

Axminster Carpet Maintenance Information

Carpet is a textile product, and, as such, it is subject to both soiling and wear. To keep carpet appearance at its peak and to achieve maximum floor-life, four things are necessary:

- 1) Suitably heavy initial product specification
- 2) Appropriate designs and colorations
- 3) Expert installation
- 4) Proper maintenance program.

By the time you read this, it is likely that the carpet pattern has been designed, the specification has been determined, manufacturing is completed, and the installation is finished. Now it is time to make sure that the *MAINTENANCE* procedures are properly planned and faithfully executed. It is likely that your Crossley Axminster carpet is custom woven with either 80% wool/20% nylon or 100% wool yarn. Be sure to check the face yarn fiber content before proceeding with maintenance.

The first “do” rule of carpet maintenance is vacuum, vacuum, vacuum.

The first “do not” rule of maintenance is **DO NOT USE ROTARY SHAMPOO OR SPIN BONNET ABSORBENT PADS ON WOOL OR WOOL/BLEND CARPETS – EVER.**

Normal Characteristics of New Carpet

New carpets have characteristics which are normal and expected, but which may be new to you. Here is a brief review:

Shedding – All spun yarn carpets have loose “fiber ends” from the spinning process lodged within the yarn. These ends will essentially “shake out” of the new carpet as it goes into service, and will create some fuzz on the surface. This is normal and no cause for concern. This “fuzzing” should simply be vacuumed away. It will probably be necessary to repeat the vacuuming several times until the fuzzing subsides. Make sure to check each time you vacuum that the bag is emptied or replaced as needed. The bags will fill up frequently as the initial shedding is removed, and the vacuum cleaner will not function effectively with clogged bags.

Shading – All cut-pile carpet (woven, tufted, and handmade) is subject to the possible occurrence of a natural carpet phenomenon known variously as shading, watermarking, pooling, or pile reversal. This is not a manufacturing defect. It does not affect the durability of the carpet. Its occurrence cannot be predicted or prevented, as it happens infrequently and at random. If it does occur in a particular situation, it will generally appear within the first few months after installation but may occur later. No one has identified with certainty the trigger mechanism behind shading, but maintenance procedures do not appear to have any causal or remedial effects.

Shading creates a noticeable change in the color intensity of defined areas of the carpet. This change is created by a slight shift in the normal pile direction (pile lay) of the face yarn. This shift in pile direction causes reflected light from adjacent areas of the carpet to register on the retina as darker or lighter than surrounding areas, even though the yarns are identically dyed. The same area may appear lighter from one direction, darker from another direction, and with no change at all when viewed from directly above. No one has determined exactly what causes the pile direction in these defined areas to change permanently after the carpet is installed.

Planning the Maintenance Program

Failure to adequately plan and implement a proper maintenance program can severely shorten the lifespan of even the finest carpets. Here is a proven strategy to maximize the service life of custom carpet:

- **Preventative Maintenance:**
The easiest way to control soiling is to prevent it from occurring. Identify high-traffic or anticipated high-soiling areas and develop a plan to minimize this soiling.
- **Daily Maintenance:**
Vacuum effectively, spot-clean successfully.
- **Interim Maintenance:**
Encapsulation Process
- **Scheduled Maintenance:**
Hot Water Extraction – done correctly with the proper detergents and equipment.

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Preventative Maintenance

Design and color play significant roles in long-term appearance retention in carpet. General rules apply: medium and darker colors and heavily patterned carpets are easier to maintain, while light or pastel colors with very little pattern will be more difficult to maintain. Preventative maintenance begins with the selection of colors and patterns.

80% of dirt is walked off within the first 12' of carpet or matting.

As a matter of preventative maintenance, walk-off mats are the most effective way to reduce maintenance cost. They should be constructed with stiff bristles or fibers, to best remove soil and prevent it from being tracked into the building. To effectively remove as much soil as possible, you need 12 to 14 feet of walk-off mats at every entrance. All of these mats do not have to be inside the building - a combination of outside and inside mats is probably most effective.

It is common to have two sets of mats on-site. Since they receive heavy abuse, one set should be in use while the other set is being cleaned. Mats should be vacuumed at least daily and thoroughly cleaned or changed at least weekly.

Routine cleaning/sweeping/hosing of sidewalks, parking lots, and outdoor areas should be considered. Canopies and entry structures are extremely effective at reducing soil build-up at building entrances.

Carpeted stairways are considered very high-impact areas, and are subject to far more stress from foot-traffic than floors. To avoid premature wear, it is recommended that commercial grade stair-nosing should be used. If stair nosings are deemed unacceptable for any reason, then additional attic stock should be considered to replace stairways as necessary.

The application of fluorochemical-based anti-soiling agents to wool and wool-blend carpets has limited beneficial effects. In fact, when partly worn off, it can highlight problems of differential soiling between high and low traffic lanes. Silicone-based finishes have a generally adverse effect on the soiling properties of wool carpets. Such applications are sometimes used as an additional selling point by certain manufacturers, but Crossley Axminster does not recommend application to contract carpets.

Fading or loss of color can occur if carpet is continuously subjected to sunlight and ineffective screening against ultraviolet light. UV protection is therefore recommended, particularly in rooms with direct sunlight. Soiling may sometimes be confused with fading, where there is a reduction in the original brightness of a carpet.

Keep in mind that carpet tends to catch and hold soil and spills. When carpet is adjacent to hard surface, be sure to use transition strips or edge moldings to prevent soils and spills from migrating into the carpet from the hard flooring.

