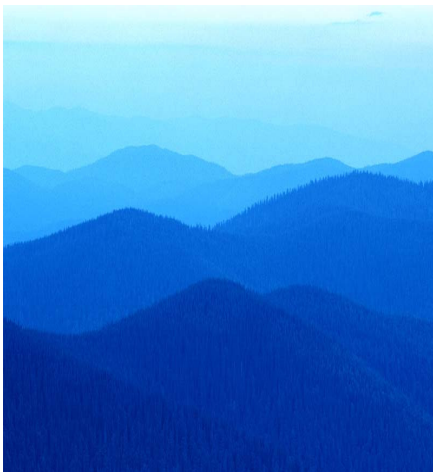


CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO CARPET CLEANING

By Don & Jennifer Drummond
Spectrum Home Services



Provided as an educational service by
**Spectrum Painting &
Home Services**
Specialist in Carpet Cleaning
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Dear Homeowner,

Choosing a carpet cleaner isn't easy.

Why? Because you're bombarded with misleading advertising, confusing claims and simply bad information.

From super-low prices and high-pressure sales - to unqualified technicians and near-worthless methods—how do you ever find a qualified, competent, professional carpet cleaner?

You start by reading this Consumer's Guide. In this fact-filled booklet, you'll discover how to avoid four carpet cleaning rip-offs, six costly misconceptions about carpet cleaning, and seven questions to ask a carpet cleaner before you invite them into your home. Plus, we will offer four recommendations to a fresh, clean, healthy carpet.

We wrote this guide to help you better understand carpet cleaning. Now, with this information, you can make an informed, intelligent decision.

And if you have any questions about carpet or upholstery cleaning you're invited to call us at 850-529-0836. We've dedicated our business to educating consumers. We'll be happy to help you in every way.

Cordially,

Don & Jennifer Drummond
Spectrum Painting & Home Services
Home Service Specialist

6 COSTLY MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT CARPET CLEANING

MISCONCEPTION #1: *You should wait as long as possible before cleaning your carpet.*

No. Dirt is an abrasive-like sandpaper. Every time you step on your carpet, you grind dirt into the carpet fibers. This cuts your carpet, just as if you had used a knife. A dirty carpet will not last as long as a clean carpet. And while vacuuming helps-by itself, it's simply not enough. The longer you wait to have your carpet cleaned, the more damage you do to your carpet and the faster it wears out.

MISCONCEPTION #2: *The only reason to clean carpets is to remove the dirt.*

No. As you probably know, outdoor air contains pollens, fungus, bacteria, air pollution, cigarette smoke, car exhaust—and hundreds of other chemicals. When you come into your home, you carry those pollens, bacteria and chemicals in you hair and on your skin, clothing and shoes. Not surprisingly, all those chemicals and toxins wind up in your carpet.

If you have allergies, asthma, emphysema, or other breathing problems—one major source of your problem could be the pollens, fungus, smoke and chemicals in your carpet.

MISCONCEPTION #3: *One method of carpet cleaning is as good as another.*

No. You can choose from two primary methods: Dry cleaning or Hot water extraction.

FIRST, we'll explain dry cleaning. Many people believe that dry

cleaning your carpet is like dry cleaning your clothing. This is not true. All carpet cleaning methods use water in one form or another. Here are the three methods of dry carpet cleaning.

- 1) When a carpet cleaner uses dry foam, he applies shampoo to your carpet, allows it to dry, then sucks the dried shampoo into a vacuum. Can you imagine applying shampoo to your hair, allowing it to dry and then removing the shampoo from your head with a vacuum?: This method can leave a residue in your carpet, which is one reason dry foam is not very effective.
- 2) The dry-chem. method is similar to dry foam. The major difference is that when dry-chem. is used, the company sets a large cotton bonnet on your carpet. Using a machine, the bonnet spins from side to side, absorbing the dirt that is in the carpet. After the bonnet is saturated with dirt, another cotton bonnet is applied. Bonnet cleaning is like trying to use a large towel to rub the dirt out of your carpet. Like dry foam, it is not very effective.
- 3) The dry-compound method spreads an absorbent mixture that looks like wet sawdust all over your carpet. Then the machine brushes the mixture into the carpet, which in theory, causes dirt to absorb into the mixture. When the mixture has dried, a vacuum cleaner sucks the material out of the carpeting. Because the carpet is not rinsed in any way, this method is not very effective.

The second carpet cleaning method is called hot water extraction.

Hot water extraction means a hot water cleaning solution, under high pressure, is forced into your carpet and then sucked out of your carpet. Shaw Industries, the world's largest carpet manufacturer, recommends hot water extraction as the primary method of cleaning carpets, along with an IICRC-approved firm.

