systems, and Guarantee** that we do. Our two IICRC Certified Master Textile Cleaners, with a combined 68 years of professional carpet, upholstery, and tile cleaning experience, can **achieve results no one else can**. We not only are able to get things clean that many others can't, our skill, our adherence to proper cleaning procedures, and our thoroughness enable a deeper clean that **stays clean longer**. Finally, of all our clients surveyed, over **99% have indicated that we have either met or exceeded their expectations!** Our goal is to see that each client we serve experiences a quality of service that our grandparents came to expect every day. One that makes them smile!

The benefits of *thorough and correct* cleaning are many:

Clean carpets, rugs, upholstery, and tile are beautiful. They are healthy. They are easy to maintain. They last a long time. Over time, however, residue buildup accelerates the accumulation of soils that wear carpets out and promote bacterial growth. Thorough and correct cleaning will remove not only these abrasive, unhealthy soils, but also the residues that contributed to their accumulation. This will add life to your flooring, promote a healthier indoor environment, and reduce the overall cost of owning carpeting, rugs, upholstery, or tile.

When is the last time a service truly put a *SMILE* on your face?

We're here to save you money, time, and aggravation...not by doing it cheaper, but by doing it BETTER! Our guarantee is that our service will make you smile...or it's FREE...and that's in writing! Why else would you ever spend your hard-earned money unless it made you smile?

Summit Carpet Care

Reno / Carson Valley
(775) 267-9960

Lake Tahoe Area
(775) 831-9495

Normal Hours of Operation:

Monday–Friday

8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Saturday

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

www.abettercarpetcleaner.net

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission is to make you smile by providing you with the most outstanding service experience ever!

Five Important Reasons to Choose Summit Carpet Care

1. **Reputation.** Summit Carpet Care enjoys a reputation that is second to none. The area's most seasoned carpet professionals, interior designers, and realtors regularly refer our services, including Atkins House of Carpets, Tahoe Specialty Carpets, Earth Stone Gallery, Radtke Tile and Marble, and Coldwell Banker.
2. **Experience.** Summit Carpet Care is experienced in all methods of carpet cleaning, and all carpet and fabric types, as well as the most unusual soiling conditions. We are often called on to correct soiling conditions that other cleaners aren't even familiar with.
3. **Education.** Summit Carpet Care is certified by the IICRC, the world's most recognized body of certification of carpet and upholstery cleaners. Never use a cleaner that is not certified.
4. **Systems.** Summit Carpet Care is committed to first-class

customer service. You will be treated with the utmost respect. We offer the most advanced cleaning technology on the market; it does not over-wet your carpet or leave a sticky residue behind.

5. **Guarantee.** Summit Carpet Care guarantees you'll SMILE...or it's FREE! If you are not thrilled with the service experience you receive from us, we will rush back at no charge or obligation. If you are still not smiling, we will issue a 100% refund.

**Carpet Cleaning – Carpet Repair – Carpet Dyeing
Upholstery Cleaning – Oriental & Area Rug Cleaning –
Drapery Cleaning
Tile & Grout Cleaning – Marble Polishing
– Natural Stone Care**

**ALL SERVICES AVAILABLE
FOR COMMERCIAL ACCOUNTS**

FREE TRIAL OFFER!

**If you've never experienced the excellent services of
Summit Carpet Care, now you can get
100 Sq. Feet, FREE! No Charge, No
Obligation!**

**There will be no high-pressure sales pitch. Just
A Better Carpet Cleaning!**

Call (775) 267-9960 Today!

www.abettercarpetcleaner.net

Restrictions: Must be new client, must own home if residential
or be a decision maker if commercial,
must be present at time of cleaning,

One coupon per client. NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFERS

Chapter 1

“What Kind of Reputation Do You Have?”

When selecting a professional carpet cleaning company you have three choices:

1. **Choose a carpet cleaner that has a low, too-good-to-be-true price.**

You'll likely get the worst experience you ever imagined.

2. **Choose a “commodity” carpet cleaning company.**

This is typically a high-volume company that does a lot of mass media advertising. They may not be the lowest, but their prices are “competitive.” The problem is they don't train their staff very well and they skip vital steps in the cleaning process; that ends up costing YOU in the long run.

3. **Choose a reputable, experienced, certified carpet cleaning firm.**

Choose a cleaning firm that measures up to the seven questions in this book. You will end up with a phenomenal cleaning job AND a pleasant service experience.

The typical scenario with the first two types is to “bait” you with a low price, then “switch” you to their “dual scrub” or “deep clean” system. They proceed to soak your carpet and leave a soapy residue behind. Good luck getting them back again!

Beware of low-priced carpet cleaning

If their price is truly low, you should be concerned about their quality. What are they leaving out? How can they pay their technicians a decent wage and have the best products and equipment at the lowest price?

They can't.

Some companies advertise a low price then charge you more when they get there. Be clear about what is included and what is not.

These so-called "cleaning" companies also happen to be the ones that don't educate themselves or their employees. The result is that carpets and fabrics are ruined every day by uneducated, uninformed, and sometimes downright unscrupulous carpet cleaners.

They are facing soiling conditions they have never seen or heard of due to a lack of education. Or worse, they create a problem on a carpet or fabric, and they have no idea how to fix it. One example is they leave sticky residues in the carpet that cause the carpet or fabric to re-soil rapidly or to discolor.

Top-notch education is readily available in our industry. There is no excuse for cleaners not to educate themselves (and provide useful education to their clients). Part of the problem is that they have fallen into the trap of viewing cleaning as a commodity, and they can't afford to educate themselves. Education is expensive, but ignorance can result in disaster—on YOUR carpet!

Our company invests a great deal in education. Not only do we spend thousands of dollars per year on education, we are heavily involved in our industry, which makes us well-connected with our industry leaders.

This way, if a unique situation arises in the field, we have experts we can call on, thereby bringing the cutting edge of cleaning technology to you.

Our industry provides courses in carpet cleaning, repair, fabric cleaning, marble and tile cleaning, area rug cleaning, customer service, marketing, management, and other related courses.

