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The Carpet Factor

Vol 9/No. 1

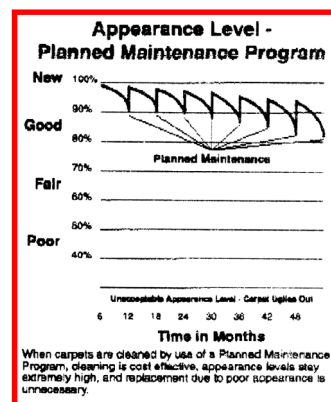
Residential Carpet Maintenance – *How Often is Often Enough?*

There is much discussion in our industry about how often carpeting should be cleaned. Surely you have heard “Wait as long as you can before you clean your carpet...” or “Once you’ve cleaned your carpet, it’s never the same...”.

These widely used comments have stemmed from unfortunate encounters with uninformed cleaners that have left the carpet with an overload of detergent residue. The unfortunate consumer has assumed that this is the case with all carpet cleaning and resolved to wait until the carpet is in dire straights to clean it.

The good news is that a properly cleaned carpet will not re-soil quickly and will actually last longer. Why? Because damaging soils are removed with effective carpet cleaning. Soil that is not removed by vacuuming, even though it can rarely be seen by the naked eye, cuts and slices on the carpet fibers as the carpet is being walked on breaking down the carpet yarns in the traffic areas. The result is that even with restorative cleaning at that point, it will not correct the damage that has been done to the fiber. Not to mention that a carpet that is not cleaned on a regular basis is an unhealthy carpet. Carpet is like a sink. It collects pollens, insecticides, exhaust, etc. that gets tracked in or blown in from the polluted outdoors. Carpet manufacturers state that a residential carpet should be professionally cleaned at least 18 to 24 months for best performance. More often if pets and/or children are present and perhaps more often if you are a smoker. The EPA published a guide that suggested regular cleaning frequencies based on number of occupants, etc.

In closing, a carpet that is maintained on a regular basis will not only last longer but will also provide a healthier indoor environment.



CLEANING FREQUENCY GUIDELINE

Environment:	Normal	Contaminated Outside, Dusty	Extremely Cold Weather Climates	High Humidity Biogenic
Day Care Center	2 wk	1wk	2 wk	1 wk
Nursing Home	1 mo	1 mo	1 mo	1 wk
Residence				
(2 persons, nonsmoking)	6-12 mo	2 mo	4-6 mo	4-6 mo
(2 persons with smoking)	4 mo	2 mo	3 mo	4 mo
(young children)	6 mo	1 mo	3 mo	3 mo
(young children with pets)	3-6 mo	1 mo	2 mo	2 mo
Office Building				
(ground floor)	3-6 mo	1-4 mo	2-6 mo	2-6 mo
(higher floors)	6-12 mo	2-6 mo	3-9 mo	3-9 mo
Food Service Establishment	1 mo	1 wk	2 wk	2 wk
Commercial				
(retail shop, bank)	3-6 mo	1 mo	2 mo	2mo

(From U.S. EPA Letter, January 1989)

Run Spot Run – *Seeing Yellow?*

Have you ever experienced your carpet turning yellow? Yellowing can manifest in a myriad of shapes and sizes. It could appear in spots, only under furniture, or only in the open areas, under a rug or only in the bathroom by the tub! The fact is that it is totally unpredictable!

There are literally hundreds of causes for yellowing. It could be that a cleaning agent used contained too high of a pH, or it could be from the pad, backing or fiber itself. It could be the result of intense sunlight, or it could be a completely unknown reason.

Even though predicting what caused the yellowing is obscure, the approach to solving the problem is relatively simple. Our company carries many products that are made specifically for yellowing in carpet. Sometimes it is as simple as spraying a neutralizing solution on the carpet. Other times, greater measures must be taken. In any event, the solution is generally not as mysterious as the cause. Our solutions contain a variety of different agents, each cleaning agent works on a different type of yellowing problem. We simply test each one in a small area to find out what works and proceed with that solution. Many times yellowing is caused by uninformed carpet cleaners. Our company avoids that by controlling the pH of our cleaning process, therefore helping you to avoid seeing yellow.

