

AXMINSTER CARE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINE

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CARPET MAINTENANCE

Carpet is the only textile product on which people walk. This is why construction and installation specifications are so critical. The third critical specification element is maintenance.

NORMAL CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW CARPET

Your new carpet may exhibit certain visual characteristics that are normal, but may be new to you:

Shedding - It is normal for some loose fibres to be present in new cut pile carpet. Their number is quite small compared to the total fibre content of the carpet and is of no consequence. Regular vacuuming will remove these without harming the carpet.

Shading – All cut pile carpet is subject to a natural phenomenon known as “shading”, “pooling”, or “watermarking”, which may be unsightly. Its occurrence cannot be predicted or prevented, and it creates a permanent change in the carpet’s appearance, usually within 2-6 weeks after installation. “Shading” is not a manufacturing defect and does not affect the durability of the carpet.

The appearance of “Shaded” carpet is created by the difference in the way light reflects off the side of a yarn and the tip of a yarn as the pile yarns lay in different directions. Shaded areas will appear light from one direction, and dark from the other direction. The “spots”, usually curved in nature, will virtually disappear when observed from directly above. No one knows why the pile, which when installed is laying in one direction, changes direction permanently.

PLANNING THE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

When preparing the maintenance plan, keep in mind that one of the advantages of carpet compared to hard surface floors is that carpet localizes soil. Carpet tends to catch and hold soil and spills where they occur instead of allowing them to spread quickly.

Whatever the nature of the installation, it is wise to anticipate dealing with soilage from the very first day the carpet is installed. Otherwise, abrasive dirt may build-up faster than it can be handled.

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Kitchen smoke in restaurants and cafeterias will contribute heavily to overall soiling. Stains and spills in food service areas will be very common. Routine procedures for attending to these as quickly as possible are necessary.

DAILY AND PERIODIC PROCEDURES

Two elements essential to an efficient maintenance program include daily procedures encompassing both regular vacuuming and spot cleaning, and scheduled overall cleanings to remove discolouring grime and to refresh the pile.

Overall grime not only causes discoloration, it presents another undesirable quality. Carpet that is not cleaned and reconditioned regularly, no matter how it is vacuumed, will tend to permanently crush and mat down. As grease, present in smoke, or pollutants in the air settle on the carpet, pile yarns may become gummy enough to stick to each other and flatten in use. Matted carpet appears to be worn out, even if there is no real pile loss. Obviously, carpet which must be replaced because it looks worn out is no less costly than carpet which must be replaced because it is worn out!

WALK-OFF MATS

As a matter of preventive maintenance, walk-off mats should be installed in all building entrances and kitchen exit areas to collect dirt before it reaches the carpet. Walk-off mats may be constructed of stiff bristles, or formed from pieces of the carpet itself, or may be one of a variety of types specially made for commercial use.

A minimum of 3 metres of mat should be used at building entrances and kitchen exits. Optimum length is 3.5 - 4 Metres. We recommend Grime Buster Walk-Off Matting.

It is common to have two sets of walk-off mats available. Because they receive such heavy abuse, one set is in place while the other is being cleaned. Mats should be vacuumed daily and cleaned or changed at least weekly.

If the carpet is in a restaurant, it is also important to keep the kitchen floor as clean as possible to minimize tracked-in grease.

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VACUUMING SCHEDULES AND EQUIPMENT

Of all the carpet maintenance procedures, vacuuming takes the most time and attention...yet is the most cost effective.

- **High Traffic** - Vacuum Daily (Extremely high traffic lanes may require vacuuming several times daily)
- **Medium Traffic** - Vacuum Two to Three Times Weekly
- **Light Traffic** - Vacuum Weekly

“Track-off” areas at building and/or kitchen entrances should be vacuumed several times daily.

An upright heavy-duty commercial vacuum power driven brushes and dual motors must be used. Brushes are usually more effective than “beater bars” in commercial installations. A more powerful “pile lifter” type vacuum may also be used before and/or after periodic cleaning for optimum pile agitation and restoration.

Proper vacuuming requires three to five slow passes over the same area. Brushes must be cleaned frequently and replaced when worn.

SPOT AND STAIN REMOVAL

Identification and immediate action are the keys to effective stain removal procedures. To minimize time and effort, it is helpful to know what causes a stain so that treatment can begin without guesswork.

The longer a stain “sets”, the more difficult it may be to remove. If it remains too long, it might react with the carpet dyes and cause permanent discoloration. Hence, an alert staff and a well-stocked stain removal kit are important to a good carpet maintenance program.

Signature Carpet has available recommended spot and stain removal procedures for various fibre types. Use a blotting action in spot removal rather than brisk rubbing which may create a fuzzy texture. Be careful not to use a high pH cleaner (above 8.0) on wool or wool blends, and do not let any carpet stay wet for over 24 hours.

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DETERGENT SOLUTIONS

Cleaning carpet with harsh detergents can be risky. Inappropriate cleaning agents may cause dyes to bleed or become faded. Before using an untested detergent solution, it is wise to try it first on a small, inconspicuous section of the carpet to be sure it will not affect the colour. Be careful not to spill or overspray hard surface cleaning agents on carpet.

