

Floor Covering Basics *(Product Care & Maintenance)*

Product Care

Shelmarc Carpets are quality engineered to provide a long, useful life and enhance the indoor environment. Carpet offers many advantages over other flooring systems, such as reduced fatigue, sound absorption, and lower life cycle costs.

From the start, the carpet maintenance program should be considered part of the carpet buying decision. If proper maintenance is neglected, the carpet's appearance will suffer, shortening its useful life and raising long term costs.

A comprehensive carpet care program* consists of four elements:

Cleaning by high-performance hot-water extraction

Reduction of soil entering the building

Removal of spots and spills

Removal of dry soil

The Importance of Planning

Carpet maintenance must be established as a scheduled program, rather than as a random series of reactions to soiling conditions and infrequent cleaning. Virtually every complaint of poor appearance, rapid soiling and, many times, poor performance has been shown to be related to a lack of planning and control of the maintenance program.

The most important consideration when planning a maintenance program is the budget. Like other expensive furnishings or equipment, carpet represents a substantial investment for any facility and requires adequate care to prolong its effective life. If the carpet maintenance budget is set unrealistically low, the carpet will need to be replaced prematurely. Tailor the design of the program to the amount of traffic and type of soiling, which vary by area. Due to higher traffic levels, entrance lobbies elevators, and hallways will need more care than offices. Food service areas and entrances will require more effort due to the more difficult soiling conditions. Consult the chart on the following page for suggested maintenance frequencies by traffic levels.

What you can expect from your carpet in the real world.

Although Shelmarc products are designed for specific applications and are tested to withstand the tremendous beating that carpet receives in those recommended uses, there are some conditions where appearance change must be expected. In areas where the oily material from asphalt sealers is tracked into the building, carpet and other flooring may become yellowed over time. It is virtually impossible to remove all of this material once it has penetrated the fiber of any carpet. Walk-off mats and periodic cleaning can reduce this phenomenon. When sealing asphalt parking lots, specify a high-quality sealer and ask the vendor for a warranty that this will not occur. Areas where large amounts of sandy soil enter the building may become dull in

appearance over time. This is due to abrasion of the fiber surface, reducing the reflection of light. Frequent vacuuming minimizes this.

- Please note that the information in this booklet pertains to most carpets made of synthetic or man-made fibers in commercial installations. Some procedures may not be suitable for wool or wool-blend carpets or printed carpets. For these type carpets, please see the special appropriate maintenance brochure from the Shelmarc Technical Services Department.
- This brochure contains specific procedures for maintenance and printed carpets.

Recommended Minimum Maintenance Frequency

Traffic Level	Vacuum	Pile Lift	Spot Clean	Hot Water Extraction
Light	Every 2-3 Days	As Needed	Daily If Needed	Annually
Medium	Daily	Quarterly	Daily If Needed	Every 6 Months
Heavy	Daily	Monthly	Daily If Needed	Quarterly
Sever*	Daily	Weekly to Monthly	Daily If Needed	Weekly to Monthly

Light Traffic = Private Offices & Cubicles

Medium Traffic = Shared Offices, Interior Hallways, & Conference Rooms

Heavy Traffic = Entrances, Elevators, Main Hallways, Break Rooms, Work/Copy Rooms, & Mailrooms

Severe Conditions = Airports & Entries to Hospitals, Malls & Theaters

*(Extra-Heavy Traffic & Soiling Require Frequent Attention)

Reduction of Soiling

One of the most critical aspects of maintenance is the use of walk-off mats at building entrances. Mats are also one of the least understood and most neglected parts of the maintenance program. Walk-off mats greatly reduce the amount of soil carried into a building by foot traffic. Other areas where mats are beneficial are service entrances with direct contact to the carpeted dining area in a restaurant, or entrances from plant facilities into the offices. Various studies have shown that the cost of removing a pound of soil from a building ranges up to \$500 or more! Clearly, it is far cheaper to stop the dirt at the door.

