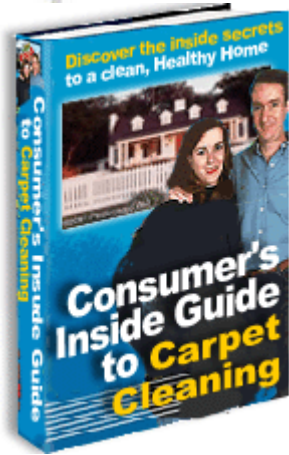


SPECIAL REPORT



The Consumer's

Inside Guide To Carpet Cleaning

"Hi! Thanks for visiting. We're excited and grateful for the opportunity to provide you with information about carpet cleaning and help you choose a carpet cleaning company.

As the owner of Lovejoy Carpet Cleaning I have spent almost 30 years cleaning textiles right here in the Massachusetts area. I have attended numerous schools, workshops, and seminars to stay abreast of changes in carpets and fabrics.

During my years of cleaning, I've learned that cleaning is the subject of much confusion. In fact, people have so many misconceptions about carpet cleaning that I decided to offer this consumer education message, so when you select a carpet cleaning company, you can make an informed, intelligent decision.

I'm going to share with you **6 costly misconceptions** about carpet cleaning. Plus, I'll offer 4 recommendations. And, I'll give you **8 questions** you should ask a carpet cleaner before you invite him into your home.

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

ABSOLUTELY NOT! Dirt is an abrasive – like sandpaper. Every time you step on the carpet, you grind dirt into your carpet fibers. This cuts your carpet, just as if you had used a knife, causing it to wear out faster. A soiled carpet will not last nearly 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 soil and improve the appearance.

NOT TRUE! As you probably know, outdoor air contains pollens, fungus, bacteria, air pollution, cigarette smoke, car exhaust – and hundreds of other harmful chemicals. When you and your family members come into your home, you carry those pollens and chemicals in your hair and on your skin, clothing, and shoes. Not surprisingly, all those chemicals, pollens and bacteria end up – you guessed it – in your carpet.

Carpet cleaning is not just about removing soil and improving the appearance of your home. It's about **protecting your family and safeguarding their health** by removing pollutants and contaminants that can affect your quality of life. In some instances, INDOOR AIR QUALITY can be 70-100 times more polluted than outdoor air. Since carpet is the lowest and largest horizontal surface, it acts as a "sink" or filter, which needs to be emptied and cleaned regularly.

If you have allergies, asthma, emphysema, or other breathing problems – one major source of your problem could be the pollutants and contaminants in your carpet.

According to Michael Barry, Ph.D., of the EPA, tobacco smoke contains over 4500 separate chemical compounds. The effects of tobacco smoke have been extensively studied and publicized. They include cancer, cardiovascular effects, increased susceptibility to infectious diseases, chronic and acute pulmonary effects in children and much more. Even if you don't smoke, those chemicals get on your shoes, you track them in to your home and deposit them in your carpet. If you're sensitive to cigarette smoke, you'll find that you'll breathe easier after you hire a company to properly remove those harmful chemicals from your carpet.

Another factor to consider is that carpet fibers are made to hide and camouflage soil and debris. So, when you can see evidence of soiling, your carpet is not just dirty, it's **filthy**. Naturally, some colors do a better job of hiding soil than others. For example, earth tone colors (browns) do a beautiful job of hiding soil, so you **cannot depend on appearance** as a basis for deciding when it is time to clean your carpets.

MISCONCEPTION #3: ONE METHOD OF CARPET CLEANING IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER!

No, nein, nada. You can choose from two primary methods: Dry cleaning or hot water extraction.

First, I'll explain dry cleaning. Many people believe that dry cleaning your carpets is like dry cleaning your clothing. This is not true. All carpet cleaning methods use water. Here are the three methods of dry cleaning carpet:

The first dry cleaning method uses a water-based dry foam, which is applied to the carpet, allowed to dry, and then simply vacuumed. 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 tremendous amount of residue in your carpet, which is one reason dry foam is not very effective.

The **second** dry cleaning method is called Chem-Dry™ or generic, absorbent spin-bonnet. A water-based solvent is sprayed on the carpet, then a bonnet is placed under a rotary floor machine and is spun over the carpet surface to absorb the soil. Once the bonnet is saturated with soil, another cotton bonnet is applied. Bonnet cleaning is like trying to use a large towel to rub the dirt out of your carpet. This method not only leaves a residue behind but it can only remove soil from the top 25% of the carpet so it resoils much faster – obviously not desirable.

