

MAINTAINING YOUR CARPET INVESTMENT

- I. Steps for Home Carpet Maintenance as recommended by the International Institute for Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC):
 - A. Control soil entering the home through the use of mats at each entry door, both outside and inside, that absorb or collect soil and moisture entering the home before it reaches the carpet. Shake or vacuum these mats regularly.
 - B. Routine vacuuming with properly maintained, quality equipment is most important. Select a vacuum that has brush agitation and a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtering system or bag.
 - C. Attend to spills and spots immediately.
 - D. Avoid using cleaning chemicals in carpeted areas containing chlorine bleach or other bleaching or discoloring agents.
 - E. Regular professional cleaning is important in extending the life of your carpet and also in maintaining indoor air quality (IAQ). Most fiber manufacturers now require periodic professional cleaning to maintain fiber warranties.

- II. Spot Removal
 - A. Spotting supplies needed
 1. a dry vacuum
 2. white or color-fast towels or other absorbent cloth
 3. A tool such as a spoon to remove or break up solid particles.
 4. a detergent spotter
 5. a solvent spotter
 6. plain water
 - B. Procedure
 1. If fresh, blot liquids or scoop away solids.
 2. If dry, remove solid particles by breaking them up and vacuuming away as much as possible.
 3. Apply either plain water or a detergent or solvent spotter depending on the spot. Spray or use a bottle with a drip applicator rather than poring. **NOTE: Do not** apply chemicals directly to upholstery or drapery fabric. Apply to a cloth first and test an inconspicuous area for color change before attempting spot removal.
 4. Blot, do not scrub, with your towel until there is no more color transfer onto your cloth.
 5. Rinse thoroughly with plain water.
 6. Blot excess moisture and cover with a folded, dry cloth. Weight the cloth down with something that is not moisture sensitive and leave for several hours. Remove and let air dry.
 7. If the spot is not removed by the above procedures, the chances are that it may be a stain rather than a spot. Consult your professional carpet cleaner for other alternatives.

III. Selecting Spotting Chemicals

- A. Alkaline detergent spotters (ph 8-10) work well on spots caused by materials that are acid such as coffee, tea and colas.
- B. Neutral detergent spotters (ph 5-7) are for use on wool and non-color fast material.
- C. Acid spotters (ph 3-5) can be used to neutralize alkaline spots such as urine and to stabilize dyes.
- D. Solvent spotters are used for oily or greasy spots.
- E. The above are available from janitorial supply stores, from independent distributors of cleaning chemicals and some are found in the supermarket. Stronger chemicals for more complicated spot removal are not available for home use.

IV. Selecting a Carpet Cleaner

- A. Consider the length of time in business.
- B. Consider professionalism such as trade association membership, Chamber of Commerce or Better Business membership.
- C. Consider certification by certifying bodies such as the International Institute of Carpet and Upholstery Certification and on-going educational programs for the firm's cleaning technicians.
- D. Ask for verification of insurance coverage, employee bonding and guarantees of service.
- E. Ask for references.
- F. Ask friends and other acquaintances about their experiences.