Many of the organizations offer certification programs that involve testing, and ethics requirements. There are a variety of opportunities to stay plugged in: trade publications, websites, bulletin boards, and more.

We attend every course we can in order to bring you the very best. Many of these courses require travel across the U.S. and can therefore be quite costly. However, we believe, as fiber technology changes and as floor coverings become more complex, proper education becomes even more important.

The bottom line is that you have a tremendous investment in your textiles and flooring systems and it is our duty to know how to best care for them. Understanding cleaning technology at the highest level helps to reduce cleaning residues and creates a healthier indoor environment by eliminating invisible germs and bacteria. It also empowers the cleaner to remove more soil, thereby creating a longer-lasting fabric or floor.

Mystery Shopper Experience Reveals
Poor Customer Service and Inadequate Cleaning Systems

A reputable consulting firm in the carpet cleaning industry undertook a “mystery shop” of three very visible companies in the carpet cleaning industry. The findings shocked even us!

The first company

The first company that was called not only had horrible telephone manners but sent out the rudest, most unprofessional and uninformed crew you could imagine. They acted like they were being bothered the entire time they were there—which was a total of 37 minutes! This crew did not pre-vacuum the carpet, didn’t pre-spot it, and didn’t groom it.

Even though the spots were not satisfactorily removed, the crew was unconcerned and unwilling to try harder. Their one-step method doesn’t even come close to meeting minimum standards of The Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC). Because the crew just brushed over the carpet with the cleaning tool, the soils returned before the day was even over!

At the end of the job, our consultant was required to sign a lengthy document even though the company couldn’t clearly state any reasonable guarantee. And the company had stressed their guarantee to secure the job over the telephone.

To top it off, these idiots never said thank you. Not even a smile the entire time proved that a customer was just another bother in their day. How sad.

The second company

The second company sounded more promising at first. Their telephone courtesies were somewhat better but not anywhere near what they should be. This company gave us a 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. arrival window. At one o’clock the consultant called to check on the arrival time. “Toward the latter,” he was told.

At 4:10 p.m. he called again. “The crew is still at their previous job. They should be about an hour.”

At 5:10, still no crew. Another call revealed that they were still at the previous job. When pressed, the operator said “Well, their previous job went from two rooms to two houses.”

“Oh, so you took on more work on your previous job and bumped me, huh?” the consultant replied.

“Let me get the Operations Manager.”

The so-called Operations Manager said, “It’s only 5:10!”, insinuating they weren’t actually late. They couldn’t give a specific arrival time, so our consultant cancelled the job. If a company doesn’t care enough to communicate with the client, turn down extra work, and offer alternate arrangements for their clients, they don’t deserve the work, no matter how good they are. If you’re not there, you can’t very well do a good job, now, can you?

The third company

The third company was better than the first two but was found to be very lacking for a company considered a “top” company. Booking the job was about as average as the other two. Incorrect information and ignorance ran throughout this experience. This company gave a two-hour window for arrival. They called the day before to confirm—which was good. The morning of the appointment, they called to confirm the arrival time. Good.

When the technician arrived, he was very nice. But due to his inexperience, that was not enough to get them more than a “C average.” He didn’t know anything about the carpet, although he claimed to have been around carpet for a long time. He was baffled, and it was a basic nylon carpet! This technician pre-vacuumed the carpet, pre-sprayed the traffic area, and rinsed. Upon completion, he requested a signature beside several cleaning steps that were not provided. When pressed, we got the tired, old “well, I didn’t have it on the truck.” Duh!

Both companies that actually made it to the job site had cleaning steps on their work order that they were unwilling to do. One step was grooming the carpet. In both cases, that step was on the ticket (put there by their operational system to make sure they do it). Both blew it off as unimportant.

Obviously, any company has their bad days or days when employees just don't want to perform. The scary part about these three companies is that they are very visible companies in the market they serve. The inadequacies and poor attitudes were obviously routine.

At our company, we are extremely passionate about raising the standard of our industry. We commit to be courteous, to do our very best to show up on time, to educate you, to inform you, and to give your carpet the absolutely most thorough cleaning we possibly can. If we ever fail you on that, we will not only express deep regret and concern but will insist on refunding your money if we can't satisfy you.

CHAPTER

2

“What Kind of Experience Do You Have?”

A number of situations that arise in professional cleaning require experience to get the best cleaning and avoid problems.

First, the cleaner must understand what type of carpet they are working on. The type of soiling and how the carpet is used are important factors. Are pets and/or children present? What kind of traffic does it get? What about cooking oils and other environmental soils?

Second, experience is a factor in knowing how to handle other situations that aren't even related to cleaning, but have to do with customer service. Do the carpet cleaners know how to treat me and others they may come in contact with during the service experience? More about this in Chapter 5.

Training is a good start towards understanding these factors, but nothing replaces the right kind of experience. And I do stress the right kind of experience. Practicing something the wrong way for years just means that doing it wrong becomes a habit.

One thing you want to ask is *“how long have you been in business?”* If they have been in business for a while and the references check out from Chapter 1, then you are most likely on your way towards a good fit.

Finally, your professional cleaners need to understand and be experienced in the reason you are cleaning. There are actually six reasons people clean, and many times the cleaning is for more than one reason:

What prompted you to have cleaning done at this time?

The Six Reasons...

Reason 1

Events

Experience proves that events drive more carpet cleaning than any other reason. Whether it is getting ready for Thanksgiving or mother-in-law is coming, events create a sense of urgency that doesn't exist otherwise. Although entertaining guests or family on clean carpet is a fantastic idea, don't let this be the only reason you clean.

Reason 2

Visible Soil

The second most common reason for cleaning is some type of visible soiling. Whether it is a spot or a traffic area, it just becomes unsightly. Many times, waiting until your carpet is visibly soiled is waiting too long. Traffic area damage may have occurred, and spots may have become permanent.