The choice of mats is important because the cheaper mats do a poor job of trapping soil and have a short life span. Walk-off mats fall into two categories: those designed to remove and trap gritty soil and those intended to absorb water during wet weather. They should be used in combination. Both 3M™ and Kleentex produce excellent mats of both types. Some have the added feature of accepting logos and insignias as inlays into the mats.

Good soil-removal mats have a coarse texture, are able to brush soil from shoes, and can hold large amounts of soil in their pile. The water-absorbent mat is used inside to prevent tracked-in moisture from getting to the carpet. A wet carpet acts like a giant shoe cleaner and soils rapidly. When both types of mats are used in combination, they should always be placed so that incoming traffic passes over the soil-removal mat first, because the absorbent types have very little soil-holding ability.

For mats to continue to trap soil, they should be cleaned on a regular basis, more frequently than the carpet. If accumulated soil is not removed, the mat will become overloaded and cannot prevent soil from entering the building – the mat may even become a source of soil itself. When a building is new or still under construction, soil may be tracked in from unfinished grounds, so the mats need to be cleaned more often.

Removal of Dry Soil

Vacuuming is the **most significant element** in the maintenance of carpet and the overall appearance of the facility. Research has shown that 85% of the soil tracked into a building is dry, and the other 15% is oily. Vacuums are designed to remove the dry soil. Walking on soiled carpet permits the soil particles to work their way down into the pile where they are more difficult to remove. Frequent vacuuming removes soil particles from the surface before this happens. Heavily trafficked areas, such as entrances and major corridors, should be vacuumed at least once a day. Areas with less traffic, such as offices, should be vacuumed every other day depending upon conditions.

Vacuum Cleaner Recommendations:

1. Vacuums should have certification in **The Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) Vacuum Cleaning Indoor Air Quality Program**. Vacuum specifically designed for commercial installations offer characteristics which help meet the demands of a good maintenance program.
2. For vinyl-back carpet tile and carpets that are **glued directly to the floor without cushion**, a vacuum with a rotating cylindrical brush, rather than a beater bar, should be used to agitate the pile and loosen the soil. Beater bars can damage the pile of direct-glued carpet if the machine height adjustment is set too low. This can also damage the vacuum.
3. Vacuums with either a beater bar or rotating brush can be used for carpet installed over pad, or with attached cushion backing. These vacuums are also recommended for double-stick installations where the carpet is glued to the pad.
4. Bags that fill from the top are preferred over those that fill from the bottom. Replaceable paper bags or paper liners for cloth bags are better filters than cloth bags alone, because they can trap more of the small particles that cloth bags allow to pass back into the air. Many vacuums can also be used with **micro-filtration or high-efficiency bags**, which capture even smaller particles that tend to be related to allergy complaints and which can also reduce the need for dusting. Check bags frequently and replace when 1/2 to 2/3 full to avoid a decrease in efficiency. When changing bags, also check the belt and replace if loose or worn.
5. A good vacuum is vital to prolonging the life of your carpet. A cheap vacuum can remove surface dirt but may not effectively remove the hidden particles embedded in the pile. This can lead to rapid appearance loss and complaints of poor product performance. A hundred dollars saved on the price of a vacuum can easily cost thousands of dollars in reduced useful life of the carpet.

Pile Lifting

Between cleanings, regular use of a **pile lifter** can remove deeply embedded dry sand and soil, help stand up the pile, and renew the appearance of the carpet in high-traffic areas such as traffic funnel zones, elevators, and lobbies. A pile lifter is an upright, two-motor vacuum with a large, adjustable, motor-driven brush, a high-suction vacuum motor, and a sand trap. Using a pile lifter in traffic lanes just prior to cleaning removes the deeply embedded soil and opens up the pile so the hot-water extraction can be more effective. Follow the pile lifting with a thorough vacuuming.

Spot and Spill Removal

All maintenance procedures mentioned thus far have been **planned**; spot and stain removal is the reaction to an **unplanned** incident. Therefore, it is desirable to have the needed materials handy by planning ahead of time. The professional cleaning companies have spot-removal kits in convenient carrying cases that contain all the necessary materials.