UNSEEN DANGER! THE HOUSE DUST MITE



The causes and effects of allergies have long been known and can be a serious health threat. Still allergies seem to be on the increase. They are an unwanted response of the immune system resulting in inflammation of the eyes and nose (rhinitis), lungs (asthma) and skin (eczema). It is estimated that allergies affect some 40% of the population at some time and the percentage is on the increase.

One controllable culprit in the battle with allergens is the house dust mite, a microscopic insect which is found in our indoor environment. The bedroom is particularly vulnerable for allergy sufferers as we spend one third of our life in bed and a good deal of other time dressing and preparing for the day. We shed skin scales (which is food to the dust mite) into our sleeping environment collected by the linens, pillows, mattress and carpet. All these areas are ideal breeding grounds for the dust mite.

HOUSE DUST MITE FACTS

- It is the house dust mite waste, and not the mites themselves, that triggers asthmatic and allergic attacks. Research has revealed this trigger is a microscopic protein in the mite excrement called *Der p1*.
- Mites live on carpets, pillows, upholstered furniture, blankets, mattresses, in the air handling system, etc.
- The average dust mite is 0.5 mm in length, not visible to the naked eye. **Over 7,000 can fit on a fingernail.**
- A dust mite molts several times during its life producing 200 times its weight in waste and will lay **300 eggs**. Each mite produces 40 to 100 feces pellets per day. The mites' droppings are coated in an enzymatic slimy substance, which after drying become mixed with other particles forming household dust.
- To help deactivate the allergen found in dust mite droppings, clean all textiles in the home. MasterBlend® Dust Mite Anti-Allergen can be used on carpet, furniture and in the final rinse cycle when laundering bed linens. MasterBlend® Dust Mite Anti-Allergen will remain effective for up to 4 washes.

To reduce dust mite feces, clean your carpet, upholstery and rugs today!

Trivia: TIPS

Did you leave a tip the last time you went to a restaurant? Have you ever wondered where the term "tip" came from? It was taken from this acronym:

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OUR GUARANTEE TO YOU

If you do not feel that our cleaning experience is the absolute best you have ever received, we will rush out to re-clean for you at no charge.

Education - Is It Worth The Money?

Cleaning has historically been viewed as a commodity - a menial task that anyone can do. Long before sophisticated textiles and complex built indoor environments were created, cleaning may have been a simple, easy task, but that is no longer the case. Complex flooring systems, sensitive fabrics, and new age soiling conditions have created a need for advanced education in the cleaning industry. Unfortunately, many cleaners (and consumers) have not understood this concept. We still see the ads for \$6.95 per room for carpet cleaning and sofa cleaning for \$45.00. The cleaner puts the ads out, never intending on cleaning for those prices, and the consuming public gets the idea that cleaning should be cheap.

These so called "cleaning" companies also happen to be the ones that don't educate themselves or their employees. The result is that carpets and fabrics are being ruined every day by uneducated, uninformed, and sometimes downright unscrupulous carpet cleaners.

They are facing soiling conditions that they have never seen or heard of due to a lack of education. Or worse, they create a situation on a carpet or fabric that they have no idea how to fix. Some examples would be that they leave sticky residues in the carpet that cause the carpet or fabric to re-soil rapidly or discolor.

Top notch education is readily available in our industry. There is no excuse for cleaners not to educate themselves (and provide useful education to their clients). Part of the problem is since they have fallen into the trap of viewing cleaning as a commodity themselves, they can't afford to educate themselves. Education is expensive, but the result of not getting the knowledge necessary is much more costly.

Our company invests a great deal in education. Not only do we spend thousands of dollars per year on education, we are heavily involved in our industry making us well connected with our industry leaders.

This way, if a unique situation arises in the field, we have experts that we can call on, therefore bringing the cutting edge of cleaning technology to you.

Our industry provides courses in **carpet cleaning, repair, fabric cleaning, marble and tile cleaning, area rug cleaning, customer service, marketing, management, and other related courses.**

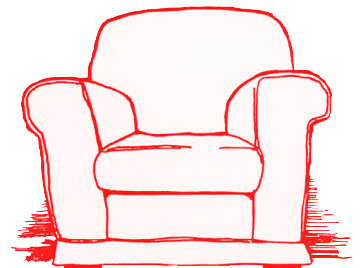
Many of the organizations offer certification programs that involve testing and ethics requirements. There are trade publications, web-sites, bulletin boards and a variety of opportunities to stay plugged in.