Reason 3

Maintenance

This is one of the best reasons to order cleaning. By properly caring for your carpet, you will dramatically increase the useful life of your carpet and it will look better all the time—even when mother-in-law springs a surprise visit!

Reason 4

Health

This is also a great reason to clean. As your carpet does its job as a “sink” or a “filter” it eventually becomes “full.” It is catching pollens, bacteria, insecticides, asphalt, and many other contaminants that need to be cleaned out.

Reason 5

Problem Solving

Occasionally something happens to a textile that appears to be a defect but can actually be corrected through professional cleaning. Usually, before they send out a representative, carpet manufacturers will require your carpet to be serviced by a certified professional cleaning firm.

Reason 6

Odor Problems

Pet odors, cooking odors, and others make their way into carpets, rugs, fabrics, and floors. There are a variety of new techniques and products available today to treat odor problems. Get a complete evaluation from one of our consultants.

Regardless of what your reason is for cleaning, our company is at your service. We are available for the most routine or complex questions you have.

CHAPTER

3

“What Kind of Training Do You Have?”

The number one reason for poor carpet cleaning is technician error. Would you be surprised to learn that most carpet cleaning companies have no formal training? That they are not required to be licensed? That there is no requirement to have any certification whatsoever? Is training and certification important? After all, isn't carpet cleaning a "menial" task that anyone can perform?

Actually, a carpet cleaning professional is working with one of your most valuable assets. Should it be trusted with just anyone? Unfortunately, our industry is full of "rogues" who only care about how much money they can get from you, and who care nothing about the life of your carpeting. They do not care about the industry in which they work.

Have you ever noticed that in many states, air-conditioning companies, plumbers, and pest-control companies are required to be licensed? Not so for carpet cleaners. Fortunately for you, and for me, there are many fine people in the carpet cleaning industry who realize the standard must be raised. Those of us in that process help to police our own industry. In order to do this, associations and certification organizations were created.

One such organization is the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC). This organization provides certification courses and exams for the carpet cleaning industry. By attending these courses, carpet cleaners are taught about fiber identification, carpet construction, cleaning chemistry, cleaning methods, and professionalism.

In this training, technicians learn the technical aspects of cleaning that assist them in using the proper methods for cleaning specific types of soil from specific types of carpet. A certified firm knows the right way to apply cleaning procedures and chemistry. A certified firm is working together with other certified firms to raise the standard of carpet cleaning in general, therefore providing you with a higher-quality product.

Special Note: Never use a carpet cleaner that is not certified by the IICRC.

The IICRC is just one entity that provides training. There are many opportunities for advanced training and learning. Be sure to ask questions about the specific training the company has.

Our company is certified by the IICRC and is heavily engaged in training in our industry. We are thoroughly trained in each area of service. Be sure to ask us about our designations and certifications.

Cleaning has historically been viewed as a commodity—a menial task that anyone can do. Long before sophisticated textiles and complexly-built indoor environments were created, cleaning may have been a simple task, but that is no longer the case.

Complex flooring systems, sensitive fabrics, and new-age soiling conditions have created a need for advanced education in the cleaning industry. Unfortunately, many cleaners (and consumers) have not understood this concept. We still see ads for \$6.95 per room for carpet cleaning and sofa cleaning for \$45.00. The cleaner puts the ads out, never intending to clean for those prices, and the consuming public gets the idea that cleaning should be cheap.

These so-called “cleaning” companies also happen to be the ones that don’t educate themselves or their employees. The result is that carpets and fabrics are being ruined every day by uneducated, uninformed, and sometimes downright unscrupulous carpet cleaners.

They are facing soiling conditions they have never seen or heard of due to a lack of education. Or worse, they create a situation on a carpet or fabric that they have no idea how to fix. One example: they leave sticky residues in the carpet that cause the carpet or fabric to re-soil rapidly or to discolor.

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Our company invests a great deal in education. Not only do we spend thousands of dollars per year on education, we are heavily involved in our industry, making us well connected with our industry leaders.

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CHAPTER

4

“What Kind of Systems Do You Use?”

There is much debate about whether you should go with “dry cleaning” or “steam cleaning” for your carpet. And as usual, this is only a tiny part of the picture. In this chapter, you will learn about cleaning methods and, more importantly, what steps are required for maximum soil and spot removal without over-wetting the carpet or leaving a sticky residue behind.

Also, you want to know what kind of customer service systems the company has in place. Our world-class customer service means we will show up on time in a clean, lettered vehicle. Our technicians are clean-cut, in uniform, and ready to serve. They will treat you, your family, and your home or office with the utmost courtesy and respect.

We will communicate with you throughout the cleaning process and do our best to answer any questions you have after the job. In fact, we will call you a few days after the job to make sure you are 100% satisfied.

The 12 Step Cleaning Program

Have you ever had a carpet cleaner race through your cleaning job? You wonder how he could have possibly cleaned the carpet in such a short amount of time!

It “looks” clean, but what will resurface in the near future?

We have identified 12 vital steps in the carpet cleaning process that result in maximum soil and spot removal without over-wetting the carpet or leaving a sticky residue behind. These 12 steps also insure that you are satisfied. Most carpet cleaners don’t apply even a fraction of these steps.

When a cleaner rushes through the job, insisting that his “super-duper” cleaning machine does all the work, soil that could have been removed is left behind. In the worst cases, a sticky residue that attracts dirt like a magnet is left on your carpet. And to top it off, it takes three days to dry! That means it is now susceptible to mold and mildew.

Most of the 12 steps are required by the IICRC, yet many cleaners ignore that fact, leaving you holding the bag.

Our 12 Step Cleaning Program

Step 1

Pre-Cleaning Inspection

The carpet or upholstery should be inspected and tested so the cleaner can inform you of the expected results and any potential challenges. This inspection should include identifying the fiber type as well as any potentially permanent stains.

Step 2

Dry Soil Removal

Up to 85% of soil in a textile is dry particulate soil that has bonded to the surface of the fabric. Household vacuum cleaners don't always remove all of the dry soil. If not completely removed, it may "wick" back upon drying.

