

Commercial Carpet Care Guide

Carpet in a commercial setting continues to be a popular floor covering choice for many reasons:

- **Aesthetics** – as a vibrant focal point of a facility, carpet sets the stage for the environment’s decorations.
- **Safety** from slips and falls – carpet is not only a great cushion for feet, it can help prevent slips and falls.
- **Sound Reduction** – carpet is a sound-reducer and is quieter than hard flooring.
- **Insulation** – carpet can insulate against heat in warm climates and retain warm air longer during the cool season.

For whatever reason a facility manager chooses carpet, it’s a significant investment, both in financial terms as well as the overall facility image. The weight of preserving this investment falls to the carpet care professionals who are charged with the important task of keeping the carpet looking like new.

Carpet care professionals are not only preserving the appearance of the carpet – and preventing it from being prematurely replaced – they are helping to maintain a positive impression of the facility.

Cleaning professionals know that preserving carpet is not an easy task, especially when faced with the challenge of addressing spots that aren’t typically visible until they turn into much harder-to-treat stains. But, maintaining carpet to a building’s high standards can be easily achieved, provided a successful carpet maintenance program is implemented.

Designing and implementing a carpet maintenance program should ideally start as soon as the carpet is installed. To make sure a cleaning staff is caring for carpets in the most effective way, it’s important to study the building’s layout to determine what the high traffic areas are so those spots can be tended to daily.

Looking at the layout can also help determine foot-traffic patterns and loading areas to determine where the majority of dirt and soils will be tracked in. Another key reason to study the building layout is to determine the entryways and plan a matting system to prevent a majority of the dirt from being tracked along the carpet. Additionally, it’s not a bad idea to always keep in mind how much it would cost to replace the carpet. With that dollar figure in mind, you and your staff will be more motivated to keep the carpets in their best condition.

Daily Maintenance

Daily maintenance is designed to keep the surface clean and free of loose soils and spots, and is considered the most important aspect of carpet care maintenance. Vacuuming, which can remove more than 80% of dry soil, is the most important element of a daily maintenance program, along with a plan to address spots.

Carpet spots – When spots, stains or spills occur they cannot be allowed to remain until the next scheduled overall cleaning. It's critical that spots are quickly addressed, or else they can become deep soils that can cause the carpet to look old and result in premature carpet replacement. While spills and soils take their toll on carpets, the deep soiling is preventable if the carpet is treated with effective and reliable carpet cleaning products.

Appearance Retention Carpet Cleaning (Surface Cleaning)

Surface Cleaning will often utilize cleaning methods such as "bonnet" systems, "Absorbent Compound" (powder) systems, or "dry foam" systems, or Encapsulation systems. These methods are noted for their short drying time and their ability to greatly improve appearance without damaging the carpet or leaving a harmful residue. The function of these methods is to maintain an acceptable level of appearance at all times instead of just waiting until the carpet looks bad and then performing corrective or restorative cleaning.

Restorative Maintenance

Restorative maintenance, which includes extraction cleaning, is performed when carpets appear heavily soiled. Designed to clean the entire length of the carpet fiber, extraction cleaning typically occurs one to four times a year. The key is to use a carpet extraction product that is both an extraction cleaner and a sanitizer. Using a two-in-one extraction product will attack mold, mildew and effectively sanitize against odor causing bacteria. In addition to poor carpet appearance, odors are one of the primary reasons for carpet replacement. The best way to preserve carpet boils down to two important tactics: defining a regular maintenance schedule for carpet cleaning; and product performance. The products you use and the ability to apply them correctly are critical to achieving increased productivity, profitability and longevity of your carpet's life.

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The Encapsulation Cleaning Process

Encapsulation fixes common commercial carpet cleaning problems. It eliminates recurring spill stains and wicking. The crystallizing polymer encapsulates soil so it can be extracted with routine vacuuming. There is no sticky residue so it can't attract soil. What you'll see is incredibly bright and clean carpet, day after day.

How soil affects carpet. Most dry soil in a commercial setting can be readily removed by routine dry vacuuming. It's the oily and sticky soils that attract and hold dry soil to the surface. The result is a dull, gray and ugly appearance.

Encapsulation chemistry cleans better and helps carpet stay cleaner longer. The first step in effectively cleaning any carpet is to counteract sticky soils. The encapsulation chemistry surrounds each soil particle and crystallizes so it can't attract other soil. The encapsulated particles release from the fiber and are easily extracted with normal vacuuming. And since there is no dirt-attracting residue left behind, the carpet stays cleaner longer.

Proven technology within the commercial carpet industry. A number of the largest commercial carpet manufacturers in the country are recommending and/or using various forms of encapsulation cleaning to maintain their commercial floor coverings.

Walk-off mats ...

According to the Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI), 80% of the soil brought into a building can be trapped within the first 12 to 15 feet after stepping onto a carpeted surface. To be effective, soil control mats should allow room for at least six footsteps, about 18-20 feet of walking space, and should be placed at all entryways and major transition areas. Unfortunately, most floor mats are an inadequate 2-9 feet!

Walk-off mats should be cleaned frequently. Once a walk-off mat becomes filled with soil, the soil will then transfer to the soles of shoes and spread throughout the facility. A good walk-off mat performs these three tasks:

1. Removes soil from the shoe.
2. Absorbs large amounts of dirt, slowing the rate of transfer onto carpet surfaces.
3. Absorbs excess moisture from wet shoes, thereby reducing soiling on the interior carpet.