



**Eco-Smart, Inc.**

**(888)329-2705 info@eco-smart.com www.eco-smart.com**

## **CARE AND MAINTENANCE: WOOL CARPET**

Your choice of wool is the first step to having an attractive, easy-to-care floor covering. Following these basic rules will ensure that your investment in your new floor covering will last longer and look wonderful for years.

Please note that the information pertained in this document is specifically addressing carpets that are machine made with wool or wool-blend fibers. Some instructions do not apply to carpets made with synthetic fibers and may not be appropriate.

### **THE CARPET CARE PROGRAM:**

A comprehensive carpet care program consist of four elements:

1. Preventive maintenance
2. Vacuuming
3. Regular cleaning
4. Stain removal

### **PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE:**

1. Walk-off mats should be used at all entrances to absorb soil and moisture. Mats should be cleaned on a regular basis so that they will not become sources of soil. Ask your local retailer about purchasing quality walk-off mats. Keep sidewalks and entranceways free of excessive dirt and substances that can be tracked into the home.
2. Use a quality pad under carpet, especially under stairs. Quality pad offers better resilience underfoot and adds life to your carpet. We recommend the use of our quality pure urethane pad or products of at least equal quality.
3. Use a protective barrier of heavy cardboard or plywood when moving heavy wheeled furniture such as a piano, buffet, etc.
4. The use of protective roller cups is recommended with use of chairs, furniture or appliances over carpet with pad underlayment.
5. When using area rugs over your carpet, frequently remove the rug and clean it regularly. Clean and restore the pile of the carpet that is underneath the rug. After cleaning your carpet, allow time for the carpet to completely dry before replacing rugs or walking on the carpet.
6. Protect carpet from prolonged periods of direct sunlight with blinds, shades or awnings. Eco-Smart recommends Eco-Flector Blinds and Screens or Earth-shade Window Treatments.

### **VACUUMING:**

The most important step in caring for your carpet is vacuuming. Vacuum thoroughly and frequently, particularly in high traffic areas. Bear in mind that walking on soiled flooring permits the soil particles to work their way below the surfaces of the pile where they are far more difficult to remove. Particles left in carpet will wear fibers prematurely. Frequent vacuuming removes these particles from the surfaces before this happens.

For rooms with light traffic, vacuum the traffic lanes twice weekly and the entire room at least once weekly. Those areas with higher traffic require that the traffic lanes be vacuumed daily and the entire area twice weekly. Up to three passes of the machine will suffice for light soiling, but five to seven passes for heavily soiled areas. Vacuuming across the traffic pattern occasionally, rather in the usual direction of the traffic will help to prevent matting.

### **Vacuum cleaner recommendations:**

1. We recommend the use of a strong suction vacuum without a beater bar for loop pile wool or wool-blend carpets. Carpets with thick, loop pile construction may be sensitive to brushing, rubbing or scraping of the pile surface, which may cause fuzzing and pile distortion.
2. We recommend vacuum cleaners with a rotating brush or beater/brush bar for cut pile wool and wool-blend carpets. The beater/brush bar agitates the carpet pile and mechanically loosens soil for the vacuum to remove. Adjust the beater bar height to the highest setting, then lower the bar until it contacts the pile enough to vibrate the carpet slightly several inches away from the machine, but not close enough to cause slowing of the motor.
3. Vacuums with top-loading bags are preferred over bottom loading bags. The top-loading bag helps to ensure that the vacuum does not lose effectiveness as the bag fills. Replaceable paper bags do a better job of trapping the small particles than do the cloth bags. Cloth bags tend to let smaller particles back into the air. Vacuum bags should be frequently replaced, at least when the bag is 1/2 full and not past 3/4 full. Make sure that the belt driving the beater bar is in good shape and the bar actually rotates when in touch with the carpet.
4. A good vacuum cleaner is vital to prolong the life of your carpet. An inexpensive machine will remove surface dirt, but will not effectively remove the hidden dirt and particles embedded in the pile.

**REGULAR CLEANING:**

While vacuuming is sufficient to remove most dry dirt, the oily soil which comes from cooking vapors, air pollution and tracked in dirt from outside presents a different type of problem. The particles of oily soil deposited on carpet fibers can cause gradual but significant dulling of delicate pastel colors. The color is not lost, but hidden under the film. If this type of film is allowed to accumulate, it begins to attract and hold the dry soil. This is the reason cleaning is so important when dulling of the color is first noticed. If allowed to remain too long, it becomes gummy and difficult to remove.

If carpet is cleaned before it becomes too unsightly, the cleaning chore will be easier and more successful. It is a myth that cleaning the carpet before it is absolutely necessary will cause it to get dirty faster. However, choice of the proper cleaning system is important, in that some systems may leave residue, which promote resoiling and defeat the purpose of cleaning. The following recommendations represent the best current cleaning knowledge and should help prolong the time between cleaning.

**Hot-water extraction:** We recommend the hot water extraction method which research indicates provide the best capability for cleaning. The system is commonly referred to as "steam cleaning" though no steam is actually generated. The process consists of spraying a solution of water and detergent into the pile of the carpet and recovering the water and soil with a powerful vacuum into a holding tank. This can be done from a truck-mounted unit outside the home with only the hose and the wand brought inside. If a truck-mount unit is not accessible, then a portable self-contained system can be brought into the home.

