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# CARPET TILE MAINTENANCE GUIDE

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## INTRODUCTION

All carpets require maintenance to optimise wear life, performance and appearance retention. This guide explains the basic principles of effective carpet maintenance and we recommend that these proposals are implemented immediately after installation.

The most important point to make when discussing the cleaning and maintenance of a carpet tile installation is that it is more effective to maintain the installation from day one on a planned maintenance basis than to carry out major restorative cleaning when the carpet becomes excessively soiled.

The performance of the carpet is dependent on several factors:

- Construction and Colour
- Effective Barrier Matting
- Correct Installation
- Planned Maintenance

Often the carpet is reported as wearing badly or being 'worn out' after a relatively short period of time in use. In fact the carpet is usually found to have lost appearance as a result of infrequent or improper cleaning. Improper cleaning can cause a build-up of residual cleaning agents which will lead to rapid resoiling and matting of the pile.

A planned maintenance programme will usually consist of frequent 'preventative' cleans for selected high traffic areas, augmented periodically by more intensive 'corrective' cleaning treatments.

## Barrier Matting

The use of barrier matting in all external doorways and junctions between dirty areas and carpeted areas will significantly reduce the amount of soiling reaching the carpet. 80% of all soiling will be walked into the building from outside and once in the carpet it is likely to be trafficked further into the building.

Installing effective barrier matting can prevent most of this soiling. Obviously, the greater number of steps taken on the entrance matting, the more effective it will be in removing dirt. These mats must be regularly cleaned or replaced to prevent the build-up of soil, otherwise they become ineffective.

For specific areas of heavy soiling such as vending areas, kitchens and print rooms, we recommend a hard floor covering as this type of flooring can be easily wiped clean of spills. Should carpet tiles be installed in such areas, protective plastic or neoprene mats should be placed over the carpets where spills occur?

## Vacuum Cleaning

A good vacuuming programme is essential to successful carpet maintenance as it reduces the frequency of periodic maintenance procedures required to maintain clean carpet. In addition to removing soil, vacuum cleaning also helps to lift and restore pile. Proper equipment and technique are critical to the success of a vacuuming program.

Machines with cylinder brushes should be used and set so that brushes are in contact with pile surfaces. Twin motor machines with independent motors for suction and brushing are preferred for this task. Upright vacuum sweepers are best for this work while cylinder and back pack type machines are unsuitable for the cleaning of contract carpets and therefore not recommended.

All carpet should be vacuumed daily. Heavy traffic areas such as lobbies, entryways and barrier mats, particularly those exposed to various weather conditions, may require more frequent vacuuming to prevent dirt and dry soiling from being tracked into other areas of the installation.

## Spot Removal

The key to spot removal is to treat them as quickly as possible. The longer the spillage is left on the carpet, the more difficult it will be to remove. Certain types of spots will, if left unattended, attract more soil and, if sticky, the spilled substance will be walked elsewhere by shoe soles.

The treatment of spots should be as follows:

- Remove as much of the spillage as you can by gently scraping with a blunt knife.
- Blot up any remaining liquid spillage with an absorbent cloth or paper towel.
- Treat with an approved spotting agent following manufacturer's instructions.
- **burmatex®** recommend the use of the **Prochem Spot Cleaning Kit**

## Planned Maintenance

Carpet is often allowed to soil heavily over a long period of time before professional cleaning is contemplated. However, the cleaning of neglected carpet is likely to be expensive and there is no guarantee that the carpet will be restored to a near-new appearance.

The basis of planned maintenance is the regular cleaning of those areas that are regularly trafficked, typically only 20-30% of an installation. Consequently, planned maintenance is cost effective and maintains the appearance of the carpet at a high standard at all times.

The required frequency and method of cleaning will be determined by product type, colour, traffic intensity and soiling type and will vary widely from one installation to another.

If a planned maintenance programme is followed through, the need for intensive wall to wall cleaning by wet extraction or shampooing may only be required once a year. The timing of deep cleans will be determined by the cleaning contractor based on an assessment of the type of soiling, the traffic frequently and the location within the building. The method used for periodic corrective cleans will usually be hot water extraction, however other methods of cleaning may be more suitable in certain instances and you should consult our technical department for advice.

