

# MAINTENANCE

## **Beaulieu Commercial MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

Your commercial carpet installation is a significant investment both in monetary terms and overall facility image. It is the goal of this publication to assist you in maintaining the original appearance of your commercial carpet.

### **Overview Of Carpet Maintenance**

There are many factors involved in a well-planned maintenance program. The first and most important factor in maintaining a commercial carpet's appearance is product selection. Color, texture and density are very important considerations when determining a facility's carpet needs. Color and texture are factors in soil and stain hiding. Texture and density are important for performance in traffic areas and around fixtures.

A maintenance plan should be outlined before the carpet is installed. This is easily done when replacing carpet. Facility managers should have a basic idea of what the requirements should be, based on previous experience. It is important to note, however, that new carpet may not be the same as the old product and methods or frequencies may have to be altered. The new program should be implemented and monitored immediately following the installation.

In developing a plan for a new facility, it will be very useful to make the designers and contractors aware of your concern for an adequate maintenance program. Their suggestions will be helpful in setting up an initial program. It may be necessary to modify the maintenance plan, so it is important to constantly monitor the effectiveness of your program.

### **Preventative Maintenance**

Preventative maintenance is the least expensive and most effective means of protecting your carpet's appearance. Walk-off mats, protective mats, surface spray treatments, and user education are all extremely efficient ways to prevent costly and disruptive carpet cleaning and replacement.

The first step in preventive maintenance is to limit the amount of soil that comes into contact with the carpet. Walk-off mats are essential in this regard, as they remove dirt from the shoes of users before it can be transferred to the carpet. To be effective, these mats must be made of materials appropriate to the needs of the facility, and need to be strategically placed.

Walk-off mats should be placed directly in front of the building entrance or immediately inside the entryway. This placement takes advantage of the walk-off area's natural pivot points, thus maximizing the mat's ability to remove soil that is tracked in from the outside.

Outside mats should be capable of scraping debris off of shoes and also have the capability to hold that material. Inside mats should remove smaller particles of dirt as well as oils and other liquids that can be tracked in from outside. Facility managers should take into consideration the texture of the users shoes when selecting mats. Smooth-soled traffic requires a less abrasive surface than a situation (such as a school) where the majority of shoes are textured, sneaker-type soles.

Replacement and/or cleaning of soiled mats is also important in your preventative maintenance program. Dirt can be transferred from a dirty walk-off mat just as easily as tracking dirt from the exterior of the building.

Protective mats around food stations, water coolers, elevators and stair thresholds will also assist in maintaining your carpet's appearance.

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Spray treatments are applied to the surface of carpets in manufacturing or on-site. Quality and price vary widely. It is recommended such treatments be tested in a small area before an extensive application to determine the worth of a particular protectant. It is important to keep in mind that all topical solutions will wear off with cleaning and traffic. The rate of such a decrease in effectiveness depends on the method and frequency of cleaning and the amount of traffic. Protective coatings do not make carpet “bulletproof”. They are designed to assist you in maintaining carpet and should not be thought of as a substitute for an effective maintenance plan.

One final factor in carpet maintenance is educating users about their important role in maintaining the appearance of carpet. One way this can be accomplished is through the use of signs (such as Please Wipe Feet, Please Clean Spills, etc.) that remind users about the importance of cleanliness.

## **Carpet Care**

### **Vacuuming**

Effective, routine vacuuming is a must for good commercial carpet performance, so a proper vacuuming program is essential in a well-designed maintenance program. The most important features of your vacuuming maintenance program will be:

1. Identifying high-, medium-, and low-traffic areas.
2. Monitoring carpet performance and making any necessary adjustments to the schedule.
3. Choosing and maintaining the best vacuuming equipment possible.

Your individual program may vary. Location, activity in and around your facility, along with a host of other factors such as weather will determine the frequency of vacuuming and the overall performance of the carpet.

To develop a schedule for your facility, label a drawing of the floor plan, color coding the various traffic areas with the vacuuming schedule. Post this schedule so supervisors and personnel are aware of what areas should be vacuumed and at what frequency. When inspecting carpet, look below the tufts of carpet down to the backing. If soil is observed, a more aggressive vacuuming schedule is needed along with equipment checks.

### **Vacuuming Equipment**

Vacuuming is essential to remove soil, dust, and other debris from the carpet. It also grooms the carpet pile, which is beneficial in retaining the carpet’s appearance.

Vacuum cleaners come in wide variety of types. An upright heavy-duty vacuum cleaner is necessary to properly maintain any commercial carpet installation. This type provides the agitation of the carpet fiber necessary to achieve the highest level of soil removal. The vacuum cleaner should be maintained properly to retain a high level of suction, and beater and brush bars should be checked regularly for wear. Brush bars are recommended for installations that are direct glue down. Brush and beater bars are recommended for installations over pad or with cushioned backings.