General Instructions

- Scoop up any solids gently with a spoon or dull knife. Absorb wet spills as quickly as possible by blotting with **white** paper or cloth towels.
- Always blot; **never scrub or rub abrasively**, because it may create a fuzzy area. When blotting, work from the outer edge in toward the center of the spot to avoid spreading the spill and enlarging the problem.
- **Thorough removal of both the stain material and the detergent residue is critical to prevent resoiling. Water extraction is the best way to accomplish this. Many cleaning equipment manufacturers offer small extraction machines specially designed for spot cleaning. These are small, lightweight and highly portable. They do an excellent job of rinsing after spot cleaning. They are also an excellent way to deal with body fluids on the carpet.**
- Place several layers of white towels on the spot to draw out any remaining moisture. Weight them down with a heavy object that will not transfer color, such as a plastic jug of water.

Removal Procedures

A. WATER-SOLUBLE STAINS – Absorb as much as possible with white towels. Blot the affected area with more towels dampened with cool water until no more color transfers to the towels. If any of the stain remains, use a detergent solution of 1/2 teaspoon (no more) of CLEAR liquid hand dishwashing detergent (do not use those containing lanolin or hand lotions) to one quart of water in a clean spray bottle. You may also use a general purpose spot cleaner with a pH less than 10.

For printed carpet, do not use cleaning agents with a pH higher than 8. Spray lightly onto the spot and blot repeatedly with white towels. **Rinse thoroughly** by spraying with clean water, and then blot or extract. Do not use too much detergent, because the residue will contribute to rapid resoiling.

A-1. Either: apply a white vinegar solution (one part white vinegar to one part water) to a white towel and blot or spray onto spot. Continue as in “A,” or use a slightly acidic spotter made for coffee, tea and other tannin stains rather than the detergent.

A-2. Either: apply a solution of household ammonia (one tablespoon of ammonia to one cup water) to a white towel and blot or spray onto spot. Continue as in “A,” or use an alkaline spotter made for removing blood and protein stains rather than the detergent. **Do not use on printed styles.**

B. GREASE – Blot as much as possible with white towels. Apply a solvent designed for grease removal to a towel and blot. **Use sparingly and do not pour or spray directly** on the carpet pile, as damage to the backing or adhesive underneath may result. Use the towels to transport the solvent to the carpet. Repeat until no more color transfer to the towel. Protective gloves should be worn, because the solvent will quickly remove oils from the skin and may result in irritation. Provide adequate ventilation, and **do not use flammable solvents!** Rinse thoroughly by spraying with clean water, and then blot or extract. If needed, continue with procedures in “A.”

C. FREEZE chewing gum and candle wax with ice or a commercially available product in an aerosol can. Shatter with a blunt object, and vacuum before the chips soften. Follow up with solvent as in “B.”

D. Several commercial preparations are available to remove medical stains such as Betadine, but they should be used with caution. A 5% sodium thiosulfate solution (from a photography store) may be used. For stains that are more than a few hours old, this solution should be warmed. Another effective treatment, which can be used on solution-dyed carpet, is Strepene (Sodium Hydrosulfite). For further assistance, consult a professional cleaner.

E. RUST can be removed in most cases with a 10% solution of oxalic acid. Stubborn cases require 5% hydrofluoric acid, which is difficult to obtain and dangerous to use. Both should be used only by a trained professional.

F. SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR SOLUTION-DYED (PIGMENTED) CARPETS ONLY

****WARNING!****

Only carpets which are 100% solution dyed are resistant to bleaching. Do not use this procedure unless you are absolutely sure the carpet is solution dyed – carpet dyed by other methods will be damaged. Do not use this procedure on printed carpets. Carpets with blends of solution-dyed and conventionally dyed fibers will be damaged by bleach. If in doubt, call Shelmarc Carpet Mills, Inc. for specific fiber content of your carpet.

For solution-dyed carpets with stains such as food dyes, fruit-drink stains, and coffee not removed by procedure A-1, use a solution of one part chlorine bleach to five parts water. Do not exceed this concentration – never use full-strength bleach. Professional cleaners have products that may be more effective.

