

## PROFESSIONAL GUIDE TO CARE OF CONTRACT CARPETS

Carpets in commercial interiors are a large investment and are expected to provide not only an aesthetic appeal, but one that will encounter enormous punishment through heavy footfall, roller chairs and everyday spillages.

The WoolSafe Organisation was formed to protect that investment. Since its inauguration more than 20 years ago, the WoolSafe Organisation has helped all types of sectors including those responsible for the upkeep of wool, wool-rich and synthetic carpets in commercial interiors.

Cleaning and maintenance in any commercial building is imperative. Multiple benefits ensue from a building served by a regular cleaning programme. Carpets are no exception. Frequent cleaning will ensure a carpet's looks are maintained for longer, resulting in lower lifecycle costs and more service for your initial financial outlay. Clean carpets also maintain the right image and ambience and will impact the health and safety of the building's occupants.

With interior designers, specifiers and contractors specifying the popular 80% wool 20% nylon blend as well as 100% synthetics for commercial interiors in tile or broadloom format, the building will already have a hard wearing, tough, soft flooring option.

However, its performance can be extended by the correct cleaning and maintenance programme.

Using a certified carpet cleaning operator will ensure a professional carpet and upholstery service is given and that the company used is a cut above the rest and fully qualified to clean carpets and rugs effectively. These operators are a select group of professional carpet and upholstery cleaning companies with particular expertise in the cleaning and maintenance of wool and wool-rich carpets, rugs and upholstery. They can help with:

- Carpet cleaning
- Carpet protection
- Fire/smoke damage repairs
- Colour repairs
- Deodorizing
- Water/flood damage repairs
- Insect resist treatment
- Installation repairs
- Upholstery cleaning/treatment

The use of entrance mats at all outside entrances to buildings is highly recommended, as it will significantly reduce the rate at which carpets will soil. They should be as large as possible to allow most of the street dirt to be removed from shoe soles. The mats must be cleaned regularly.

Many newly installed carpets, particularly those with a cut or velour pile, tend to lose fibre during the first few weeks on the floor. This effect, called shedding or fluffing, is caused by the way the yarn is spun and the carpet is made. It is a natural phenomenon that will stop eventually. Cleaners should vacuum the carpet a little more gently for the first few weeks and empty the dust bag or receptacle regularly.

Many carpets come with a protective fibre treatment to reduce problems with staining and soiling. These treatments, while effective in many ways, are not bullet-proof and will eventually wear off. Quick response to spills and regular cleaning is still required.

Carpets that have no protector applied by the manufacturer can be treated after installation by an accredited carpet cleaning company. To find the nearest WoolSafe Certified Operator in your area visit [www.woolSAFE.org](http://www.woolSAFE.org).

Pile reversal, also known as shading, or wrongly water marking, is the effect whereby areas of velour or velvet carpet appear to become lighter or darker in colour than the surrounding area. It is an optical effect, brought about by localised changes in the direction of pile lay and made visible by the way light is reflected off the carpet surface. It is caused by traffic patterns or unevenness in the floor, but is not a carpet defect. Loop pile and many hard twist carpets are not affected by this. Occasionally tufts may appear above the surface of the carpet. Do not pull them out, but cut them level with the surrounding tufts using small scissors.

EASY SPOTS			
Spot or stain	Try 1st	Try 2nd	Try 3rd
Blood	5	6	3
Burn/Scorch mark	13	14	
Butter	7	5	
Candle wax	8	7	
Chewing gum	9		
Chocolate/cocoa	5	7	6
Cola	3	5	6
Cream	7	5	
Egg	5	6	
Floor wax	7	5	
Fruit juice	3	5	
Gravy and sauces	5	6	
Herbal tea	3	6	
Metal polish	5		
Mustard	5	6	
Oil and grease	7	5	
Paint (emulsion)	3	5	
Shoe polish	7	5	
Tea	3	5	6
Urine (fresh stain)	3	5	15

## PROFESSIONAL GUIDE TO CARE OF CONTRACT CARPETS

DIFFICULT SPOTS			
Spot or stain	Try 1st	Try 2nd	Try 3rd
Artificial coloured drinks	3	6	
Bleach	3	17	
Radiator fluid	5	6	16
Coffee	4	6	
Felt-tip pen	7 or 11	12	5
Furniture polish	7	5	
Glue(plastic base)	10	11	
Ink (fountain)	3	6	5
Ink (ballpoint pen)	12		
Lipstick	7		
Milk	4	5	15
Nail varnish	10		
Paint (oil)	11		
Rust	16		
Soot	6	5	2
Tar (asphalt)	7		
Urine (old stain)	6	15	
Vomit	5	6	15
Red Wine	1	6	

The carpet may change colour over time for a variety of reasons, usually due to pile flattening, gradual soiling and slight fading of the dyes used to colour the fibres. A good professional cleaning will usually restore the carpet's appearance.