### **Spot And Stain Removal**

Spills and the resulting stains are a difficult problem in any commercial carpet installation. There are also many types of tracked-on stains, ranging from grease to wax and other substances. Stains should be addressed in your maintenance schedule. A system of immediate action when a spill is noticed and a regular visual inspection system will be helpful in preventing permanent stains.

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Once again, preventing spills and tracked-on stains from reaching the carpet will be the best way to maintain carpet appearance. Protective mats can be placed in food service and other spill-prone areas. Signs that remind users to clean up spills or notify a custodian of a spill can help you reach stains before they dry and become difficult or impossible to remove.

In addition to prompt action, correctly identifying the stain and using the appropriate method of stain removal are essential. It is recommended that a spot and stain removal kit be assembled for maintenance personnel, so that the proper cleaning agents and utensils are readily available.

## **Carpet Cleaning Methods**

A regular schedule of carpet cleaning should be established in addition to the vacuuming schedule. Routine cleaning concentrates on traffic and frequent spill areas and removes soil that is not removed by vacuuming, including oily soil that builds up on carpet fibers and seriously degrades its appearance. Regular cleaning not only improves carpet appearance, but also extends the life of the carpet.

There are several methods for cleaning carpet. Beaulieu Commercial recommends hot water extraction for all commercial carpet installations. Dry extraction is also approved, especially in installations where drying of carpet is difficult.

Carpets that are exceptionally dirty may require an extensive cleaning program to restore the original appearance.

The following sections describe recommended cleaning procedures, as well as a description of alternative methods and their drawbacks. Carpet that has been poorly maintained for a long period of time is likely to have excessive amounts of dirt ground into the carpet face, and possibly the backing, cushion, and floor. This dirt will not be removed with one cleaning. It will be removed from the carpet face but as the moisture evaporates from the carpet, dirt and chemicals will wick up from the bottom of the carpet. This dirt will be left on the carpet fibers at the top of the carpet as the moisture turns into a vapor and deposits the soil particles. For this reason, it is imperative that a regular schedule of cleaning be followed – not just when the carpet looks dirty.

## **Hot Water Extraction**

This method injects hot water into the carpet pile to loosen soil and then immediately vacuums the water and suspended dirt out of the carpet. This method is very effective due to the ability of hot water to loosen soil trapped by oily deposits. To be effective, it is recommended that no detergents be used. Detergents, especially oil-based detergents, leave deposits in the carpet that attract soil. The water temperature should be approximately 100 to 150 degrees at the wand and the water pressure should be 125 to 150 psi.

The most critical—and difficult—factor in hot water extraction is the removal of all the moisture and any solvents. Care should be taken not to over-wet the carpet, and to allow it to dry completely before opening it to traffic. Depending on time constraints and atmospheric conditions, large drying fans or air conditioning can help facilitate thorough drying. If a solvent needs to be used, Beaulieu recommends a non-detergent solvent.

## **Dry Chemical Extraction**

This is an effective alternative method of soil removal. The cleaning compound, in powder or particle form, is worked into the carpet. Solvents in the cleaning compound loosen soil, which is then vacuumed out along with the cleaning compound. This method is useful when there is very little time to allow the carpet to dry before the carpet must be opened to traffic. One drawback of this method is that it introduces powder into the atmosphere. Another disadvantage is that aggressive vacuuming may be required to completely remove the cleaning compound.

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## **Bonnet Cleaning**

This method is not recommended for several reasons. First, this method tends to work soil to the base of the carpet rather than remove it. Also, the chemicals that are used to dislodge soil are not removed and can attract additional soil. In addition, bonnet cleaning can lead to matting of the carpet surface, which degrades its appearance.

## **Foam Cleaning**

Dry and wet foam cleaning may be effective in removing dirt from heavily soiled carpet. These methods, however, tend to leave chemicals in the carpet. If this method is used be sure to follow with Hot Water Extraction to remove any cleaning chemical residue.

## **Installation**

Installation plays an important role in any carpet application. Proper installation methods and products should always be used. Floors should always be thoroughly cleaned and sealed before any new carpet installation. Dirt below the carpet can and does “wick up” to the surface if moisture from cleaning, humidity or stains is introduced. It is a good practice to discuss the installation method and products with the contractor before installation to avoid future problems.

## **Summary**

Successful carpet maintenance involves education, planning, observation and effective action. Education of maintenance personnel as well as users helps ensure that proper methods and schedules are implemented. Planning the maintenance program provides guidelines that are effective and user friendly. Observing the carpet’s performance and the effectiveness of the maintenance program ensures maximum results at minimal cost. Effective action using proper, well-maintained machines, techniques and products helps retain your carpet’s appearance and extends its useful life.

The chemicals and processes discussed herein should be tested on a remnant or inconspicuous area before being incorporated into any maintenance program.

Beaulieu Commercial offers no guarantee of results, and is not responsible in connection with their use in any way.

For more information or technical advice contact our technical services department at 1-800-451-1250 or your local sales representative.