**"Do-It-Yourself" systems:** If you decide to rent a steam-cleaning machine and do it yourself, check several different cleaning systems before making a selection. Most rental units do not adequately clean and may actually damage your 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 clean the carpet adequately and could actually damage the carpet due to over wetting.
2. Use only approved cleaning solutions for wool and wool-blend carpet. The pH level of the cleaning solution should be near neutral (pH between 5 and 7). A solution with an alkaline pH above 7 can actually strip color from wool fibers.
3. Bleach or optical brightening agents are not acceptable.
4. Most problems in do-it-yourself cleaning are due to over wetting and use of excessive detergent.

**Note:** Wool can retain as much as 33% of its weight in moisture without feeling wet. It is important to allow adequate time for thorough drying after cleaning before walking on carpet.

**Bonnet cleaning systems:** We do 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 of this system is that the spinning bonnet may distort the pile of wool carpets, causing overall fuzziness, which can distract from the beauty of the carpet.

**STAIN REMOVAL PROCEDURE:** Spot and stain removal is the reaction to an unplanned incident. Therefore, it is desirable to have on hand materials needed to treat stains. You may already have some of these on your kitchen shelf. Do not use any other household products other than those listed below, since many household products contain chemicals that may permanently damage your carpet.

**Items to keep on hand:**

1. Mixture of detergent solution of 1/2 teaspoon (no more) of clear, no bleach liquid dishwasher detergent such as Dawn, Joy or clear Ivory to a quart of water in a clear clean spray bottle.
2. A solution of white vinegar and water (1 part white vinegar to 4 parts water)
3. Nail polish remover
4. Chewing gum remover (freeze or solid type)
5. Dry cleaning fluid

**STAIN REMOVAL PROCEDURE:**

**General instructions:**

Prompt attention to spots and spills is essential. Remove solids from a spill by gently scraping with a spoon or dull knife. Quickly absorb as much liquid as possible by blotting with white paper towels and replacing them as they become saturated. Always blot spills, never scrub or rub abrasively as a fuzzy area may result. When blotting, work from the outer edge toward the center of the spot to avoid spreading the spill and enlarging the problem. A final rinse by spraying with cool water and blotting is necessary to remove detergent residue that may become sticky and cause rapid resoiling.

The nature of wool fiber to absorb more water than synthetic fiber without feeling damp makes it critical to remove excess moisture. To absorb any remaining moisture from the carpet, place a half inch layer of white towels over the spot and apply pressure. Change the towels as they become wet and repeat until the carpet is only slightly damp. On the damp area, put more towels weighted down with a heavy nonstaining object, such as a plastic milk jug filled with water and leave overnight.

**The following recommendations should be used for spot cleaning:**

**A. WATER SOLUBLE STAINS:** Absorb moisture as much as possible with white paper towels. Blot the stained area with white paper towels dampened with cool water until there is no more transfer of the stain onto the towels. If any of the stain remains, the detergent solution mentioned previously should be sprayed lightly onto the spot and blotted repeatedly with white towels, working from the outer edge in toward the center of the spot to avoid spreading. Rinse thoroughly by spraying with clean water and blotting. Again, it is important not to use too much detergent because the residue will contribute to rapid resoiling.

**A.1** Same as above, but treat with white vinegar—one part vinegar to four parts water—before using detergent.

**B. GREASE:** Scrape as much of the stain as possible using a butter knife, spoon or shop vac. Apply a volatile solvent such as Carbona, Engerine or K2R to towels or spotting cloth and repeat blotting. Use sparingly! Do not pour or spray directly on the natural fiber as damage to the backing or adhesive underneath may occur. Check to see if solvent is dissolving the substance. Work from the outside of the stain toward the center to prevent spreading. Dry the fibers quickly, again from the outside towards the middle using a blow dryer. Protective gloves should be worn, as the solvent will quickly remove oils from the skin and may result in irritation. Provide adequate ventilation. Do not use flammable solvents. Follow with procedure in A.

**C. FREEZE:** Freeze stains, such as chewing gum and candle wax, with ice or commercially available products in an aerosol can. Shatter with blunt object.

**PRO:** professional cleaner

**Specific stain removal procedures for natural fiber carpets:**

Stain	A	B	C	PRO	Other	Stain	A	B	C	PRO	Other
Alcoholic Beverages	X					Grease (auto)		X		X	
Asphalt		X		X		Grease (food)	X				
Beer	X					Ink (ballpoint)		X		X	
Berries	X					Ink (permanent)		X		X	
Blood (wet)	X					Ink (washable)	X			X	
Blood (dry)	X			X		Lipstick		X			
Butter	X					Milk	X				
Chewing gum			X			Mustard	X				
Chocolate	X			X		Nail Polish					Polish removal (non-oily)
Coffee	1			X		Paint (latex wet)	X				
Cola drinks	X					Paint (latex dry)		X			
Cosmetics		X				Paint (oil)		X		X	
Crayon		X				Rust				X	
Deicer (Calcium Chloride)	X				Vacuum	Urine	1			X	
Excrement	X					Vomit	1				
Food dyes	X					Wine	X				
Furniture polish	X	X		X							

**Warning:** Certain products found in most homes can cause irreparable damage to your carpet. Bleaches, tile cleaners, mildew removers, oven cleaners and drain openers are very strong chemicals that can discolor or dissolve carpet fibers. Acne medication containing benzoyl peroxide, a very powerful bleach, are capable of permanently damaging your carpet and most other fabrics as well.