Carpets may show increased soiling around the edges of a room under doors and near air ducts. This is called draught marking, soil filtration or fogging and is caused by the pile fibres filtering out dirt particles from the air blowing under skirting boards or doors, or from ducts.

How best to care for your carpets:

- Regular cleaning will extend the life of your carpet and maintain its good appearance
- Vacuum regularly and thoroughly to remove gritty dirt that can damage the fibres
- Deal with spillages as soon as possible, preferably the moment they occur
- When your carpet reaches a stage where it could do with a really good cleaning, call in a professional carpet cleaning company.
- If you are considering cleaning the carpet yourself, make sure to use only approved products. Look for the certification mark on the bottle or package.

In tangent with these recommendations, WoolSafe has extended its services to ensure that complete peace of mind and professionalism is available to hand.

Operators must be fully trained in all carpet cleaning techniques, have been in business continuously for a period of at least five years and be a member of a

recognised professional or trade association related to the cleaning industry. They must also attend a WoolSafe training course, pass the exit exam and meet other requirements relating to their business and professional associations.

With this in hand, these operators are unrivalled in the field, and through the exceptional levels of service they provide have helped many individuals and companies care for wool carpets.

WoolSafe approved carpet care products have been independently and scientifically tested, and are safe and effective for cleaning and maintaining all types of carpets.

Never use detergents such as dish washing liquids, soaps or other cleaners recommended for general household use. Although they may clean your carpet satisfactorily they will almost certainly cause problems such as rapid re-soiling, colour bleeding or other damage to the pile or backing of the carpet.

You can hire a carpet cleaning machine from different dry cleaners or hardware stores, but make sure you get an approved cleaning product to go with it. If in doubt: check. Read the instructions for use.

So-called three-in-one cleaning machines can also be used, but make sure you first read the instructions for using them as a wet cleaning machine.

Before starting any wet cleaning, always test the carpet in an inconspicuous place for colour fastness. Also check, if possible, any maintenance leaflet that came with the carpet for the manufacturer's recommendations regarding wet cleaning.

KEY TO TREATMENTS
1. Blot with white kitchen roll or paper tissue
2. Vacuum clean
3. Cold water
4. Warm water
5. Approved carpet shampoo solution (diluted)
6. Approved spot remover for water based stains
7. Approved spot remover for greasy/oily stains
8. Absorbent paper or paper tissue and hot iron
9. Approved chewing gum remover (detergent, solvent or freeze type)
10. Nail varnish remover or acetone
11. White spirit or turpentine substitute
12. Surgical spirit (ethyl alcohol or ethanol)
13. Rub with a coin
14. Rub gently with coarse sand paper
Treatments used by professional carpet cleaners:
15. Approved disinfectant or deodorizer
16. Rust remover
17. Carpet re-colouring kit

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### 10 Commandments of Carpet Care

1. Vacuum frequently and thoroughly. Most of the wear of carpeting is caused by dirt. Oily soils attract more oily soil and frequent vacuuming will reduce soil build up.
2. Get at stains quickly 99% of all stains can be removed by one cleaning agent or another if they are cleaned in the first few days. The longer a stain chemically reacts with the carpet the harder it will be to remove it.
3. Test carpet before scrubbing, extracting or spotting. All carpets are different. Some carpets are very sensitive to acid type cleaners and will lose their colour quickly. Other carpet dyes are sensitive to harsh alkalis.
4. Use appropriate spotters starting with the mildest. Do not use harsh spotting agents unless absolutely necessary and always neutralise high alkaline or high acid cleaners after use.
5. Never dig or brush spots. The proper procedure is to scrape the spot towards the middle and then tamp the spot into the white towel or cloth using a brush or other tamping devices. A meat tenderizer makes a great tamping tool.
6. Do not over use detergents, shampoos or spotters. Too much detergent will result in residual left in the carpet than even through vacuuming may not remove.
7. Do not overwet carpet. Our carpet detergents are chemically active enough so they do not need a tremendous amount of wetting. Over-wetting can cause brownout, carpet shrinkage, adhesion problems and all other kinds of nightmares.
8. Extract residual if possible. Rotary scrubbing will clean the carpet fibres the best by encapsulating dirt and detergent residue, which powders off the carpet. Periodic extraction will flush out this dirt and other organisms deep in the carpet.
9. Never "coat" a dirty or spotty carpet. After scrubbing or extracting a dirty carpet, if you are not satisfied with the results, do not apply a coat of carpet protector as this will result in "gluing in the dirt" making it harder to remove it the next time. Either re-scrub or extract the carpet or leave the carpet until the next cleaning cycle before you coat.
10. Vacuum frequently and thoroughly. It is so important it deserves two recommendations.

