

## **Dealing with a Professional Carpet Cleaner**

We have all received calls from someone who offers to clean your carpets and furniture at bargain prices. The old adage "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably applies most certainly to this situation. There are bargains to be had particularly in the off-peak times but there are some things you can do to ensure you get good value for your money.

### **Choosing a Cleaner:**

Do a little preparatory work so you can assess the professionalism of the cleaner you choose:

Talk to friends and family who have their carpets cleaned, find out who they used and their level of satisfaction. Be realistic about expectations - carpets cleaned once every 5 years will never clean as well as those cleaned annually! Treat your prospective cleaner with the respect due to a professional and listen carefully to what he/she says.

### **Discuss with your prospective cleaner:**

What method of cleaning your carpet will be used? (See the article on this site about cleaning methods if you are unfamiliar with the ways of cleaning carpets.) How long before the carpet will be dry?

How long they have been in business? What customers you can contact for references?

What preparations are expected of you? You can often save money if you can move the furniture out of the room or do other tasks such as raising or removing drapes.

Point out any stains in the carpet, what might have caused them and what may have been done to remove them. An experienced, reputable cleaner will tell you if a stain is likely or not to be removed.

Describe past cleanings, if any, that the carpet has undergone. If the carpet has been shampooed several times, it can create problems with which the cleaner must deal.

Specify any special add-ons you would like such as carpet stain protection spray.

Get the operation cost in writing before service begins. Ask what guarantees are included.

After you've got the estimate, how comfortable did you feel dealing with the cleaner? Based on the responses to your questions and concerns, how would you rate the professionalism of the person who did the estimate? Is there a question that you wished you had asked? If there is, call and ask.

One last thing on selecting a cleaner: improper cleaning can promote rapid re-soiling and may cause premature wear. Pick the cleaner who will do the best job...if they also give you the best price, you really got the very best deal.

You've picked the professional cleaner; the cleaning is done. Here are some tips to follow:

Pay only after inspecting the carpet with the service person.

Make sure plastic or foil protectors are placed under all furniture legs. Do not remove them until the carpet is completely dry.

Ask if there are any special instructions and an estimated drying time.

Don't cover the carpet to walk on it with anything that would hinder its ability to dry.

If you notice spots or stains after the cleaner has gone, call the firm immediately.

Open windows to promote circulation and assist drying if the weather permits.

If the carpet is not dry within 24 hours, call your cleaning company.

As soon as the carpet dries, vacuum it thoroughly. Vacuuming regularly will extend the time required between cleanings.

Check the articles within the resource centre about spot and stain removal. The quicker you deal with these, the better chance of getting them out and maintaining the appearance of your carpet.

A final note...carpet is made of fibres and fibres wear out (usually on one side). If your carpet is an older one or you have not done your part by regularly vacuuming, you can expect shadows and wear patterns will have developed. These may cause parts of your carpet to appear not as clean as the unworn areas. There is nothing your professional carpet cleaner can do to prevent this or restore it to its original condition.