

Carpet Maintenance

Do-it-yourself systems

If you decide to rent a steam cleaning machine and do it yourself, check several cleaning systems before making a selection. Most rental units available do not adequately clean and may actually damage the carpet.

Consider the following:

1) Some rental companies have cleaning equipment that is similar to what the professionals use. The cleaning equipment should have enough vacuum power to allow the carpet to dry within 6 to 12 hours after cleaning. Avoid rental units found in many retail and grocery stores that do not have enough power to extract the cleaning solution from the carpet adequately and which may actually damage the carpet due to over wetting.

2) Avoid over wetting the carpet. Prolonged dampness may promote growth of mildew and bacteria in the carpet or cause separation of the backing. A carpet that is wet for more than 24 hours could develop a growth of mold and mildew. This is controlled by a combination of proper equipment and operator training. Most problems in do-it-yourself cleaning are due to over wetting and use of excessive detergent.

3) Use a cleaning solution with a pH less than 10, preferably near 9, and with a minimum of non-sticky residue. The attraction between the detergent and the particles of soil and it is critical during the cleaning process. However, the detergent residue continues to attract the particles after cleaning. Increasing the amount of cleaning solution beyond the recommended level does not greatly increase cleaning performance, but makes the removal of detergent more difficult. Because buildup of detergent residue is the most common cause of accelerated resoiling complaints, do not use extra cleaning solution. Shaw Industries recommends a clear water rinse after cleaning.

4) Carpet with stain resistant treatments must be cleaned with products formulated for this purpose, or the stain resistance will be impaired and the warranty voided. Do not use cleaning or spotting solutions that contain bleaches or optical brighteners because they can discolor the carpet.

5) Do not use any silicone-based anti-soil treatments on carpets produced by Shaw Industries. The only anti-soil products approved for use as needed are either DuPont Teflon® or 3M Scotchgard™.

6) Reduce drying time by using several fans to move air across the carpet in combination with a dehumidifier or air conditioner to pull moisture out of the air. Carpet should be dry within 12 hours; even less is better.

Bonnet cleaning systems

Bonnet cleaning systems employ a rotating bonnet of terry cloth or other absorbent material to agitate the carpet pile and absorb soil. A detergent solution is sprayed onto the pile and then worked with the bonnet attached to a rotary floor polisher.

Shaw Industries does not recommend this cleaning system.

The bonnet system has very limited capability for soil removal and leaves much of the detergent in the pile since it employs no real extraction. As a result, rapid resoiling often occurs. Another disadvantage is that the spinning bonnet may distort the fibers of cutpile carpet, fuzzing the pile and leaving distinct swirl marks.