Step 3

Furniture Moving

Find out what furniture is recommended to be moved, what is included under the regular pricing structure, and what stays in place.

Step 4

Pre-Conditioning Traffic Areas

In this step, a solution is applied that loosens the soil and spots for more effective removal.

Step 5

Pre-Treat Spots

Some spots require special solutions and special care for complete removal and to avoid the stain "setting."

Step 6

Pre-Cleaning Grooming

The carpet or upholstery pile is gently massaged to further loosen the soils so that aggressive, harmful cleaning is not needed.

Step 7

Extraction

Now that the soil has been properly “suspended,” it can be extracted without over-wetting or leaving a sticky residue behind.

Step 8

Neutralizing

A common problem is that some carpet cleaners don’t neutralize the carpet. Not balancing the pH can cause the carpet to be stiff and attract dirt like a magnet.

Step 9

Specialty Spotting

Stubborn stains sometimes require specialty stain removal processes. Because many cleaners do not train themselves, they do not know about these processes. Those who do sometimes gouge customers for these processes by offering a low price to hook you, intending to up the price by charging for “extras.”

Step 10

Post-Cleaning Grooming

The pile of the carpet or upholstery should then be “finished” so it dries and cures in the proper direction.

Step 11

Speed Dry

Proper drying should be insured with high velocity air movers.

Step 12

Post-Cleaning Inspection

A thorough walk-through should be done to insure that you are completely satisfied with your cleaning job.

Should you go with “dry cleaning” or “steam cleaning”?

Is one method better than the other? Are these even the right terms? Well, as usual, these terms only hint at part of the issue at hand. Both “dry” and “steam” are incomplete and inaccurate terms. Neither are technical terms that properly describe carpet cleaning methods.

There are actually four methods of carpet cleaning approved by the IICRC, the world’s most recognized body of certification for carpet and upholstery cleaners.

Method 1

Hot Water Extraction

Otherwise known as “steam cleaning,” hot water extraction is the process most people are probably familiar with. Hot water extraction is the correct technical term, *not* steam cleaning. Actual *steam* is not used at all. A hot water solution is produced and immediately recovered, creating a “flushing” action on the carpet.

The smallest portable machine rented at the grocery store could be called a “steam cleaner,” but a powerful truck-mounted machine is obviously more capable of doing a thorough cleaning job.

However, **the biggest and most important difference is in the person cleaning the carpet.** A trained technician will know what pressure to use, what cleaning products to use, and how to get maximum soil removal and maximum spot removal without over-wetting the carpet or leaving a sticky residue behind. The horror stories of carpet being wet for days are due to operator error, not because “steam” or hot water extraction caused it.

Hot water extraction applied properly will remove more soil than any other method. Further, anything that has seeped into the backing such as coffee, other beverages, or urine can be “flushed out” with hot water extraction. This method can also be used in lightly soiled and maintenance situations, as it is very versatile.

Method 2

Absorbent Pad

Also known as bonnet cleaning, this method employs a round pad that spins across the surface of the carpet, absorbing the soil. A solution is applied to the carpet or the pad to aid in releasing soils. This is a method that some may classify as “dry cleaning” although water-based products are used in almost all “dry cleaning” systems; therefore the term dry cleaning is not technical and would not be desired. Absorbent pad cleaning is not a deep-cleaning method. **It should only be used to clean lightly soiled carpet and upholstery.**

Method 3

Dry Compound

This method uses a powder that has been treated with detergents, water, and solvents. The powder compound is sprinkled on the carpet and a brush with cylindrical brushes is used to work the powder into the carpet pile. The solution in the powder releases the soil. The soil is then absorbed into the absorbent powder. **This method should only be used to clean lightly soiled carpet and upholstery, and for maintenance cleaning.**

Method 4

Shampoo or Dry Foam

In this method, a shampoo or foam is generated and worked into the carpet with a rotary brush or cylindrical brush machine. The shampoo or foam releases the soil. The soil is then vacuumed with the machine or allowed to dry and removed with a conventional vacuum cleaner. When using shampoo, great care should be taken to avoid leaving a sticky residue on the carpet. **This method should only be used to clean lightly soiled carpet and upholstery, and for maintenance cleaning.**

Our company is experienced in all methods of carpet cleaning. Give us a call to consult with us about your needs.

CHAPTER
5

“What Kind of Guarantee Do You Have?”

The goal of every great service company is to do the right thing every time. But the real strength of a service company is how they handle things when you feel that you didn't get what you paid for.

A quality carpet cleaning company should guarantee their work. If you ask the average carpet cleaning technician what their guarantee is, they will usually look confused. They might even ask "what do you mean?" This actually happened in a mystery shopping experience during a "mystery shop" a very reputable consulting firm in the cleaning industry did.

Once the cleaning job was supposedly finished, the technician presented the invoice that had a FULL PAGE contract on the back. The consultant asked, "Do you want me to read this whole thing?" "That's up to you, sir," the technician replied. (By the way, the technician wanted the mystery shopper to sign off on steps the technician didn't even do. He made excuses why each step wasn't needed.)

The mystery shopper continued, "Can you tell me what your guarantee is?" "What do you mean?" "For example, what happens if my spots come back?" "Then we come back." "And if they come back again?" "We come back again." "Do I ever get my money back if you can't completely remove them?" Now, prepare yourself for his response! True story: "Naw sir, those are *your* spots"!

You've got to be kidding me! And this cleaning company had a well-known name in the cleaning industry! The problem with this particular company is their residential carpet cleaning department had become something they no longer put any effort into. They obviously sent the most uncaring crew they could find to do the residential cleaning job.

This is what we are facing out there. So, always ask what the guarantee is and what it includes.

Our company offers a 100% money back guarantee on carpet cleaning jobs.

Our guarantee is simply this: If you aren't absolutely thrilled with the service experience you receive from us, we will rush back to your location at no charge and no obligation. If you are still "unimpressed," we will refund 100% of your investment.

How much should I pay for carpet cleaning?