The safest method is to test detergent solutions for pH with a simple test kit available wherever aquarium or swimming pool supplies are sold.

Please Note: Detergent solutions to be used on wool and wool blends should have a neutral pH between 5.0 and 8.0

Man-made fibres such as nylon are less moisture absorbent. Detergents which are alkaline in nature, between 7.0 and 10.0 pH*, may cut grease and suspend soil better and may be used satisfactorily on man-made fibres, but should be tested on each colour.

*pH – A value representing the concentration of hydrogen ions in grain equivalents per litre used to indicate the acidity or alkalinity of a substance on a scale from 0-14 with 7 representing neutrality, numbers less than 7 increasing acidity, and numbers greater than 7 increasing alkalinity. Laboratory and field testing for pH must be done with distilled water.

Whether neutral or alkaline, some detergents may leave a sticky residue that will cause rapid resoiling on the face of the carpet. The better detergents will dry to a crisp flake which can be vacuumed away. To test detergents for residue, set equal quantities of each solution in flat dishes and allow them to evaporate completely. Then, check the residues with a finger. If they feel waxy or sticky, those detergents have a high resoiling potential and should be avoided.

One erroneous concept often used is to double the concentrations in order to get twice the results. This concept is not true as the greater concentrations may produce less cleaning, a residue on the fibres, and a waste of money.

In the event that a detergent residue has built-up, hot-water extraction cleaning(s) with just water (no detergent) will be helpful.

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A small percentage (approx. 2%) of a mild acid, such as white vinegar, may be helpful in breaking down the alkaline detergent. To help prevent detergent residue build-up, plain water cleaning as described above should be performed in lieu of a detergent cleaning every 3rd or 4th cleaning.

PERIODIC CLEANING METHODS

There are many methods which can be used on location to clean carpet. However, it is not possible to become an instant expert by reading descriptions, advantages and disadvantages of each method. Many successful carpet cleaning firms and equipment manufacturers will use different methods and often debate that their system is superior. The basic Periodic Cleaning Methods for carpet are:

1. Hot Water Extraction
2. Dry Foam with Extraction
3. Dry Extraction

Rotary Shampoo and Bonnet / Absorbent Pad (“Spin Bonnet”) are **NOT** recommended methods for Axminster carpet.

It is critical when cleaning Axminster cut-pile carpet not to use spin bonnets, rotary brushes or rotary extractors. The rotary action of this equipment can severely distort the pile yarn. In addition, the spin bonnet method can leave chemical residue which builds up on the carpet.

Signature Carpets use 100% virgin material, and all pile yarns are pre-dyed for excellent colourfastness, so wet cleaning can be used without causing shrinkage, seam splitting or fading. When using any wet cleaning method, be careful not to over wet the carpet and allow adequate time so that the carpet will be dry before resuming use.

It is important to develop a regular maintenance schedule and have qualified individuals performing the cleaning. The frequency of cleaning will be determined by the severity of the soiling and environmental conditions. Certain areas, such as entrances and main traffic aisles, might need more frequent cleaning than the rest of the installation.

Many installations have been successful in utilizing a combination of methods, such as Dry Extraction for interim cleaning of heavy traffic areas followed by Hot Water Extraction of the entire carpet on a periodic basis.

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CLEANING FREQUENCY GUIDELINES

The following general guidelines have been established by the International Institute of Carpet and Upholstery Certification based on an EPA Letter. It is intended to serve as a guideline on recommended cleaning frequencies for carpet from a public health perspective in addition to the traditional aesthetic concern.

Environment	Normal	Contaminated Outside Dusty	Extremely Cold Weather Climates	High Humidity (Biogenic)
Food Services	1 month	1 week	2 weeks	2 weeks
Healthcare / Senior Living	1 month	1 month	1 month	1 week
Commercial Building (Ground Floor)	3 – 6 months	1- 4 months	2 – 6 months	2- 6 months
Commercial Building (High Floors)	6 -12 months	2 – 6 months	3 – 9 months	3 – 9 months
Other Commercial Areas	3 – 6 months	1 month	2 months	2 months

HARD SURFACE TO CARPET TRANSITIONS

It is common for carpet adjacent to the transition between hard surface flooring and carpet to soil rapidly and be more difficult to clean.

Hard surface cleaners should not be used on carpet, and care should be taken not to spill or spray them on carpet. These type cleaners usually have too high a pH (>10) which may damage the carpet, and they leave a residue on the carpet which will cause rapid resoiling. If applied to the carpet by accident, they should be blotted with wet towels or sponge, followed by blotting with dry towels as soon as possible to avoid damage to the carpet.

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NOTE: Failure to follow these recommended maintenance procedures could damage your carpet.

These recommendation are a to be used as a guide, for further information contact a Qualified Cleaning Technician from the Australasian Institute of Carpet Cleaning 02 4322 2652

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