We attend every course we can in order to bring you the very best. Many of these courses require travel across the U.S. and can therefore be quite costly. We believe however, as fiber technology changes and as floor coverings become more complex, proper education is becoming even more important. The bottom line is that you have a tremendous investment in your textiles and flooring systems and it is our duty to know how to best care for them. Understanding cleaning technology at the highest level helps to reduce cleaning residues and creates a healthier indoor environment by eliminating invisible germs and bacteria. It also empowers the cleaner to remove more soil, therefore creating a longer lasting fabric or floor.

Is Your Upholstery *Really* Clean?

WARNING: Unhealthy substances are being invisibly transferred onto your upholstered fabrics. Pets, clothing, purses and briefcases can transfer germs onto your textiles. Exhaust, asphalt, pollens, dust, airborne grease, and food particles contribute to an unhealthy fabric. Just because a fabric "looks" clean doesn't mean that it is *really* clean. The cleaner you keep your fabric, the longer it will last.

Soil is corrosive in nature and will continue to deteriorate your textiles if left unattended.



Suffering From Allergies?

This time of the year is prone to trigger allergic reactions due to the increased amount of time spent indoors. Pet dander, pollens, and bacteria can contribute to the irritation. It is extremely important to keep all textiles "healthy", not just looking clean. Have your textiles cleaned often whether they look dirty or not. By keeping your carpets, upholstery and rugs clean, you will enhance the indoor air quality of your home and reduce allergic reactions.

GET FREE CASH OR CLEANING THROUGH OUR REFERRAL REWARD PROGRAM!

For each new customer that you send us, we will reward you with a 10% referral fee that can be used toward CASH or FREE CLEANING. Simply refer your friends, neighbors, or co-workers, and we will reward you automatically.

Hot Spinach Salad – The Absolute Best Ever!

For two
Ingredients:

½ medium sized chopped white onion
3 bunches of Fresh Spinach
1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
2 hard boiled eggs, sliced
¼ cup cooked bacon (optional), chopped
dash salt
dash pepper
1 ½ cups Virgin Olive Oil
¾ cup Red Wine Vinegar
3 tablespoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon Worcestershire
1 oz Brandy (optional) in a jigger, not from the bottle.

Recipe:

Thoroughly wash and remove stems from spinach leaves. Put spinach, sliced boiled eggs, bacon, and mushrooms in wooden salad bowl. Salt and pepper lightly.

Pre-heat saucepan over medium heat. Pour in all olive oil. When oil is slightly warm, stir in red wine vinegar, then lemon juice, then worcestershire sauce. Stir continuously to keep ingredients cohesive. Saute' onion in this mixture until soft and tender. Turn heat to high and flame with brandy. BE CAREFUL! Shake pan back and forth to keep flame going until brandy burns off. IMMEDIATELY pour dressing over salad and toss thoroughly. The egg yolks will mix with the dressing giving it more texture. Serve immediately.



Lewis Cleaners AWARDED “OUTSTANDING BUSINESS OF 2002”



On February 13, 2002 Lewis Cleaners was honored as “THE OUTSTANDING BUSINESS OF 2002”.

The Sequoia Award was founded in 1990 to promote and recognize leadership and volunteerism in our community. The outstanding individual award went to Janet Borgens. At the Annual event this year, 22 Student Scholarships were awarded. Our entire staff is excited, delighted and truly honored. As business owners, we realize the importance of building strong communities. As individuals we are committed and believe it is our civic responsibility to give back to the communities in which we reside and work. If you would like more information or would like to donate to The Sequoia Awards, visit their website at: www.sequoiaawards.org



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Inside:
Residential Carpet Maintenance –
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IS YOUR UPHOLSTERY REALLY CLEAN?
Run Spot Run –
Seeing Yellow?

EDUCATION:
IS IT WORTH THE MONEY?

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“Avoid Uneducated, Uninformed, & Downright Unscrupulous Carpet Cleaners!”
Call 1-800-23-Lewis Today!