Corrective cleaning should always be carried out by professional carpet cleaners. **burmatex®** recommends the following companies

**Prochem Ltd (Telephone: 02089741515)**

**Wrennals Carpet Care Ltd (Telephone: 01772 435739)**

## Replacement of Damaged Tiles

One of the major benefits of carpet tiles is that irretrievably damaged tiles can be easily replaced. When replacing tiles, bear in mind that a brand new tile will always look slightly different to surrounding tiles, which have had some use.

If tiles have been removed to allow access to underfloor services, care should be taken to replace the tiles with the directional arrows on the back of the tile facing the same way as the main installation; otherwise the tile will appear prominent.

## Spot Cleaning Instructions

STAIN	TREATMENT
Asphalt/ Tar	White spirit or solvent spot remover followed by dry foam carpet shampoo or hot water extraction
Alcoholic drink	Luke-warm mild detergent solution
Ballpoint Ink	Water then solvent spot remover
Blood	Apply cold water first, then a strong solution (1 teaspoon in ½ pint of water) of biological washing powder in cold water, if stain persists. (Enzymes will digest majority of the stain)
Butter	Scrape off, apply solvent spot remover followed by dry foam carpet shampoo
Candle-Wax	Scrape off, apply solvent spot remover followed by dry foam carpet shampoo
Chewing Gum	Apply freeze spray chewing gum remover, scrape the residue, then carpet shampoo.
Chocolate	Cold water followed by dry foam carpet shampoo
Coca Cola	Water or mild detergent solution
Coffee, Cocoa or Drinking Chocolate	Wash immediately with cold or warm mild detergent solution, followed by solvent spot remover to remove residual fat.
Cigarette Burns	Scrape off carefully using a sharp short bladed knife, then treat with a lukewarm mild detergent solution. In the case of a severe burn on <b>burmatex®</b> carpet, a leather punch (1½" diameter) can be used to cut out the burn and then the area filled by a circle from the carpet remnants.
Egg	Cold water followed by a solution of biological washing powder or mild detergent solution.
Excrement	Mild detergent solution.
Felt Marker	Wash immediately with water and if necessary with solvent spot remover
Fat, Oil or Grease	Solvent spot remover followed by mild detergent solution.
Fat containing Foodstuffs	Lukewarm biological washing powder solution (1 teaspoon in ½ pint of warm water). If stain persists after drying, solvent spot remover can be used.
Ink	First water then solvent spot remover
Jam	Lukewarm water, mild detergent solution
Lipstick	Solvent spot remover followed by mild detergent solution
Milk	Solvent spot remover followed by dry foam carpet shampoo.
Nail Varnish	Acetone (not nail varnish remover)
Oil Paint	Apply white spirit immediately. Old oil paint stains are very difficult to remove.
Plasticine	Scrape off then use chewing gum freeze spray. Scrape again, then use solvent spot remover.
Rust	See specialist cleaner for removal.
Red Wine	Apply cold water first, then a solution (1 teaspoon in ½ pint of water) of biological washing powder in cold water.
Shoe Polish	Solvent spot remover or white spirit.
Soot	Vacuum then treat with dry foam carpet shampoo.
Tea	Lukewarm mild detergent solution.
Urine	Diluted white vinegar solution (acetic acid) followed by mild detergent solution. For old stains consult a professional cleaner.
Vomit	Mild detergent solution then treat with diluted protein spot remover
White Wine	Water then mild detergent if necessary.

Spot remover kit available from Prochem Ltd. and their distributors (Tel: 0208-974-1515)

Solvent spot remover is a generic term for proprietary preparations, which can be obtained at local hardware shops. Compositions can vary so due care to the instructions on the label should be taken.

## On-site Cleaning

Hot water extraction is recommended provided the carpet/carpet tile has been properly installed with the correct adhesive. If necessary, contact Prochem for details on equipment, chemicals or cleaning problems on 0208-974-1515