Professional, certified carpet cleaning provided by a reputable, experienced, and well-trained cleaning firm is not cheap. But it is an investment that pays great dividends. Two common ways of pricing in the carpet cleaning industry are by the *square foot* or by the *room*. In either case, there are questions you want to ask...

Cleaning Questions...

1. What method do you use? (Hot water extraction is the most thorough system.)
2. Do you pre-vacuum the carpet? (Removing dry soil just before cleaning is vitally important.)
3. Do you pre-spot urine and other spots? (This is a very important procedure for many spots.)
4. Do you pre-condition the carpet? (This loosens the soil so they don't have to blast it out.)
5. Do you pre-groom the carpet? (This further loosens the soil before extraction.)
6. Do you neutralize the carpet? (This balances the pH, leaving the carpet softer and avoiding leaving a sticky residue.)
7. Do you post-groom the carpet? (This promotes faster drying, reveals any faint spots that may not have been thoroughly removed, and allows the carpet pile to dry in the right position.)
8. Do you use air movers to speed dry the carpet? (The faster the carpet dries, the sooner you can use it, and the fewer issues you have after the cleaning.)
9. Is all spot cleaning included in the price? (This is a biggie!)

10. Is pet odor treatment included in the price? (Be very clear on this.)
11. Do you give a free bottle of spot remover? (Our company provides a lifetime refill.)
12. Do you give a free pair of booties? (This helps occupants avoid re-soiling the carpet after cleaning.)

Questions about the Company

1. Do you have recent references? (Are they referred by seasoned professionals?)
2. How long have you been in business? (If they just started, find out more about their training, guarantee, and references.)
3. Are you certified by the IICRC? (Many cleaners don't even know what this is!)
4. Do you offer a 100% money back guarantee? (Ask how that is determined.)
5. Do you have an on-time guarantee? (What's your reward if they don't show up on time?)
6. Do you use subcontractors or employees? (If they don't use employees, don't hire them.)
7. Do you do background checks on employees? (If they don't, don't hire them.)
8. Do you have liability insurance? (They need to have coverage in case they break something in your home.)
9. Do you have a re-soiling guarantee? (If the carpet doesn't stay as clean as you think it should, our company will come back and re-clean it for you.)

Our company obviously measures up to all of these questions.

We feel that the more educated you are, the better experience you can get from any service company you use.

CHAPTER

6

“Should I Have Carpet Protector Applied?”

Unfortunately, there is a great deal of confusion about carpet protectors in our industry. Untrained and sometimes downright unscrupulous carpet cleaners give out false information, and in the worst cases, intentionally misrepresent the product.

WARNING: The protector that *was* in your carpet may be GONE, leaving you EXPOSED!

A nylon stain-resistant carpet is made with two protective properties: The first is an acid dye blocker that is basically a clear dye that fills the extra dye sites in a fiber. This helps to keep “foreign” dyes (such as red dye in a beverage) from penetrating the carpet fiber. **The second property is called a fluorochemical.** Two commonly used fluorochemicals are 3M Scotchgard™ or DuPont™ Teflon®. This treatment helps keep spillage from actually getting to the acid dye blocker, but **its biggest job is to resist dry soil.**

By resisting dry soil, less soil bonds to the carpet, therefore more dry soil is picked up by your vacuum or cleaning. Making sure that you have a sufficient amount of protector on your carpet will help keep the soil from bonding to the carpet. Once it bonds to the carpet, it acts like sandpaper on your traffic area. **Once the traffic area yarns are broken down, there is no way to bring them back to their original state.**

**Two Primary Ways That Factory Protector
is Removed from a Carpet**

1. Regular foot traffic.

Over a period of six months to two years, depending on the traffic, a significant amount of protector can be removed from your traffic areas and **needs to be reapplied.**

2. High-alkaline cleaner.

Many cleaners use harsh chemicals on the carpet; those chemicals will strip your carpet's factory protection. If you have had your carpet cleaned in the past, there is a good chance the cleaner removed a significant amount of protector. It needs to be reapplied.

***If You Had Carpet Protector Applied
in the Past and It “Didn’t Work,” Here’s Why***

Four Mistakes Other Cleaners Make In Applying Protector...

- 1. Not using high-quality protector.** Discount protectors are not as effective and sometimes void the warranty of the carpet. Use only the highest quality, recommended protectors.
- 2. Not using a dedicated container.** Using the same container for carpet protector and for cleaners can contaminate the carpet protector, making it gummy and ineffective. Our vans have a dedicated container reserved **ONLY** for carpet protector.
- 3. Not applying the product properly.**

Some cleaners either under-apply or over-apply the protector.

- 4. Not grooming the carpet.**

For the best performance, the product should be groomed into the carpet for maximum penetration. This ensures contact with all surfaces of the carpet yarn and proper distribution and drying. Our company thoroughly grooms the protector into the carpet pile.

“So what happens if I don’t apply carpet protector?”

Five Things for You to Avoid...

1. More permanent stains.

A great-looking carpet can be ruined by an ugly spot. Unprotected carpet doesn’t repel spillage as well as protected carpet. Being able to remove spots and spills more effectively, avoids permanent staining.

2. “Uglier-out” traffic lanes.

Traffic area soil is very abrasive and cuts carpet yarns like a knife. This damaging soil can easily bond to an unprotected carpet. By applying protector, you will increase the life of your carpet dramatically. When you vacuum your protected carpet, the soils will release from the carpet pile much more effectively.

3. Difficult spot removal.

The easier a spot is to remove, the less cleaner you will have to use, the less agitation you will have to use, and the less time it will take. With a protected carpet, many spots can be removed easily with just water or the **free spot remover** we provide you with.

5. Next professional cleaning not as effective.

Because of the first three items in this list, not having protector can reduce the effectiveness of your next cleaning. Having protector applied to your carpet will enhance your next cleaning. More soil will be removed the next time your carpeting is professionally cleaned.