Wearing rubber gloves and eye protection, apply the bleach solution to a white towel and blot it onto the stain. Do not pour the bleach directly onto the carpet. Allow 15 minutes for the treatment to work.

ANOTHER CAUTION!

Follow with a thorough rinsing or extract with a wet vac or extraction machine to remove excess bleach. Bleach remaining in the carpet can degrade the fiber over time. Full-strength bleach can degrade the fiber and damage some backings. Do not track to other areas where there might be conventionally dyed carpet.

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES BY STAIN TYPE

***PRO---CONSULT PROFESSIONAL CLEANER**

Adhesive: Carpet	B,A, *PRO		
Alcoholic Beverages	A		
Asphalt	B, *PRO		
Beer	A		
Betadine	D, *PRO		
Blood: Wet	A	Dry	A-2
Butter	B		
Chewing Gum	C		
Chocolate	A-2		
Coffee	A-1,F, *PRO		
Cola Drinks	A		
Cosmetics	B,A,F,*PRO		
Crayon	B		
Deicer, Salt	Vacuum,A		
Excrement	A		
Food Dyes	A,F,*PRO		
Furniture Polish	A,B		
Grease: Auto	B		
Food	A		
Ink: Ballpoint	B		
Permanent	B,F,*PRO		
Washable	A		
Lipstick	B		
Milk	A		
Mustard	A,F,*PRO		
Nail Polish	Polish Remover		
Paint: Latex, Wet	A		
Latex, Dry	B		
Rust	E,*PRO		
Tea	A-1,F,*PRO		
Toner: Copier	Vacuum,A		
Unknown	B,A,*PRO		
Urine	A-1		
Vomit	A-1		

Wax
Wine

C
A-2

Cleaning

Even with thorough vacuuming, cleaning is necessary to remove the 15% of soil that is the oily type material, as well that which the vacuum cannot remove. To maintain an acceptable appearance, the carpet must be cleaned periodically to prevent it from becoming so dirty that it can no longer be cleaned satisfactorily. The frequency of cleaning must be adjusted to the rate at which soil accumulates; therefore, heavily trafficked areas typically require more frequent cleaning, as do areas with less traffic but more soil.

When the color of the carpet begins to look dull, it is time to clean the carpet. The traffic lanes will show this first. If the carpet is cleaned before it becomes excessively soiled, the cleaning will be more successful and a much easier task. This is especially important in places where oily soil is prevalent, such as the areas near streets or asphalt parking lots, and those around cooking or dining facilities. Oils oxidize slowly forming a sticky material similar to varnish, which becomes nearly impossible to remove as it ages.

Another stubborn problem is the salt or deicer from snow melt, which accumulates in the carpet over winter. Salt pulls moisture from the air and prevents the carpet drying as quickly as it normally would. Remember that damp carpet acts like a wet sponge to clean shoes and collect soil faster. The resulting back discoloration in the traffic lanes requires pretreatment with a traffic lane cleaner to break down the soiling and the use of hot, not warm, water to dissolve and remove the salt and soil. Residue from snow melt can cause possible damage, including discoloration.

The Cleaning System

Many cleaning systems are available; their effectiveness varies widely. When choosing the cleaning system, the important considerations are:

It must clean effectively

It must not damage the texture of the carpet

It must not leave excessive residues of cleaning materials

Shelmarc Carpet Mills' recommendations are based on significant laboratory work and many years of experience. **Shelmarc recommends only the high-performance hot-water extraction system, which research indicates provides the best capability for cleaning.** This system is commonly referred to as "steam cleaning," although no steam is actually generated.

The process consists of spraying a solution of water and cleaning agent into the pile and, using a powerful vacuum, recovering the used solution and soil into a holding tank.

This can be done from a truck-mounted unit outside the facility with only the hose and wand brought inside; or where a truck-mounted unit cannot reach, by a portable, self-contained system brought into the facility.

Self-contained, walk-behind machines are another type of hot-water extraction equipment commonly used. They apply the cleaning solution at a rate that is balanced with the recovery capability of the machine. This type machine is often employed where cleaning is done by in-house maintenance staffs. Since these machines cannot equal the performance of high-performance wand-type extractors, their use should be supplemented by periodic cleaning with a wand-type high-performance machine.