MISCONCEPTION #4: *Having the right equipment is all a company needs to clean your carpets properly.*

Not true. Many companies own hot-water cleaners but very few companies teach their employees how to use them properly. This is why it's important that you choose your carpet cleaner carefully. The best cleaning companies

are those that have been certified by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification, known as the IICRC. Before you choose a carpet cleaner, ask to see written proof of the company's IICRC certification and also the certification of the technician who is going to do the job! If they don't have them, don't use them!

MISCONCEPTION #5: *The company who offers the lowest price is the company you should hire.*

No. I've seen so many problems arise from lowest-bid companies that I suggest you NEVER hire the company that quotes the cheapest price. The two most common problems are:

The price you see offered may not be for the services you want performed.

The company may be equipped to remove only the dirt from your carpet. But you may want bacteria, fungus, pollens, dust mites and tobacco residues removed as well.

The price you see advertised may not be the price you pay.

Many homeowners have learned that the low price they saw advertised only lasted until the carpet cleaner got into their home. Then they were pressured into paying a lot more for a variety of add-ons. (Some carpet cleaners even break the law by using illegal bait-and-switch tactics.)

MISCONCEPTION #6: *Any honest carpet cleaning company should be able to give you an exact price quote over the telephone.*

I wish this were true, but it isn't. Consumers often think that if they want to clean four rooms and the price is \$15.00 per room, then the price will be \$60. But this isn't always true.

Honest, reputable carpet cleaning companies almost never price carpet cleaning by the room. Instead, carpet cleaning is usually priced by the square foot. So if you'd like me to tell you the exact cost of cleaning your carpet, I need to know the exact number of square feet that you want cleaned. To get an accurate measurement, I use a measuring wheel to calculate the exact size of the carpet area.

You'll be glad to know that the area to be cleaned is not nearly as large as most people think. For example, if you want your entire home cleaned, and your home is 2,000 sq. feet, the amount of carpeting might only be 1,200 sq. feet. We deduct the area taken up by walls, room dividers, and the like. The result is that the area to be cleaned is usually about 60% of the square footage of the home.

So, even though we can't give you an exact quote over the phone, here are things we consider when quoting a price:

First, the type of carpet . Certain types of carpet are harder to clean than other types.

Secondly, the amount of soiling. Carpet that hasn't been cleaned for ten years will take longer to clean than carpet that we cleaned within the last six months.

Third, the amount of furniture we have to move. If you move your furniture, you'll save money.

To recap, we consider the type of carpet, the amount of soiling, and the amount of furniture that has to be moved. So as you can now imagine, every quotation is different.

If you are thinking about having your carpets cleaned, we offer these four recommendations:

Recommendation #1:

Make a commitment to yourself to get your carpets cleaned. The longer they remain dirty, the sooner they'll wear out. Plus the longer you will have to breathe all the pollens, fungus, chemicals and dust mites that live in your carpet.

Recommendation #2:

List your objectives. Do you want only the dirt removed, something you could do with a rented machine? Or do you want the bacteria, fungus and chemicals removed, which will require a hot water truck mounted machine,

like we use? Do you want to work with an honest, reputable company — or are you willing to risk working with the company that offers you the lowest price— knowing that company might not be in business tomorrow?

Recommendation #3:

Ask questions. The way you learn about a company is to ask specific questions and listen carefully to the answers. Here are the questions we suggest you ask:

1. What method of carpet cleaning do you recommend?
2. What type of equipment do you use to clean the carpet?
3. What does your equipment remove from my carpet?
4. How often should I get my carpets cleaned?
5. What training have you had?
6. Are you certified by the *Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification* (IICRC) and will you show me your certificate?
7. What's the total price I'll be charged?

Recommendation #4:

Once you are satisfied that you are working with an honest, competent professional, invite him or her into your home and ask for a **specific quote in writing**. A written quotation gives you the assurance that you know exactly what your job will cost — no surprises.

By following these four recommendation you'll gain all the information you need to make an informed, intelligent decision. If you want a quick, cheap carpet cleaning job, many companies in the phone book can help you. Or you can rent a shampooer and do the job yourself.

But if you want your carpeting to be completely and thoroughly cleaned — removing the bacteria, fungus and harmful chemicals — then we invite you to call on us.

We will be happy to answer your questions and come into your home and give you a free written quote — without any obligation of any kind. To reach us, call 850-529-0836.

Here's one last point:

We guarantee our work. That's right! We fully guarantee every carpet cleaning job we do. If you are not happy with our work, we'll re-clean the area for free. And if you still aren't pleased, you pay nothing. Not one cent.

What could more fair?

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this guide. We hope you found it helpful. If you have questions or comments — or would like to schedule a free, in home quote, please call us at 850-529-0836, or visit www.homeservicetips.com.

On behalf of Spectrum Painting & Home Services —
We thank you for your kind attention.

Don and Jennifer Drummond