4. Costly service calls.

Although you want to call us out to handle any spot you cannot remove immediately, carpet protector helps you remove more

spots than you could without protector. **You may be able to save a minimum charge by removing the spot yourself.**

Here's the answer to the question of whether to have carpet protector applied: You should always get carpet protector on nylon or wool carpet. Olefin carpet can even benefit in the abraded areas. So, make it your goal to always get carpet protector applied when having professional cleaning done.

CHAPTER

7

“How Do I Best Care for My Carpet?”

There is much discussion in our industry about how often carpeting should be cleaned. Surely you have heard “wait as long as you can before you clean your carpet” or “once you’ve cleaned your carpet, it’s never the same.”

These widely used comments have stemmed from unfortunate encounters with uninformed cleaners who have left the carpet with an overload of detergent residue. The unfortunate consumer has assumed this will happen with all carpet cleaning and resolved to wait until the carpet is in dire straits before cleaning it.

The good news is that a properly-cleaned carpet will not re-soil quickly and will actually last longer. Why? Because damaging soils are removed with effective carpet cleaning. Soil that is not removed by vacuuming, even though it can rarely be seen by the naked eye, cuts and slices the carpet fibers as the carpet is walked on, breaking down the carpet yarns in the traffic areas. The result is that even with restorative cleaning at that point, it will not correct the damage that has been done to the fiber. Not to mention that a carpet that is not cleaned on a regular basis is an unhealthy carpet. Carpet is like a sink. It collects pollens, insecticides, exhaust, and other undesirable substances that get tracked in or blown in from the polluted outdoors. Carpet manufacturers state that a residential carpet should be professionally cleaned at least every 18 to 24 months for best performance. More often if pets and/or children are present and perhaps more often if you are a smoker. The EPA published a guide that suggested regular cleaning frequencies based on number of occupants and other factors.

In short, a carpet that is maintained on a regular basis will not only last longer but will also provide a healthier indoor environment.

Your carpet represents a significant investment. Just like any investment, maintenance is required to get the best return on it. Think about your automobile. You change the oil in your vehicle so the engine will last longer, to avoid costly repairs, and to get top performance from it. The same is true for your carpet, or any floor covering for that matter. By properly maintaining your carpet it will look better, last longer, and contribute to a healthier indoor environment.

Soil is corrosive by nature. It breaks down the fibers of your textiles. Soil that cannot be removed by vacuuming bonds to the carpet; it can then only be removed by professional cleaning. Even though your floors and fabrics may *look* clean, that doesn't mean they *are* clean. Especially if you have pets and children. Soils, pollens, bacteria, asphalt, insecticides, and all sorts of invisible enemies are transferred to your furnishings daily. Not to mention the unmentionable: urine or fecal matter. (I know that's yucky!)

Every day "environmental oils" attract abrasive soils: Carpeted traffic areas coming out of the kitchen collect cooking oils. Sofa arms collect body oils, and hard surface floors collect film from cleaning agents. The grit then eats away at the surface like sand paper.

The solution is to have your carpets, upholstery, draperies, and hard surface floors cleaned at least every 12 months; more often in high traffic areas.

You have probably heard that cleaning your carpets and floors too often is harmful. **This is simply not true IF your floors and fabrics are cleaned according to proper standards.** This myth came from uneducated, uninformed, and sometimes downright unscrupulous cleaners leaving a sticky residue behind, which made the attraction to harmful soils worse instead of better.

Five Easy Ways to Get the Most Out of Your Carpet

1. Check the Warranty

Copies of specific warranties from your carpet purchase may be available from your carpet retailer. Stain resist warranties can vary from 5 to 20 years. **ALL STAIN RESIST WARRANTIES REQUIRE REGULAR CLEANING AND IMMEDIATE SPOT REMOVAL.**

2. Vacuum, Vacuum, Vacuum!

It is said that the three most important rules for maintaining carpet are vacuum, vacuum, vacuum. Vacuum your carpet often; once or twice a week at least. Vacuuming removes the sharp soil that can cut and slice the fiber, causing premature wear. Much of this soil is not visible to the eye. Remove any loose particles such as food, leaves, pieces of crayon, and bugs, as these items can cause a spot on the carpet. Be sure to use a quality vacuum cleaner that is well maintained. If you have any questions about what type of vacuum is best, please ask us.

3. Have Your Carpet Professionally Cleaned Often

Most people don't clean their carpet often enough, perhaps due to the cost or the hassle factor, or because they do not realize how important regular professional cleaning can be. For example, if your traffic areas are visibly soiled, you have already waited too long! Traffic area soil is somewhat oily and bonds to the carpet fibers, eventually staining the carpet. Once this has taken place, even though professional cleaning will make it look much better, the traffic pattern will still be visible. In addition, traffic area soil is sharp—like sandpaper—and it abrades the carpet fibers. To keep this to a minimum, clean your traffic areas before they look visibly soiled.

As a general rule, professional cleaning by a professional, certified firm should be done about once per year. For extremely heavy traffic areas, cleaning may be required more

often. Proper professional cleaning will not leave a sticky residue behind and can be done as many times per year as needed. **MANY STAIN RESIST WARRANTIES REQUIRE PROFESSIONAL CLEANING EVERY TWO YEARS.** Professional cleaning removes the damaging soil that vacuuming has not been able to remove from the traffic areas.

WARNING: UNINFORMED CARPET CLEANERS MAY VOID THE WARRANTY; BE VERY SELECTIVE ABOUT WHICH COMPANY YOU HIRE.

4. Remove Spots Immediately

Spots that are not immediately removed can turn into permanent stains very easily. When a carpet is new, or has sufficient protector on it, plain tap water will remove many spots. However, for those spots you can't remove easily with water, you must use a spot cleaner. **Select a spot cleaner recommended by the carpet manufacturer or by your trained, certified professional cleaner.** Most spot removers purchased over the counter leave too much soap residue and can cause yellowing. Avoid using foam carpet cleaners or any product not made specifically for carpet.

Apply spot cleaner sparingly to white terry cloth and gently massage the spot, causing it to transfer into the cloth. Never pour spot cleaner directly on carpet. If the product you are using seems to cause the spot to re-soil over a few-week period, discontinue use. For any spot that you are not able to remove, and for pet urine or feces, call your professional cleaner immediately.

