



Steve and Judy Ransom are the owners of Daystar Cleaning, Inc. and have been in the carpet cleaning business since 1983, serving the Bay County area since 1986. In that time, we've learned that carpet cleaning is the subject of much confusion. In fact, people have so many misconceptions about carpet cleaning that we decided to offer this consumer education message, so, when you select a carpet cleaning company, you can make an informed, intelligent decision.

Our company is certified by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, and Restoration Certification (IICRC). We continually train our technicians in the latest methods and industry standards. We have dedicated this business to helping homeowners get the highest return from their carpet and hard surface floor covering investment. We welcome your inquiries and will gladly answer your questions.

How To Avoid Four Carpet Cleaning Rip-Offs

Rip-Off #1: UNBELIEVABLY LOW PRICE. To some degree all of us are attracted by low price because we want to work within a budget. But some carpet cleaners use price as the bait for their false and misleading advertising. They offer a cheap price—usually between \$13.95 and \$19.95 per room—and then, once they're in your home, they pressure you into buying "add-ons." It's as if you were buying a car and found that the dealer was charging you extra for the tires and steering wheel. Carpet cleaning is not as cheap as some unethical carpet cleaners would like you to believe.

Rip-Off #2: BAIT AND SWITCH. Dual process carpet cleaning describes the process of shampooing or heavy preconditioning, followed with hot water extraction cleaning. Unfortunately, unethical carpet cleaners often use dual process as a bait-and-switch technique. Here's how it's done: First, they "bait" you with a basic cleaning (single process) at an unbelievably low price. Then, when you call, they try to "switch" you to more expensive, dual-process cleaning. If you don't fall for their switch and choose their basic service, you'll likely receive poor workmanship using little or no chemical and they will not guarantee their work.



Rip-Off #3: UNSUPPORTED CLAIMS. "THIS CLEANING METHOD IS THE BEST." You'll read this in almost every ad. You'll hear this from virtually every carpet cleaner. Remember this: the method that's best for you is the method that achieves your goal. If you want a method that cleans the deep-down soil in the carpet, then a method that top cleans only would not be the best for you. So before you choose a carpet cleaner, identify your objectives. Then select the method that best reaches those objectives.

Rip-Off #4: OUTDATED BELIEFS. "HOT WATER DAMAGES YOUR CARPET." Years ago, many people believed this was true because carpets were damaged by "technicians" who didn't know how to properly clean using hot water. But today, we know it's false. By washing and then rinsing your carpet with hot water, your carpet is thoroughly cleaned—in the same way that the person who showers and then rinses off the dirt and soap will be much cleaner than the person who takes only a sponge bath. Obviously, each carpet cleaner will be biased toward his/her own method. And each method does have advantages. So I suggest you look to what carpet manufactures say. Shaw Industries, the largest carpet manufacturer in the world, recommends only hot water extraction cleaning with a truck-mounted unit used by firms that are certified with the Institute of Inspection Cleaning Restoration Certification (IICRC).

Six Costly Misconceptions About Carpet Cleaning

Misconception #1: *"You should wait as long as possible before cleaning your carpet."*

No. Dirt is an abrasive—like sandpaper. Every time you step on your carpet, you grind dirt into the carpet fibers. This cuts your carpet, causing it to wear out faster. A dirty carpet will not last nearly as long as a clean carpet. And, while vacuuming helps, by itself it's simply not enough. The longer you wait to have your carpet cleaned, the more damage you do to your carpet, and the faster it wears out.

Misconception #2: *The only reason to clean carpets is to remove the dirt.*

No. As you probably know, outdoor air contains pollens, fungus, bacteria, air pollution, cigarette smoke, car exhaust—and hundreds of other chemicals. When you and your family members come into your home, you carry those pollens, bacteria and chemicals in your hair and on your skin, clothing, and shoes. Not surprisingly, all those chemicals, pollens, and bacteria wind up—you guessed it—in your carpet.



If you have allergies, asthma, emphysema, or other breathing problems, one major source of your problem could be the pollens, fungus, and chemicals in your carpet.

In addition, as you may know, tobacco smoke contains over 4000 different chemical compounds, 43 of which cause cancer. And even if you don't smoke, those chemicals get on your shoes; you track them into your home and leave them in your carpet. If you're sensitive to cigarette smoke, you might find that you'll breathe *easier* after you hire a company to get those harmful chemicals out of your carpet.

So, in addition to getting rid of dirt, another important reason to clean your carpet is to get rid of pollens, fungus, bacteria, chemicals, and the tars and residue from tobacco smoke. Not only do you want a clean carpet—you also want a **HEALTHY** carpet.

Misconceptions #3: *One method of carpet cleaning is as good as another.*

No. You can choose from two primary methods: Dry cleaning or hot water extraction.

