



Hand Tufted Rug Maintenance Information

Hand tufted rugs are akin to art work, more than to carpet. You can think of it as “floor art” if you will. As such, these are not engineered for heavy commercial use such as woven Axminster. In order to keep this product looking its very best, care should be considered for the product. It is a textile product, and, as such, it is subject to both soiling and wear. To keep rug 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. Hand Tufted Rugs are generally made with 100% wool, but check the specifications to determine if there are any yarns other than wool used in this particular application.

If there are other yarns, like silk, viscose, or bamboo in the rug, then DO NOT FOLLOW these instructions. These “exotic” yarns can create an interesting look but from a maintenance standpoint they present real challenges. Note that while these yarns may develop an interesting look, they do not perform nearly as well as 100% wool. Do not attempt to clean or maintain these, don’t even use water. There is no performance warranty written or implied on rugs with these fibers. Please consult with professional “Wool Safe” service provider in your area www.wool-safe.org/usa. The instructions contained here are based on rugs crafted with 100% wool face yarn.

The first rule of rug maintenance is vacuum, vacuum, vacuum.

DO NOT USE ROTARY SHAMPOO OR SPIN BONNET ABSORBENT PADS ON WOOL RUGS – EVER. Do NOT use Pile lifters, especially on loop pile.

Because rotary equipment is used on nearby hard surface products, it is important to keep this equipment away from Hand Tufted Rugs. It will tear and/or damage rugs, so remove the rugs (if overlaid onto hard surface) or cover the rugs with protective blankets so the rotary equipment does not damage the rug.

Normal Characteristics of New Carpet

New wool rugs 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 rugs and carpets (woven, tufted, and handmade) are subject to the possible occurrence of a natural phenomenon known variously as shading, watermarking, pooling, or pile reversal. This is not a manufacturing defect. It does not affect the durability of the rug. 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 four (4) to eight (8) weeks after installation. No one has identified with certainty the precise 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 rug. 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 a few weeks after the rug 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 increase the service life of custom Hand Tufted rugs:

- **Preventative Maintenance**

The easiest way to control soiling is to prevent it from occurring. Identify anticipated high-soiling areas and develop a plan to minimize this soiling.

- **Daily Maintenance**

Vacuum effectively, spot-clean as needed.

- Interim Maintenance
Encapsulation Process
- Scheduled Maintenance
Hot Water Extraction – done correctly with the proper detergents and equipment.

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.

Routine cleaning/sweeping of nearby hard surface will help reduce the amount of soiling and the cost of maintaining the appearance of the rug.

Hand Tufted carpet on stairways are considered very high-impact areas, and are subject to far more stress from foot-traffic than floors. Generally stair nosing is not used with Hand Tufted product. But often additional attic stock should be considered to replace stairways as necessary. It is very difficult to properly vacuum steps and the nose of the stair is where the first sign of wear is likely to occur.

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 some manufacturers, but Crossley Axminster does not recommend this 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 rugs tend 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 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 the rugs.

Properly functioning vacuum equipment is needed to ensure that rugs 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 rugs.** 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

We recommend that you contact "WoolSafe" and/or Karcher/Windsor to purchase a "spotting kit" of products that are safe for use on Hand Tufted 100% wool rugs.

Identification and immediate action are the keys to effective stain removal. **With wool and wool-blend carpets always use WoolSafe Approved products (www.woolsafe.org/woolsafe-approved-carpet-care-products) 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 Karcher 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

- An encapsulation cleaning solution is sprayed lightly onto the carpet and allowed to dwell in the carpet, breaking down and surrounding soils and other residues. **Do NOT use pile lifters**. Pile lifters are machines with counter rotating cylinders, much like a vacuum cleaner without suction. These machines can damage the face yarn splaying the fibers, **especially** on loop pile. (splaying is pulling out and spreading of single fibers)
- 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

Unless you have the correct equipment for deep cleaning, you probably want to consider having a professional maintenance company come to remove your rug and have it professionally cleaned and dried before putting it back in place. Many facilities have identical rugs made for the purpose of putting one in place while the other is out for maintenance.

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 a properly diluted chemical onto an area of the rug 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. **With wool and wool-blend carpets always use WoolSafe Approved products (www.wool-safe.org/wool-safe-approved-carpet-care-products) and don't let carpet stay wet for over 6-8 hours.**

- 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 / 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 rug 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.

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