5. Have Carpet Protector Reapplied

Residential nylon stain resistant carpets are treated with stain resist properties and soil resisters known as Dupont Teflon or 3M Scotchgard™. After a period of two to three years, some of the soil resistor wears off. At that point you should consider having a professional carpet cleaner reapply the protector after professional cleaning. The soil resistor will help soil slide off

the carpet more easily when vacuuming, spots will be easier to remove, and professional cleaning will be more effective.

Unprotected carpet soils faster, doesn't last as long, and is prone to permanent staining.

How to Clean Up a Spill

STEP 1

Cover spill with a WHITE napkin or paper towels. DO NOT use colored paper! It might transfer onto the carpet. Be sure to use a THICK stack to absorb as much of the spot as possible.

STEP 2

Blot by stepping on stack of towels.

REPEAT THIS PROCESS UNTIL NO TRANSFER TAKES PLACE. DO NOT RUB!!!

STEP 3

Apply spotting agent. **Warning:** Do not use over-the-counter spot removers! They can leave a sticky residue that attracts soil and may discolor your textiles. Instead, call us to find out what spotters we recommend.

STEP 4

REPEAT steps 1 and 2. If the spot does not come out, do NOT attempt any further action, as you may set the spot and/or damage your textiles. Instead, give us a call.

Do not over-wet the spot. Keep blotting until dry to the touch.

Why Spots Return after Your Cleaning

Have you ever wondered why spots return after having your carpet cleaned?

There are two reasons spots return.

Reason 1

Wicking

Many times, the spot that is being removed has seeped into the backing of the carpet. This is common with pet urine, beverages, and anything spilled in “volume.” The material dries in the backing and in the cushion (pad) of the carpet. When the spot is cleaned, only the material in the “pile” of the carpet is removed. However, moisture is introduced into the backing of the carpet. As the spot dries, the material in the backing of the carpet “wicks” back into the pile of the carpet much like wax into a candlewick.

Even traffic area soil that is embedded can wick back. This is especially common in glued-down carpet that is heavily impacted with soil. When the carpet is cleaned, it looks good. When it dries, the spots and traffic area soil come back.

The good news is if a spot actually wicks back, it can be removed. When you spot clean, place a folded white terry cloth towel over the spot just after you clean it while the spot is still moist. Place a heavy object on top of the cloth. Be sure to use a non-porous object that won't transfer color onto the carpet. For example, a paper book cover could transfer color. Use a brick, a planting pot, or something like that.

When you have your carpet cleaned professionally, be sure to point out spots that have wicked back in the past, so they can be treated properly.

Reason 2

Re-soiling

Re-soiling is caused by a sticky residue that has been left behind. The residue may be from the spot itself, the cleaner that was used, or both. Some common residue causes are over-the-counter carpet cleaners purchased at the grocery store. Avoid using these cleaners altogether. If you have to use one of these cleaners, or you have to use dishwashing detergent, use as little as possible and rinse with water thoroughly.

Other residue causes are oily spots, duct tape, body oils, lotions, and other sticky or oily substances. If the entire oily residue is not removed, it will attract soil as the carpet is walked on. Even quality professional cleaning may not remove all oily residues the first time.

SPECIAL NOTE:

Cheap carpet cleaners use cheap products that are loaded with optical brighteners. Optical brighteners create an illusion of clean that causes the soil or spot to appear to be removed. The spot is still there. The soil is still there. Optical brighteners create a film that reflects light so that the carpet looks incredibly clean. It's an optical illusion.

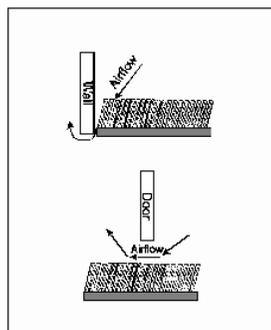
A stark illustration of this can be seen at a flea market or home show. Someone will be demonstrating a miracle cleaner on a small rug. The rug is saturated with motor oil. The salesman then scoops off just the foam of the miracle cleaner and presto, the motor oil is gone! This is physically impossible. Notice that the salesman has several bright lights shining on the demo rug to create the illusion.

Resource Guide

SPECIAL REPORT #1

Ugly Black Lines Along My Baseboards and Under My Doors

If you have light-colored carpet, you may have experienced dark lines that appear on the carpet. This soiling is called filtration soiling because it comes from air passing through the carpet as it is attempting to get through the crack between the carpet and the baseboard.



As the air passes through the edge of the carpet pile, microscopic soiling is deposited there (hence the term filtration soiling.) This occurs over a significant period of time and is not noticed until a buildup has occurred.

This type of soiling is difficult to remove because the soil particles are so fine that they penetrate deep into the carpet pile, even sometimes into the backing of the carpet. Can filtration soiling be removed? Sometimes. With special products, time, and effort, reasonable results can be achieved.

To help prevent filtration soiling, vacuum and wipe the edges of the carpeting on a regular basis. Be careful around the tack-strip on the edge of the carpeting; it could nick your fingers!

*SPECIAL REPORT #2***Cleaning Raw Plant Material**

Jute, sisal, sea grass, coir, and hemp are names associated with floor coverings made from raw plant material. Ranging from mats to wall-to-wall, some with backings, some without, this type of material is in a very raw state. Therefore, an understanding of how the fibers react to every day soiling and how they respond to cleaning is very helpful.

One of the unique characteristics of this type of floor-covering material is the tendency to develop mysterious dark spots when cleaned, regardless of the method used. Generally, efforts to bring a “worn” sisal back to its original state are a lost cause. Also, sisal stains very easily. One of the best things to do is have it protected with a solvent-based fabric protector, providing some resistance against spots that result from any type of spillage. In addition to developing dark spots, sisal may also “lighten” when cleaned. The best way to clean plant material is with a low-moisture approach. The bottom line is that these products are not very spillage, traffic, or cleaning friendly. However, you can't beat the look.

