

# WHY CARPET MAINTENANCE IS IMPORTANT

## Maintenance Protects your Investment

Flooring is a substantial investment —one you'll want to protect for years to come. After all, the longer your flooring lasts, the less it costs. The initial cost for floorcovering materials and installation does not fully encompass your total floorcovering investment. The life cycle cost also factors in life expectancy of the carpet, costs for removal/disposal, lost revenues during renovations and maintenance costs over the life of the carpet. Good maintenance helps protect your total flooring investment.

## Maintenance Helps Carpet Last Longer and Cost Less

Proactive, regularly scheduled maintenance removes soil before it can build up and damage carpet fibers. This can actually extend the life of the carpet, reducing the costs of restoration, replacement and disposal. Reactive maintenance cannot fully restore a carpet to a like-new appearance. This results in shorter carpet life and higher carpet life cycle costs. The chart below demonstrates how proactive and reactive maintenance compare over time.

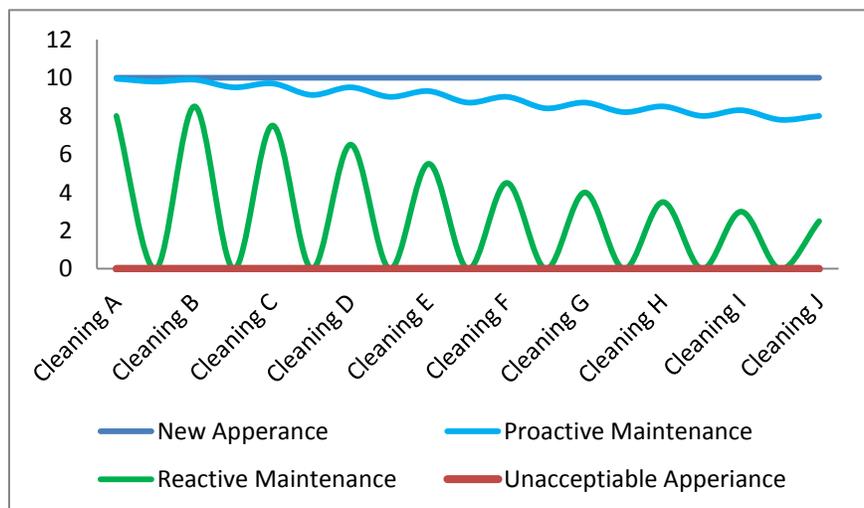
## Maintenance Is Good for the Environment

Our life cycle analysis of carpet shows that the overall environmental footprint of carpet is reduced by increasing the amount of time a carpet remains on the floor. A consistent, proactive maintenance program can significantly improve the appearance retention throughout the life of the carpet. Less carpet waste going to landfills is always good for the environment.

### Appearance Over Time

**Proactive Maintenance**  
A proactive maintenance program, carpet retains most of its original appearance over time

**Reactive Maintenance**  
A reactive maintenance cannot bring carpet appearance back to the levels maintained with a proactive maintenance program



## Creating a Carpet Maintenance Program

Once the importance of proper carpet maintenance is understood, we can create a comprehensive maintenance program for you.

### Step 1: Make Preventive Maintenance a Priority

Preventing soil from entering the environment is easier and less expensive than removing it from the carpet. Here are five simple but important steps in a preventive maintenance program:

#### Keep Outside Areas Clean

Outside maintenance helps minimize immediate sources of soil. The cleaner you keep sidewalks, parking lots, garages and other areas around the perimeter of your building, the less dirt that will be tracked inside.

#### Use Soil Barriers

Walk-off mats, grates and removable elevator carpets help collect soil before it can be tracked throughout the building. Be sure soil barriers are large enough to allow for at least five steps across. Vacuum daily, clean frequently and change often for best results.

#### Protect Desk Areas

Chair pads under desk chairs prevent casters from crushing carpet and grinding in soil. Specify eating, drinking and smoking areas. By restricting these activities to limited areas, you can help confine certain difficult kinds of soil.

#### Maintain your HVAC System

To remove many airborne particles before they are recirculated, regularly replace or clean filters on air-handling equipment. Airborne soil includes industrial wastes, auto emissions, tobacco smoke and pollen.

### Step 2: Manage Soil with Regular Vacuuming

Vacuuming is the most important dry soil management procedure. Effective vacuuming removes dry soil so that it cannot spread to other carpeted areas. The level of effective vacuuming has two components: frequency and equipment type.

#### Vacuuming Frequency

- Heavy- to moderate-traffic areas (entrances, elevator lobbies, reception areas, busy corridors, cafeterias, vending machine areas, employee lounges) should be vacuumed daily.
- Light-traffic areas (offices, conference rooms) should be vacuumed at least two to three times per week.

#### Equipment Type

- Dual-motor vacuums are very effective machines for thoroughly cleaning heavy- to moderate traffic areas. This vacuum uses two motors to clean. One motor drives a beater-brush bar that knocks dirt loose, while the second motor provides suction that pulls dirt into the vacuum bag.
- Single-motor vacuums can be very effective machines depending upon their design. For the most part, they should only be used in light-traffic areas. They are generally less powerful than dual-motor vacuums, but easier to maneuver around furniture.
- Detail vacuums can be used to clean around the edges of a room or in confined areas around furniture.

- Carpet sweepers may be used to remove larger particle-sized surface dirt and small litter in high-visibility areas during the business day. However, they are not an effective cleaning method and should not take the place of thorough vacuuming. The Carpet and Rug Institute has identified vacuum cleaners that meet industry criteria for removal efficacy, particulate emission and carpet damage. To learn more about CRI Green Label approved vacuum cleaners visit their web site at [www.carpet-rug.com](http://www.carpet-rug.com).

### **Step 3: Promptly Remove Spills and Stains**

Although spills are inevitable, permanent stains do not have to be. Most stains can be avoided or removed by immediate, or at least same-day, treatment. It is good practice to have spot and stain removal products and equipment on hand for immediate use. Correct identification of spots and stains is the first step in proper removal because some types of spills may require special cleaning solutions and techniques. But for most spills, the basic removal procedure is the same:

1. Blot as much of the spill as you can with an absorbent towel. Always work toward the center of the spill. Do not rub! If the spill is solid or semisolid, gently scrape off what you can using a dull knife.
2. Apply a general-purpose carpet spotter to the spill. This is a detergent solution that is specially made for use on carpets. Never use other kinds of cleaning solutions, such as bleach. These may permanently damage the carpet.
3. Tamp or pat in the carpet spotter with a tamping brush.
4. Wait three minutes, then blot again.
5. Rinse with clean water, then blot as dry as possible. If the stain remains, repeat the entire process. If the stain persists after the second time, contact a maintenance professional.

### **Step 4: Renew your Carpet with Proactive, Periodic Cleaning**

Even the most effective, consistent vacuuming may leave some soil behind. Periodic cleaning improves the appearance and extends the life of carpet. Periodic cleaning also removes oily, sticky soil from the carpet that attracts and holds additional soil. Depending on soiling conditions and other factors, there are a number of available cleaning methods. Your choice of method should be based on what will be the most effective and compatible with your carpet and its traffic levels. If you are not familiar with the cleaning methods and products please contact Workplace Services and/or refer to "Cleaning Methods" to help select the method which will keep your carpet looking its best for the longest time.