### Carpet Cleaning Tips

Some stains are tougher than others. Here are specific tips on how to clean those tricky spots and spills on your carpet. Simply find the stain you have and follow the instructions:

### General cleaning tips

- Always deal with any stains and spills immediately.
- Use a spoon or blunt end of a knife to scrape off solid materials e.g. candle wax.
- Blot up spills with a paper towel or cloth – don't add more liquid.
- Most water-based stains such as tea, coffee, fruit juice or urine should be cleaned with a carpet shampoo.
- Most grease based stains will need a brand name dry cleaning solvent

### Treating Specific Stains

**Blood** – Blot fresh spills with a paper towel or cloth. Mix 1 teaspoon white vinegar and 1 teaspoon mild detergent with 1 litre of warm water. Apply this solution to the stain and let dry. Vacuum the area.

**Butter** – Scrape off as much as you can. Apply a dry cleaning solution and let the carpet dry. Repeat if necessary. Vacuum the area.

**Candle Wax** – Wait until it is hard, then scrape off as much as possible cover the remains with kitchen paper and press with the tip of a warm iron. The wax will melt and be absorbed by the paper.

**Chewing Gum** – Place a bag of ice cubes on top to freeze it, then break off as much as you can. Clean off the remainder with a little white or methylated spirits on a cloth.

**Chocolate** – Scrape off any solid chocolate pieces, then treat with a spot carpet shampoo, if greasy marks remain treat carefully with a grease solvent.

**Coffee** – Blot fresh spills with a paper towel or cloth. Mix 1 teaspoon white vinegar and 1 teaspoon mild detergent with 1 litre of warm water. Apply this solution to the stain and let dry. Apply a dry cleaning solvent and once dry, vacuum the area.

**Crayon** – Wait until it is hard, then scrape off as much as possible. Cover the remains with kitchen paper and press with a tip of a warm iron. The wax will melt and be absorbed by the paper.

**Fruit** – Acting quickly is the key as once fruit stains are dry and hard they are very difficult to remove. Scrape up as much as possible and blot any juice. Mix 1 teaspoon white vinegar and 1 teaspoon mild detergent with 1 litre of warm water. Apply this solution to the stain and let dry. Repeat if necessary then vacuum the area.

**Ink** - Rub with cloth moistened with methylated spirits for ball point and felt tip pens; use cold water to shift fountain pen ink.

## PROFESSIONAL GUIDE TO CARE OF CONTRACT CARPETS

**Lipstick** – Carefully scrape off any excess with a knife, then treat with a carpet shampoo. If any colour remains, use a little methylated spirits on cotton wool.

**Milk or Ice Cream** – Sponge with soapy warm water, rinse, then treat with a grease solvent.

**Mud** – Wait until it is dry and hard, then scrape off as much as possible. Mix 1 teaspoon white vinegar and 1 teaspoon mild detergent with 1 litre of warm water. Apply this solution to the stain and let dry. If the stain remains, apply a dry cleaning solvent and once dry, vacuum the area.

**Scorch Marks** – Trim lightly with a pair of scissors.

**Shoe Polish** - Scrape off as much as you can, treat with a dry cleaning solvent, then methylated spirits. You may also need to finish off with carpet shampoo.

**Tar** – Use a small amount of solvent, such as WD40 on the stain. Blot the dissolved area with a paper towel. Mix a small amount of mild detergent with warm water and apply to the stain: this will remove the smell of the solvent. Next sponge the area with fresh water and let dry.

**Urine** – Mix 1 teaspoon white vinegar and 1 teaspoon mild detergent with 1 litre of warm water. Apply this solution to the stain and let dry. Repeat if necessary, vacuum the area.

**Vinegar** – Dilute the spill immediately with baking soda and water. Apply a solution of 1 part ammonia to 10 parts water. Rinse with cold water. Let the area dry and vacuum.

**Vomit** – Blot up as much as possible. Dilute with baking soda and water. Apply a solution of 1 part ammonia to 10 parts water. Rinse with cold water. Let the area dry and vacuum.

**Wine** – Blot fresh spills, then use carpet shampoo. Don't sprinkle it with salt as it may change the colour of the carpet. On old stains try rubbing in a mixture of equal parts glycerine and water. Leave for an hour, then rinse off.