Place this type of floor covering in non-traffic, non-spillage areas to prevent over use. Have a light, maintenance cleaning done about once a year to remove surface soils, pollen, asphalt, exhaust, and other foreign matter that finds its way into our homes.

A final note about sisal: some wool carpets come in a “sisal style.” These products are made to look like sisal, but are actually an entirely different material.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Due to the natural characteristics of these types of materials our company requires a written consent before proceeding with cleaning.

*SPECIAL REPORT #3***What Carpet Fiber Should I Choose?**

When purchasing a carpet, the biggest question is “how long will it last?”

In asking that question, one must consider the clean-ability of that particular carpet. Even though the construction of the carpet plays a significant role in the life of the carpet, the fiber type is extremely important.

Before getting into this report, let it be made clear that **this advice is NOT to override the recommendations of your carpet retailer.** This report simply states some of the characteristics of four fiber types commonly used in carpeting, in order to provide an understanding of how fiber plays a role in soiling and particularly in wear.

There are many fiber types used in carpet manufacturing; however, for the purpose of this article we will focus on the four main players. These will also be the ones you are most familiar with:

- **Olefin (polypropylene)**
- **Nylon**
- **Wool**
- **Polyester**

Olefin (also called polypropylene) has become extremely popular in recent years. The first attraction to olefin is the price. Olefin is generally—although not always—less expensive than other fibers. The second appeal is that this fiber will not absorb any liquid. If you were to take a yarn from an olefin carpet and place it in a glass of water, the fiber would float on the top of the water. Nylon and wool would not, since each would absorb a certain amount of water. The point is this: when something is spilled on olefin carpet, it will not be absorbed into the fiber. The value is that permanent

staining from spillage is reduced. In addition, olefin carpets are solution dyed, which means that the color is introduced to the molten plastic before the fiber is made.

The characteristic of being non-absorbent can present unique cleaning challenges. Sometimes when spillage occurs, it runs down the side of the yarn into the backing of the carpeting. Many times this can cause wicking problems as the spill gets trapped in the backing of the carpet and is not effectively removed. Therefore, it continues to wick up the surface over time. In addition, if an inexperienced carpet cleaner leaves too much liquid in the carpet after cleaning, it simply slides down to the backing of the carpet with the soils, and as the carpet dries, it wicks back to the surface.

The second challenge with olefin is a characteristic that is often overlooked: Olefin fibers are less resilient than others. What that means in plain and simple terms is that when a fiber is crushed, it doesn't "bounce back" as well as other fibers. It also "scratches" very easily. A very common occurrence with olefin installations is the traffic areas begin to look dingy or worn. In fact what has happened is the fibers have been scratched from foot traffic. Imagine a plastic toy that has a scratch on it: there is nothing you can do to remove that scratch. It's permanent. The same is true of an olefin fiber—once it is scratched, nothing can be done to correct it. In a high traffic area, the carpet may appear completely different than the edges against the wall.

The third interesting characteristic of olefin is that it is an "oil-loving" fiber. In other words, in the same way that it repels water-based soils, it absorbs and accepts oil-based soils, making it difficult to remove common oil-based soils in a household, such as lamp oil, lotion, body oils, and cooking oils. This can be especially important to keep in mind when choosing covering for floors just outside a kitchen area. Some of the higher-quality carpet mills "scour" the olefin to attempt to reduce the oil-attracting properties. Our company uses special cleaning agents manufactured for effectively cleaning olefin carpets.

Nylon has definitely been the most widely used fiber in the residential environment, and for good reason. Nylon is very resilient, has good dry soil resistance, and doesn't present as many cleaning challenges.

Nylon is also very resistant to spillage. Since most residential nylon is not solution dyed but dyed after the carpet is made, it is not impossible to stain; however, if the spot is attended to in a timely manner, one can expect excellent spot removal results. Residential nylon carpets are also treated with a fluorochemical such as 3M Scotchgard™ or DuPont Teflon, which helps tremendously with dry soil resistance and stain resistance.

According to a Consumer Reports article in the August 1998 issue, branded nylons performed better than non-branded ones.

Wool is more resistant to foot traffic than any other fiber. This is the reason that you see Oriental rugs that have lasted for so many generations. Wool hides dry soil naturally and is not adversely affected by it for quite some time. Another wonderful aspect of wool is that it is a great insulator. In the winter your home will be warmer inside and in the summer it will be cooler. However, the cheaper wool stains easily and may not be the choice where children and pets are present.

Polyester has some excellent qualities and the dye method makes it very resistant to bleaching, fading and soil dye reactions. It is very resistant to water-based stains, but it is not resistant to oily stains. In fact, an oily spill or spot left without proper cleanup can oxidize and even chemically bond with, and become part of, the fiber. You need to know that some of these spots just won't come out.

Polyester is not a resilient fiber. When crushed it does not regain its original shape easily. Traffic areas tend to lie down, showing "apparent soiling". Furniture marks can be permanent reminders to the owner of where his furniture used to be. Even when cleaned properly it will lay flat. It tends to lie in different directions (nap

reversal) down a heavily traveled hall or room and is very noticeable. The appearance from the nap reversal then looks like a snake down the hall or a pool of water in the middle of a room. Definite improvements have been made by heat setting and using finer yarns, but crimp loss can still be a problem. This is a characteristic of polyester, not a defect.

Testimonials

“The Mustard and make-up stains came out! These were in the carpet at least 3 yrs – absolutely amazed!!”

Jackie Manoukian, Minden NV, September 16, 2011.

“ABCC (A Better Carpet Cleaner) exemplifies professionalism – they were attentive to their commitment and did an excellent job of cleaning and educating me about carpet care.”

Gary Lyon, Carson City, NV, August 30, 2011.

“I appreciated learning about pet stains and how to take care of them.” **Marjorie McGee Gardnerville, NV, August 30, 2011.**

“Extremely professional and still the best in town.”

Walt Borland, Incline Village, NV, September 21, 2011.



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