Third, the dry-compound method spreads an absorbent mixture that looks like wet sawdust all over your carpeting. Then a 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. In a cut pile carpet, it is impossible to vacuum it all out. **In summary, the reason why none of these dry-cleaning methods are effective, is because they are lacking 2 important elements of physics: (1) no rinsing, and (2) no powerful extraction.**

The second carpet cleaning method is called hot water extraction. This is a fancy way of saying that a hot water cleaning solution under high pressure is forced into the carpet and then extracted out of the carpet. This method is also referred to as **steam**

cleaning, even though steam is not used.

SHAW INDUSTRIES, the world's largest carpet manufacturer, recommends hot water extraction, and you can choose from two different types: (1) portable and (2) truck mount.

Not surprisingly, the truck mount extraction cleans much better because it heats the water to a higher temperature – shoots the cleaning solution into the carpet at higher pressures – which breaks up the dirt, bacteria and pollens. Then the machine uses high-powered extraction to physically remove the soil out of the carpet. This is the method my company uses.

No question, the most effective way to clean carpeting is with a hot-water extraction unit, mounted in a truck or van. It's the most powerful cleaning machine on the market and the only machine that thoroughly removes dirt, harmful bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollens and other residues.

Methods that use cold and even warm water, remove some soil, but are not as effective as the hot-water truck mount method.

Some people believe that hot water damages your carpet, but this isn't true. By washing and then rinsing your carpet with hot water, we clean your carpet completely – in the same way that the person who showers and then rinses off the dirt and soap will be much cleaner than the person who takes only a sponge bath. In fact, not only does hot water clean better, faster, and with less cleaning agents, it also dries quicker and even **SANITIZES** your carpet. This makes your home or office free of DUST MITES, and other harmful microorganisms for a safer healthier environment. (Wool carpet must always be cleaned with lower temperature and milder cleaning solutions.)

MISCONCEPTION #4: HAVING THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT IS ALL A COMPANY NEEDS TO CLEAN YOUR CARPETS PROPERLY.

Not true. Many companies own hot-water extractors, but a large number of employees don't know how to use them. You probably know someone who bought the newest computer on the market – but didn't learn how to use it for a year or more. The same is true with carpet cleaning machines. The company may own good equipment, but the employees may not know how to use it correctly. This is why it's important that you choose your carpet cleaner carefully. **It is not the equipment by itself that determines whether the results will be good or not!** For example, it is not the OVEN that makes a chef A CHEF. Nor are they the TOOLS that make a mechanic A MECHANIC.

The best carpet cleaning companies are those that have been certified by the INSTITUTE OF INSPECTION, CLEANING, AND RESTORATION CERTIFICATION, known as the IICRC. A carpet cleaning company cannot buy this certification. The carpet cleaner must **EARN** the certification through study, experience, and the successful completion of formal, written examinations. Technicians who are certified by the IICRC have, in effect, earned a degree in carpet and textile cleaning, and continuing education is a must to remain certified.

The IICRC provides written credentials to the companies it certifies. So, before you choose a reputable company, ask to see written proof of the company's IICRC certifications.

MISCONCEPTION #5: THE COMPANY THAT OFFERS THE LOWEST PRICE IS THE COMPANY YOU SHOULD HIRE.

Price is important, but never should be the only basis for deciding who to hire! Here are two important points to consider.

Point #1: The price you see offered may not be for the services you want performed. Before you select a company, decide what you want to accomplish. If you want the technician to remove only some of the dirt, you can choose from hundreds of companies that offer low price, poor equipment and limited knowledge.

On the other hand, if you want your carpet thoroughly cleaned – if you want to remove the harmful dirt, bacteria, pollens, chemicals and tobacco residues – then you need to hire a company that uses a hot water extractor mounted in a van. This is the only way to assure that your carpet remains healthy and free from dirt, disease-causing bacteria, and harmful chemicals.

So, remember, the price you see offered may not be for the services you want performed.

CLEAN IS NOT AN EXACT SCIENCE, BUT RATHER, UP TO THE INTERPRETATION OF EACH PERSON.

Point #2: The price you see advertised may not be the price you pay!

Many homeowners have learned that the low price they saw advertised was not the amount they were charged.