SHELMARC DOES NOT RECOMMEND!

“Bonnet” Systems

The name for these systems is derived from the rotating bonnet of terry cloth or other absorbent material used to agitate the pile and pick up soil. A detergent solution is sprayed onto the pile and is then worked with the bonnet attached to a rotary floor polisher. It is, at best, a temporary appearance enhancement, because it only absorbs at the surface and does no real extraction of deep soil.

SHELMARC CARPET MILLS DOES NOT ADVOCATE THIS SYSTEM.

It is not a substitute for hot-water extraction.

It has very limited capability for soil removal and often leaves most of the detergent; in the pile. The spinning bonnet may distort the pile of cut-pile carpets and leave distinct swirl marks. **SHELMARC’S EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN THAT MORE CUSTOMER SOILING COMPLAINTS RESULT FROM THIS SYSTEM THAN ALL OTHER CAUSES COMBINED!**

The bonnet system may damage the edges of some carpet tiles.

Water Recycling Machines

Shelmarc Carpet Mills does not recommend any portable cleaning machine which continuously recycles the cleaning solution. A growing body of experience is showing that although the large particles are filtered out, the soluble materials, including detergents and soluble contaminants, are distributed over the whole area. With repeated cleanings, these materials become more concentrated and begin to cause rapid resoiling.

Choosing a Professional Cleaner

One way to locate a nearby professional carpet cleaner that uses a hot-water extraction system is to call the national referral service listed below:

Institute of Inspection, Cleaning & Restoration Certification (IICRC) at 800-835-4624

This organization maintains a national directory of independent professional cleaners who are trained and certified in a variety of cleaning specialties. **You must specifically request a**

professional cleaner using hot-water extraction. Those with the “Master Cleaner” certification are preferred.

Basic Guidelines for In-House Maintenance

If you choose to maintain your carpet using in-house personnel, here are some guidelines to follow. For a good reference describing carpet cleaning and the hot-water extraction method specifically, read the Carpet Cleaning Standard, (S001-1991) by the IICRC, available at the number listed above.

1. Before hot-water extraction, thoroughly vacuum the area to be cleaned to remove as much dry soil as possible. Use a pile lifter, if necessary, in high-traffic areas.
2. Remove spots and stains using the procedures above or a commercially available spot-removal kit. Pretreat the heavily soiled areas and traffic-lanes with traffic-lane cleaner and wait the recommended time before cleaning. Give the cleaner time to do its job before beginning extraction. Although it is advisable to minimize the use of solvents, many traffic-lane cleaners do contain some solvents to help remove the stubborn oily dirt often found in traffic areas. Treat a small area and extract the liquid before the traffic lane cleaner dries.
3. On most commercial carpets, **use a detergent with a pH less than 10, preferably near 9, and with a minimum of nonsticky residue. For printed carpets, use a detergent solution that has a pH between 6 and 8.**

Your detergent selection is important. It is even more important to remove all the detergent you put into the carpet. A detergent’s ability to bind to particles of soil and oil is what makes cleaning happen. However, the detergent residue continues to attract and hold soil even after drying. Increasing the amount of detergent beyond the recommended level does not increase cleaning performance but makes the complete removal of detergent more difficult. **Excessive detergent residue is the most common cause of accelerated resoiling complaints. Shelmarc does not recommend the use of cleaning agents with optical brighteners.**

4. **Avoid overwetting** the carpet. Prolonged dampness may cause discoloration, promote growth of mildew and bacteria in the carpet, or cause separation of the backing. This can be controlled by a combination of proper equipment use and operator training.
5. Do not use any silicone-based anti-soil treatments on carpet produced by Shelmarc. The only anti-soil products approved for use as needed are formulated with either DuPont Teflon® or 3M Scotchgard™.
6. **Reduce drying time** by using several fans or air movers to move air across the carpet, in combination with a dehumidifier or air conditioner to pull moisture out of the air. Carpet should be completely dry within 12 hours or less.