First, I'll explain dry cleaning. Many people believe that dry cleaning your carpet is like dry cleaning your clothing. This is not true. All carpet cleaning methods use water in one form or another. Here are the three methods of dry cleaning carpet:

When a carpet cleaner uses dry foam, he applies shampoo to your carpet, allows it to dry, and then sucks the dried shampoo into a vacuum. Can you imagine applying shampoo to your hair, allowing it to dry, and then removing the shampoo from your head with a vacuum? This method can leave a residue in your carpet, which is one reason dry foam is not very effective.



The dry-chemical method is similar to dry foam. The major difference is that when dry-chemicals are used, the company sets a large cotton bonnet on your carpet. Using a machine, the bonnet spins from side to side, absorbing the dirt that's in the carpet. After the bonnet is saturated with dirt, another cotton bonnet is applied. Bonnet cleaning is like trying to use a large towel to rub the dirt out of your carpet. Like dry foam, it is not very effective.

The dry-compound method spreads an absorbent mixture that looks like wet sawdust all over your carpeting. Then the machine brushes the mixture into the carpet, which in theory causes dirt to absorb into the mixture. When the mixture has dried, a vacuum cleaner sucks the material out of the carpeting. Because the carpet is not rinsed in any way, this method is not very effective.

The second carpet cleaning method is called hot water extraction. This is a fancy way of saying that a hot water cleaning solution under high pressure is forced into the carpet and then sucked out of the carpet. This method is also referred to as steam cleaning, even though steam is not used.

Shaw Industries, the world's largest carpet manufacturer, recommends hot water extraction. You can choose from two different types: portable extraction, which is done with a small machine; or truck mount extraction, which means the large cleaning machine is mounted in a truck or van.

Not surprisingly, the truck mount extraction cleans much better because it heats the water to a higher temperature—and shoots the cleaning solution into the carpet at higher pressure—which breaks up the dirt, bacteria, and pollens. Then the machine uses high suction to draw the dirt out of the carpet. This is the method Daystar Cleaning uses.

No question, the most effective way to clean carpeting is with a hot-water unit mounted in a truck. It is the most powerful cleaning machine on the market and the only machine that thoroughly cleans your carpet of dirt, harmful bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollens, and tobacco residue.

Methods that use cold and even warm water remove dirt—but are not as effective as the hot-water truck mount method.

Some people believe that hot water damages your carpet, but this isn't true. By washing and then rinsing your carpet with hot water, we clean your carpet completely -- in the same way that the person who showers and then rinses off the dirt and soap will be much cleaner than the person who takes only a sponge bath.



Misconception #4: *Having the right equipment is all a company needs to clean your carpets properly.*

Not true. Many companies own hot-water cleaners—but a large number of employees don't know how to use them. You probably know someone who bought the newest computer on the market— but didn't learn how to use it for a year or more. The same is true with carpet cleaning machines. The company may own good equipment, but the employees may not know how to use it correctly. This is why it is important that you choose your carpet cleaner carefully.

The best carpet cleaning companies are those which are certified by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification, known as the IICRC. A carpet cleaner cannot buy this certification. He must *earn* the certification through study, experience, and the successful completion of formal, written examinations. Cleaners who are certified by the IICRC have, in effect, earned a *degree* in carpet cleaning.

So before you choose a carpet cleaning company, ask if they are IICRC certified.

Misconception #5: *The company that offers the lowest price is the company you should hire.*

No. We've seen so many problems arise from lowest-bid companies that I suggest you NEVER hire the company that quotes the cheapest price. The two most common problems are:

#1: The price you see offered may not be for the services you want performed.

Before you select a company, decide what you want to accomplish. If you want the carpet cleaner to remove only *some* of the dirt, you can choose from hundreds of companies that use small shampooers or other cleaning methods. Or, you can even rent a machine at the grocery store and do the job yourself.

On the other hand, if you want your carpet thoroughly cleaned—if you want to remove the harmful dirt, bacteria, pollens, chemicals, and tobacco residues—then you need to hire a company that uses a hot water cleaner mounted in a truck. This is the only way to assure that your carpet remains healthy and free from dirt, disease-causing bacteria, and hurtful chemicals. So remember that the price you see offered may not be for the services you want performed.

#2: The price you see advertised may not be the price you pay.

Many homeowners have learned that the low price they saw advertised was not the amount they were charged.

And if you've ever hired a carpet cleaner, you too may have been the victim of false or misleading advertising. You probably learned the hard way that some carpet cleaners offer a cheap price—such as \$9.95 per room—and then pressure you into paying a lot more once they get inside your home. Some of them may even break the law by using illegal bait and switch tactics.