BAIT AND SWITCH is the term used to identify those who use fraudulent advertising, just to get their foot in the door. You probably know someone who has learned the hard way. Some carpet cleaner offered a cheap price – usually between \$3.95 and \$9.95 per room – and then pressured them into paying a lot more. This amounts to breaking the law.

As in all businesses and professions, the carpet cleaning industry has its share of bad

apples. I take no pleasure in telling you this, but some are unethical and, sadly, a few are dishonest. By their misleading advertising and false promises, they cast a dark shadow on our entire industry.

Then you'll find other carpet cleaners, professionals like me, who work hard to earn your trust and respect.

As a way of improving our profession, I've dedicated my business to educating the public. The only way you can make an intelligent decision is to have all the facts you need. This is why I've written this message.

MISCONCEPTION #6: ANY HONEST CARPET CLEANING COMPANY SHOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU AN EXACT PRICE OVER THE TELEPHONE.

First, honest, reputable, carpet cleaning companies usually price carpet cleaning 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 have a measuring tape I use to calculate the exact size of the carpeted area.

You'll be glad to know that the carpeted area to be cleaned is not nearly as great as most people think. For example, if you want your entire home cleaned, and your home is 2000 square feet, the amount of carpeting to be cleaned might be only 1200 square feet. This is because most home measurements are outside measurements. Plus I deduct the area taken up by walls, room dividers, and the like. The result is that the actual area to be cleaned is usually only about 60% of the square footage of the home.

So, even though I can't give you an exact quote over the telephone, here are things I consider when quoting a price.

First, the type of carpet. Certain types of carpet are harder to clean than others. So, before I can give you a quote, I need to know the type of fiber your carpet is made from.

Second, the amount of soiling. Carpet that hasn't been cleaned for 10 years will take longer to clean than carpet that was cleaned within the last 6 months. When carpet has been neglected for any length of time, (perhaps more than 2 years) our approach to the job changes from a regular maintenance cleaning, to a more aggressive **RESTORATIVE** cleaning.

Third, the amount of furniture that has to be moved. If we have to move your furniture, the cost of labor must be included. But, if you move your furniture, you'll save money.

To recap, I 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. However, we package our carpet cleaning into 3 different groups to fit most any budget.

IF YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT HAVING YOUR CARPETS CLEANED, I OFFER THESE 4 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 have to breathe all the pollens, fungus, chemicals, and dust mite droppings that reside in your carpet.

RECOMMENDATION #2: List your objectives. Do you want only the dirt removed? Or do you want the bacteria, fungus, and chemicals removed, which will require a hot water truck mount cleaner, like I use? Do you want to work with an honest, reputable

company – or are you willing to risk working with the company that offers 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 I suggest you ask

1. WHAT METHOD OF CARPET CLEANING DO YOU RECOMMEND?
2. WHAT TYPE OF EQUIPMENT DO YOU USE TO CLEAN 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 IN CLEANING CARPETS?
6. ARE YOU A MEMBER OF ANY TRADE ASSOCIATIONS AND, IF SO, WHICH ONES?
7. ARE YOU CERTIFIED BY THE IICRC AND WILL YOU SHOW ME YOUR CERTIFICATE?

RECOMMENDATION #4: Once you are satisfied that you're working with an honest, competent professional, invite them into your home and ask for a specific quotation in writing. A written quotation gives you the assurance that you know exactly what your job will cost. **NO SURPRISES!**

By following these four recommendations, you'll gain all the information you need to make an informed, intelligent decision. If you want a quick, cheap carpet cleaning job, there are many companies in the phone book to choose from. Don't even think doing it yourself with a machine you can rent. I know of individuals who have caused severe damage by trying this.

However, if you want your carpeting to be completely and thoroughly cleaned – removing the bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollens, and tobacco residues – then, I invite you to call me.

I'll be happy to answer your questions – provide you a cost estimate over the telephone – or come into your home and give you a free written quotation – without obligation of any kind. To reach me, call **888-831-6671**.

I GUARANTEE MY WORK! That's right. I fully guarantee every carpet cleaning job we do. If you aren't 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 be more fair than that?

As a matter of fact, add this question to the list. **Question #8** is "Do you guarantee your work?" Not all companies do – and it's important that you have this information before you make your decision.

I hope you found this consumer awareness special report to be helpful. If you have any questions or comments or you'd like to schedule a free, in-home audit, please call us at **888-831-6671**. We look forward to being of service!