

Extend your carpets' life

Replacing carpet is a costly proposition and in these challenging times extending its life through comprehensive cleaning and maintenance can result in significant savings. David Grossmann, president of service provider Renue Systems looks at the role of preventative measures, vacuuming, spot & spill removal, and periodic deep cleaning.

Replacing your carpeting is indeed a very costly proposition, which can easily be a high six-figure or even seven-figure line item when the material and labour costs are involved. In the past carpets, curtains and upholstery were typically replaced every five years, but in these challenging economic times stretching the life of your soft assets even for a year can result in significant savings. Based on our 25 years of experience servicing thousands of hotels, we offer several suggestions, many of which have been endorsed by leading industry expert organisations such as the IICRC (Institute of Inspection Cleaning and Restoration Certification) and the Carpet and Rug Institute as well as carpet manufacturers.

A comprehensive maintenance programme consists of the following four key points that not only prolongs the carpet asset but also increases its attractiveness:

1. Preventive measures – use a three-pronged matting programme to significantly prevent wear and tear on carpets. To begin, mats placed outside entrances prevent dirt from entering or spreading throughout the property. Outside mats should have a coarse texture to prevent large pieces of soil. Careful usage of these entranceway mats can help, especially

in winter months. Complement outdoor 'scraper' mats with well-positioned natural or grass mats immediately inside the entrance to absorb moisture and small dirt particles. These water-absorbent indoor mats also will help remove oil and other liquids. Lastly, a fibre mat placed deeper into the property traps some of the remaining soil and moisture before they come into contact with the hard floor.

In addition to the type and placement of the mats, consideration should be given to their length. According to the American Institute of Architects, 1.5 metres of matting captures 33 per cent of external soil entering a venue, three metres captures 52 per cent, six metres captures 86 per cent and eight metres captures nearly all the soil.

Clean mats regularly

Once they are filled to capacity with dirt and debris mats become counter-productive. Thus mats should be cleaned regularly to maintain maximum effectiveness. This can be done by vacuuming, laundering and replacing them at various times and by having extra mats available when one set is being cleaned.

2. Vacuuming – past studies have shown that 85 per cent of the soil tracked into a building is dry, and the other 15 per cent is oily. Vacuums are designed to remove dry soil. The more traffic a carpet receives the more it allows soil particles to work their way down into the carpet pile, where they are more difficult to remove. Frequent vacuuming removes these soil particles from the surface before this happens. Vacuum daily to three times per week, traffic dependent, to remove dry soil. Be sure to use a (CRI) Green Label Approved vacuum and operate according to the manufacturer's specifications. The specific model depends on factors such as the carpet's material and contours, the way the carpet was attached to the underlying hard surface and the dimensions of the surface.

3. Spot and spill removal – act quickly by treating as soon as possible. The long-

er the contaminant sits, the more difficult it is to eliminate and the more likely it is to become a permanent stain. Be sure to blot liquids with a dry, white, absorbent cloth or white, non-print, paper towel and be careful not to scrub the area since the latter can lead to pile distortion. Semi-solids should be gently scraped with a rounded spoon, and solids should be broken up and vacuumed until completely removed. It's also important to pre-test a small inconspicuous area to ensure the carpet's fibre is not damaged and work your way in from the spill's perimeter, so as to minimise spreading. Since some actions can cause permanent damage be sure the manufacturer's recommendations are followed or call in an expert to assist.

Ever wonder why stains return almost immediately after eradicating them? When a carpet dries, it does so from the bottom up. Even after the stain is removed, there can still be residual staining below the surface waiting to 'wick' back to the surface during the drying process. Aiming an air-mover or carpet fan directly at the stain can reverse the drying process downwards.

4. Restorative cleaning – schedule periodic deep cleaning to remove residues and trapped soil. To improve the aesthetics of the property, increase the longevity of the carpet and minimise cleaning costs, deep cleaning should be performed before the soil is highly visible. Carpet manufacturer Shaw Industries recommends deep cleaning anywhere from one to 12 times per year, depending on the amount of traffic on the surface.

Also of importance – especially in restaurants and other venues with food – is the need to address the accumulation of FOGs (fats, oils and grease). They require stronger techniques than vacuuming.

There are several different types of restorative cleaning ranging from hot-water extraction to low-moisture methodologies. While the former produces better results, cleaning without water – using

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CARPET CARE

Extend your carpets' life (continued)

an encapsulation or bonnet technique – sometimes can be used when a four to six hour dry time is not practical.

Regardless of methodology used, the most critical step is identifying low, medium and high traffic areas so frequency can best be balanced with limited staff time and equipment. It is prudent to consult the manufacturer's recommendations regarding the specific frequency within the common range of one to 12 times per year.

While curtains and upholstery represent smaller budget items than carpeting, substantial money can still be saved. Following these several simple tips will also help maintain curtains' appearance:

- Vacuum twice a year using a soft brush attachment. This can be done while the curtains are hanging to enable the room

to be used immediately after cleaning and reduce any take-down and re-installation labour cost.

- Sheers can be laundered in a washing machine and spin cycle, but be careful not to dry them. Re-hang them while still damp to avoid wrinkling.

Steam cleaning

- Curtains and blackouts should be professionally steam cleaned once a year. The frequency should be increased for smoking rooms and those that have kitchens for long-term stay guests.

- Attach a rod to the curtains so guests can open and close them without putting their hands on the material.

For upholstery we recommend:

- Sofas should be thoroughly vacuumed on a weekly basis and professionally

steam cleaned once or twice per year.

- If possible, rotate cushions to avoid uneven crushing.

- Spot clean sofa arms since they come into contact with guests' hands and cushion tops which touch people's heads.

- Have a place for people to hang wet bathing suits so they are less prone to be placed on upholstery.

- Apply a fibre sealant to new material in order to reduce the likelihood of permanent staining.

While it may appear overwhelming, once this four-step maintenance plan is put into place, it is simply a matter of working it, occasionally revising it and then enjoying the impressive aesthetic as well as financial results.

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Comme le remplacement d'une moquette est une opération coûteuse, l'allongement de sa vie utile au moyen d'un programme complet de nettoyage et d'entretien peut aboutir à des économies considérables, particulièrement par les temps difficiles du moment. Dans ce contexte, ECJ examine le rôle des mesures de prévention, du passage à l'aspirateur, du détachage et du nettoyage périodique en profondeur.

Das Ersetzen von Teppichflächen ist eine kostspielige Angelegenheit, und in den gegenwärtig schwierigen Zeiten kann die Verlängerung seines Lebens durch eine gründliche Reinigung und Instandhaltung zu erheblichen Einsparungen führen. Das ECJ betrachtet die Rolle von vorbeugenden Maßnahmen, Staubsaugen, Entfernen von Flecken und verschütteten Flüssigkeiten sowie regelmäßiger Grundreinigung.

Sostituire la moquette è una proposta onerosa e in questi periodi difficili estenderne la vita con la pulizia a fondo e la manutenzione periodica può avere come risultato enormi risparmi. ECJ esamina il ruolo delle misure preventive, pulizia a estrazione, rimozione di macchie e rovesciamento di sostanze, e la pulizia a fondo periodica.

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