As in all businesses and professions, the carpet cleaning industry has its share of bad apples. I take no pleasure in telling you this, but some are unethical—and sadly, a few are dishonest. By their misleading advertising and false promises, they cast a dark shadow on our entire industry.

Then you'll find other carpet cleaners—professionals like us at Daystar Cleaning—who work hard to earn your trust and respect.

As a way of improving our profession, we've dedicated our business to educating the public. The only way you can make an intelligent decision is to have all the facts you need. This is why we're providing you with this information.

Misconception #6: *Any honest carpet cleaning company should be able to give you an exact price quote over the telephone.*

I wish this was true, but it isn't. Consumers often think that if they want to clean four rooms and the price is \$12 per room, then the price will be \$48. But this isn't always true.

First, honest, reputable carpet cleaning companies usually price carpet cleaning by the square foot. So if you'd like us to tell you the exact cost of cleaning your carpet, we need to know the exact number of square feet that you want cleaned. To get an accurate measurement, we have a measuring tool to calculate the exact size of your carpeted area.



You'll be glad to know that the carpet area to be cleaned is not nearly as great as most people think. For example, if you want your entire home cleaned and your home is 2000 square feet, the amount of carpeting to be cleaned might be only 1200 square feet. This is because most home measurements are outdoor measurements. Plus we deduct the area taken up by walls, room dividers, and the like. The result is that the actual area to be cleaned is usually only about 60% of the square footage of your home.

So even though we can't give you an exact quote over the telephone, here are things we consider when quoting a price:

First, the type of carpet. Certain types of carpet are harder to clean than others. So before we can give you a quote, we need to know the type of carpet you want cleaned.



Second, the amount of soiling. Carpet that hasn't been cleaned for ten years will take longer to clean than carpet that has been cleaned within the last six months.

Third, the amount of furniture that has to be moved. If we have to move your furniture, the bid must include that labor. But if you move your furniture, you'll save money.

Fourth, we at Daystar Cleaning have different cleaning packages to fit *your* budget and to meet your needs.

To recap, we consider the type of carpet, the amount of soiling, the amount of furniture that has to be moved, and the cleaning package you would like. So, as you can now imagine, every quotation is different.

Four Recommendations For A Fresh, Clean, Healthy Carpet

If you are thinking about having your carpets cleaned, we offer these four recommendations:

Recommendation #1:

Make a commitment to yourself to get your carpets cleaned. The longer they remain dirty, the sooner they'll wear out—plus, the longer you'll have to breathe all the pollens, fungus, chemicals, and dust mites that live in your carpet.



Recommendation #2:

List your objectives. Do you want only *some* of the dirt removed, something you could do with a rented machine? Or, do you want to *increase* the life of your carpet, and have the bacteria, fungus, and chemicals removed, which will require a hot water truck mount cleaner, like we use? Do you want to work with an honest, reputable company with years of experience—or are you willing to risk working with the company that offers you the lowest price? We simply warn you to be aware of cheap, brush-the-dirt-off-the-top cleanings, which really don't do much for the longevity and beauty of your carpet.

Recommendation #3:

Ask questions. The way you learn about a company is to ask specific questions and listen carefully to the answers. Here are the questions we suggest you ask:

1. What method of carpet cleaning do you recommend?
2. What type of equipment do you use to clean carpet?
3. What does your equipment remove from my carpet?
4. How often should I get my carpets cleaned?
5. What training have you had in cleaning carpets?
6. Are you a member of any trade associations and, if so, which ones?
7. Is your company certified by the IICRC?

Recommendation #4:

Once you are satisfied that you're working with an honest, competent professional, invite him into your home and ask for a specific quotation in writing. A written quotation gives you the assurance that you know exactly what your job will cost—no surprises.

By following these four recommendations, you'll gain all the information you need to make an informed, intelligent decision. If you just want a quick, cheap carpet cleaning job, many companies can help you. Or you can rent a shampooer and do the job yourself.

But if you want your carpeting to be completely and thoroughly cleaned -- removing the bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollens, and tobacco products -- then I invite you to call Daystar Cleaning.

We'll be happy to answer your questions and then set up an appointment to come out to your home and give you a free written quotation—without obligation of any kind. To reach us, call **850-769-0606**.

The Daystar 100% Guarantee



Here's one last point: We know that many consumers are a little skeptical about carpet cleaning companies. Before we got into the business, we were skeptical too. So, in addition to dedicating our business to consumer education, we do one more thing as well.

We guarantee our work. That's right. We fully guarantee every carpet cleaning job we do. If you aren't happy with our work, we'll re-clean the area for free. And if you still aren't pleased, we will give you your money back.

What could be more fair?

As a matter of fact, add this question to the list.

Question #8 is: *"Do you guarantee your work? If so, what kind of guarantee do you offer?"*

Not all companies do -- and it's important that you have this information *before* you make your decision.