



Maintenance guide

Having made the decision to choose carpet as a floor covering for your premises it makes sense to protect the investment which this represents.

Over 80% of soiling deposited on interior flooring is tracked in from outside the building. Barrier mats or barrier carpets are essential first line defences against foot borne soiling. Barrier mats trap the majority of soiling before it can be walked on to the main carpet and the trapped contaminants should be regularly removed from the barrier area in which they are confined.

Not all soiling will be removed by barrier mats and some street soil will be deposited on the main carpet area.

Regular cleaning and a programme of routine maintenance are essential to retain the original visual effect and allow the carpet to perform satisfactorily.

Silk and Bamboo pile fibres

These products are known for their unique characteristics and are most suited to luxury use, and therefore, to maintain their appearance, should be dry cleaned only by a professional organisation.

We do not recommend that carpets produced in these pile fibres are subjected to any form of wet cleaning or that any liquids are used to treat spots or stains as this may cause unsightly matting or loss of colour in treated areas.

Vacuum Cleaning

Upright cleaners with strong suction and driven brushes are the most effective models for cut pile carpets, suction only cleaners should be used on loop piles. Your cleaner needs to be maintained in good working condition and should be inspected regularly. Slow passes of the cleaner head in directions at right angles to each other over a given area of carpet will allow the suction to remove most surface soiling and soil which has penetrated to the base of the pile.

Most vacuum cleaners have different height settings to allow adjustment to different pile heights and constructions. Experience will show which height setting is most suitable, providing the slight resistance to cleaning passes which is desirable.

Heavy Soiling Areas

Main traffic lanes leading from entrances, lobby's and reception areas are places where the heaviest soiling takes place as are those where people queue or stand waiting for lifts etc. These areas require daily vacuum cleaning with several passes in different directions to expose the pile to maximum suction action.

Light Soiling Areas

Those areas which receive infrequent traffic or which can only be reached by walking some distance over other carpeted floors are likely to receive very little soil contamination and may be cleaned less regularly or following use. Examples are meeting rooms, board rooms and archive storage.

Barrier mats and regular vacuum cleaning will keep soiling to a minimum but eventually some effects of soiling will show themselves. The carpets fresh appearance may begin to fade and the surface become dull. Stains from spillage may become increasingly evident and at this stage action beyond regular vacuum cleaning is called for.

Wet Cleaning

There are several methods of wet cleaning to choose from. The most effective method is hot water extraction which flushes out ingrained soiling using a shampoo, then rinses the carpet to remove any detergent residues which could encourage re-soiling.

There are cleaning contractors who specialise in this type of operation or a suitable machine can be purchased or hired for the purpose.

Manufacturer's instructions for use should be carefully followed and staff must be trained to operate the machine correctly.

The carpet becomes wet during the cleaning cycle and should not be walked on until it is absolutely dry (24 hours is usual). This time may be reduced significantly by adequate ventilation, ambient temperature and use of air movers (Turbo Dryers). This disruption to usual business may not be acceptable or possible and an alternative cleaning process may be required.

Dry Cleaning

In this process a detergent powder is brushed into the carpet, left for half an hour or so then removed by vacuum extraction. The powder is moist but the carpet will only become slightly damp with a very short drying time. As with wet cleaning, professional specialists can be called in or machinery bought or hired, again staff should be trained in correct operation following manufacturer's instructions.

Staining

Staining caused by spillage or by the deposit of adhesive substances to which soiling will stick, usually becomes immediately obvious. It is important to treat spillage stains early, preferably before they dry out, to reduce pile penetration and remove as much of the spillage as possible. Staff should be vigilant and report spillage incidents immediately so that effective, remedial action can be initiated.

Wet Staining

Tea, coffee, wine, beer, soft drinks etc. all compounds which include a high proportion of water, should be blotted with clean dry cloths or absorbent paper towels, any solid particles should be wiped or scraped up.

When most of the liquid spillage has been removed the residual staining should be diluted with water applied with a clean cloth or sponge. Care must be taken not to over wet the carpet or to scrub the surface. A gentle action working from the outside edge of the stain to the centre will prevent spread and concentrate the stain for removal.

Oil or Grease Stains

Butter, face and hand creams, wax, cooking oils, and fats are examples of spillage which can be treated with methylated spirits. An impregnated cloth is applied to the pile which loosens the grease. Larger deposits of chewing gum, blue tac etc., can be removed by the application of citrus gels, which must be rinsed out. Care must be taken to ensure adequate ventilation, and excessive application can damage certain carpet constructions. Manufacturer's instructions must always be followed by staff carrying out the cleaning process.

Treatment of Stains and Spillage

There are three main categories of stain:

- Water Based
- Grease Based
- Combination of both Water and Grease

Water Based Stains

Tea, Coffee, Beer, Fruit Juices, Wine, Soft Drinks

Method:

Blot the stain, remove any solids, apply warm water on a clean cloth or sponge, do not over wet. Work from outside of stain towards the centre, repeat if necessary. Treat remaining residues with very dilute shampoo and rinse. Thoroughly blot, allow to dry and then vacuum.

Grease Based Stains

Butter, Wax, Lipstick, Fat, Face Creams, Oil

Method:

Firstly remove any solids, blot the affected area. Apply

methylated spirits or citrus gels, rinse thoroughly, allow to dry and then vacuum.

Caution: Follow manufacturer's instructions, ensure adequate ventilation and prohibit smoking. Some chemicals may cause damage if used excessively.

Combination Stains

Ice Cream, Milk, Gravy, Chocolate Drinks

Method:

Remove any solids, blot the stain. Apply warm water on a clean cloth or sponge, do not over wet. Work from outside the stain towards the centre, repeat if necessary. If stains remain, apply methylated spirits or citrus gels, rinse thoroughly, allow to dry and then vacuum.

Caution: Follow manufacturer's instructions, ensure adequate ventilation and prohibit smoking. Some chemicals may cause damage if used excessively.

Maintenance Summary

1 Protect your carpet

Place barrier mats to trap soiling walked in from outside. Identify sources of soiling inside your premises such as canteens, restaurants, vending machines, workshops etc. Isolate them by fitting barrier matting or barrier carpet. Prohibit eating, drinking and smoking in carpeted areas.

2 Remove soiling regularly

Identify your cleaning needs and formulate a regular and thorough maintenance schedule with your cleaning staff or cleaning contractor.

3 Tackle spillage and stains early

Encourage staff to report spillage and stains immediately, and respond to the problem quickly. Be prepared, ensure that suitable stain removal materials are readily available, that staff know where they are and how to use them.

4 Professional help

Locate a reputable professional cleaning company, ask

them for references. Provide them with details of carpet specification and construction. Obtain guarantees and agree price quotations in advance.

5 Health and safety

Train staff, be aware of chemical content of sprays, shampoos and cleaning fluids etc. Follow manufacturer's instructions. Inspect equipment regularly, assess any hazards and take adequate measures to avoid them.

6 And finally...

This booklet is offered as a service to our customers, it provides general installation and maintenance guidelines and outlines basic carpet care. Firth Carpets and Floorings Ltd will not be held responsible for damage or injury arising out of any action taken based on the advice in this booklet.

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