Hard surface cleaners should not be used on carpet, and care should be taken to prevent spilling or spraying them onto carpet. These cleaners usually have a high pH (over 10.0, so they are very alkaline) which may damage wool or wool-blend fibers and leave a residue which will cause rapid soiling of the carpet. When cleaning hard surfaces, it is very important to prevent mopping detergent or polishes and waxes from touching the carpet. We recommend that only chemicals or cleaning agents tested and certified as "WoolSafe" be used on wool and wool blend carpets.

Kitchen smoke in restaurants and cafeterias contributes heavily to overall soiling. Airborne grease can travel throughout the restaurant and often ends up in the carpeting. HVAC systems with good filtering systems can reduce airborne grease and smoke. Using walk-off mats in the kitchen helps contain grease before the servers go onto the carpet. Sometimes it is necessary to have mats inside and outside the door to the kitchen. And, of course, these mats need to be maintained so they don't become laden with grease and grime and thus a soiling source themselves.

Daily Maintenance

VACUUM – VACUUM – VACUUM

The most important part of the maintenance program is to vacuum as much as possible. Vacuuming is by far the most practical and effective way to remove soil and to maintain the overall appearance of your carpets. The best plan is to categorize areas according to traffic exposure before determining frequency – and to review your schedule regularly to see whether any changes are needed. Here is an example:

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

Properly functioning vacuum equipment is needed to ensure that carpets are cleaned efficiently. For contract applications, we recommend **commercial-usage vacuum cleaners, with power-driven beater brushes and/or bars, as most effective for removing soil and raising pile on cut-pile carpets installed over pad.** The machine should have good suction and a firm brush adjusted properly to just barely touch the tips of the carpet yarns.

Vacuum cleaners should be maintained to perform at peak efficiency. Check belts and brushes regularly for wear. Vacuum bags should be emptied frequently and not

allowed to become more than half-full. Vacuuming with a full bag is wasteful of time, energy, and money.

SPOTTING or SPOT REMOVAL

Identification and immediate action are the keys to effective stain removal. With wool and wool-blend carpets always use "WoolSafe" products avoiding high pH cleaners (above 8.0) and don't let carpet stay wet for over 6-8 hours. 8 rules for best results:

1. Always pre-test spotters to make sure they do not remove the color. Apply a small amount of spotter to the carpet in an inconspicuous area, blot with a white towel, and look for transfer.
2. Blot up spills with clean, white, absorbent materials (towels, napkins, tissues, etc.) Keep blotting and repeat.
3. The faster you find the spot and take action, the better the results.
4. Know the fiber make-up of your carpet.
5. Know and recognize the common spots in your facility. Keep a spot removal kit on hand.
6. Many spots are concentrated accumulations of general soil tracked into an area. A general purpose water-based spotter will remove these.
7. When applying a spotter, never rub the spot area. Always carefully blot the spot with a cloth.
8. Remove solid built-up materials with a rounded tablespoon, spatula or edge of a plastic scraper.

For a spotting guide and spot cleaning kit, please contact Windsor (800-444-7654) or see their website, www.windsorind.com. Inquire about their Hospitality Spot Cleaning Kit. They also can provide proper maintenance equipment. For "WoolSafe" products please visit www.wool-safe.org/usa.

Interim Maintenance

ENCAPSULATION PROCESS

- A cleaning solution (encapsulation chemical) is sprayed lightly onto the carpet and is then agitated and distributed into the pile yarn via a dual counter-rotating brush machine (without vacuum).
- The chemical is allowed to dwell in the carpet, breaking down and surrounding soils and other residues.
- The chemical dries into a hard, non-sticky crystal, encasing the soil, in about 20 minutes.
- The dried crystals can be easily removed by vacuuming.

The result is a carpet that is clean and dry in about 20 to 30 minutes. This process not only restores the carpet to a useable state quickly, but also cuts down on water

and chemical usage. Interim maintenance is a key component in your carpet maintenance program; time saving, cost effective, and good for the environment. Carpet is left clean and neutral with no chemical residue to cause re-soiling.

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Scheduled Maintenance

DEEP CLEANING

The goal of scheduled maintenance is to remove deeply embedded soils and restore the appearance of the carpet as closely as possible to its original state. This is achieved through deep, restorative cleaning via **hot water extraction**.

- Soil Suspension

Pre-spray properly diluted chemical onto an area of the carpet to allow the cleaning chemical time in contact with the bonded soils adhered to the carpet fibers. This is commonly referred to as “dwell time”. The chemical will pull the soils from the fibers into suspension, so they are ready for removal. For virtually all synthetic carpets, the pre-spray should be alkaline (above 7.0 pH) so that it can most effectively neutralize the soils in the carpet, which are usually acidic in nature. **For wool or wool-blend carpet fibers, the pre-spray should have a pH between 5.0 and 8.0. pH detergents outside of this range WILL DAMAGE THE WOOL FIBERS. USE ONLY tested “WOOLSAFE” PRODUCTS.**

- Rinse and Extract

The next step is rinsing the suspended soil out of the carpet, through extraction. Keep in mind that the *best* extractors only extract about 80 to 85% of the original solution put into the carpet. If it is left to dry, those detergents will cause re-soiling to occur. The chemical for this step should be an acidic or neutralizing rinse. While many people try water, it is not effective in removing the residues and soils from the pre-spray. Rinsing with hard water will only remove about 15% of the residue, and rinsing with soft water will only remove 30%. But rinsing with an acidic or neutralizing rinse will remove over 90% of the residue.

- Dry

The last step is to dry the carpet as quickly as possible, to prevent wicking and any potential for mold growth. Use blowers, ceiling fans and HVAC units. While drying, all traffic should be prohibited, if possible.

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Failure to follow these basic recommended maintenance procedures could damage your carpet and void manufacturer warranties.