

Terry's Consumer's Guide to Carpet Cleaning

Dear Homeowner,

Choosing a carpet cleaner is very confusing with all the different methods that are out there today. Why? Because you are showered with misleading advertising, confusing claims, and simply bad information.

From really low prices and high-pressure sales, to unqualified technicians and cleaning methods that achieve little soil removal, how do you find a certified, competent, and professional carpet cleaner?

You can start by reading the Consumer's Guide. In this fact-filled guide, you'll discover how to avoid "bait-and-switch" cleaners, four mistakes to avoid when choosing a carpet cleaner and four steps to a fresh, clean and healthy carpet.

I wrote this guide to help you better understand carpet cleaning. Now, with this information, you can make an informed and intelligent decision. After all, your carpet reflects your entire home's cleanliness, so why not maintain your carpet properly to extend its life?

If, after you have read this guide, you still find yourself with questions or concerns; please feel free to call our office at 1-800-700-5530. My staff will be happy to help in any way they can.

Cordially,

Terry L. Cripe, Owner

IICRC Certified Master Cleaning Technician and Master Restoration Technician

Read this guide and you will discover...

What sets Terry's Carpet Cleaning, Inc. apart from the rest?

Terry's Carpet Cleaning is certified by the IICRC.

We hold certification in:

- Carpet Cleaning
- Upholstery Cleaning
- Water Damage Restoration
- Fire Damage Restoration
- Repair and Reinstallation
- Odor Control

Terry was the 1st Master Cleaning Technician in the Elkhart County area.

Terry is also a Master Restoration Technician.

Terry's provides truck-powered steam extraction. We currently have five truck-powered units to work in those unforeseen jobs.

Terry's telephone is answered by person. Our office hours are Monday thru Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. However, if you call after hours for an emergency, you will still receive a person to speak with.

Terry's is a member of the ASCR. ASCR is an association that provides us with the newest industry technology information. They also provide a chemist if the need arises. If we do not know the answer, we just call the industries finest, and we will get the answer for you.

Terry is certified in air duct cleaning by the ASCR. Terry was trained by the industry's finest in air duct cleaning. You will receive the most thorough air duct cleaning around. We will even tell you if your system does not need to be cleaned.

Terry's Carpet Cleaning, Inc. brings honesty and integrity to the restoration and cleaning industry. We will not clean, if we do not feel that we can make a difference. We want to build relationships with our customers, not simply provide a one-time service.

Four Steps to a Fresh, Clean, Healthy Carpet

If you are thinking about having your carpets cleaned, I encourage you to follow these four steps:

Step #1: Make a commitment to yourself to get your carpets cleaned on a regular basis. The longer they remain dirty, the sooner they will wear out, and the longer your carpet stays dirty the more you will be breathing the pollutants that hide in your carpet.

Step #2: List your objectives. What method do you want? 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? Do you want a certified firm, or just any cleaner?

Step #3: Ask questions. The way you learn about a company is to ask specific questions. Listen carefully to the answers and take notes. Here are seven questions to ask a carpet cleaner before you hire him to clean for you.

- What method of carpet cleaning do you use?
- What type of equipment do you use?
- How often should I get my carpets cleaned?
- How many years has your company been in business?

- Are your technicians certified by the IICRC?
- Are you bonded and insured?
- Are you a member of the ASCR?

Step #4: Once you are satisfied that you have found an honest and competent professional, request that he does an on-site estimate. A written estimate gives you the assurance of knowing exactly what the job will cost. Companies usually have a certain mile radius they will travel to give free estimates, so make sure you ask how far they will go.

Don't just clean for the appearance- Clean for your family's health!

Which is more important to you, clean carpet or a clean and healthy carpet? Yes, I assure you there is a difference.

As you read earlier, each carpet cleaning method has advantages and disadvantages. Some methods will get out only the dirt, or only get out the dirt and grease, while other methods can get out virtually everything. However, you must expect a longer drying time, and be willing to pay for a more thorough service.

If all you want is a cheap, clean-the-dirt-off-the-top cleaning, which you might find for around \$19.95 per room or less, then I respectfully ask that you call another company.

If you want to protect your health, your investment, and your family from bacteria, fungus, and pollens in your carpet, then I invite you to call us, Terry's Carpet Cleaning, Inc., at (574) 533-5626.

The truck-powered steam extraction units that we use are the most effective cleaning system available today. Likewise, it is one of the most expensive units on the market. However, we purchased these units for a good reason; more families want the good-health benefits that come from having fresh and clean carpet.

Truck-powered extraction units are the Rolls Royce of carpet cleaning. Compared with portable systems, the truck-powered extraction systems use hotter water, higher pressure and stronger vacuum. So all the way around, you get a much better cleaning.

Understanding the importance of value and price

Price is what you pay. Value is what you get.

When you select a carpet cleaner, you will choose from a wide variety of cleaning methods and prices. Here are some of the differences between portables and truck-powered / mount units.

Truck-powered steam extraction units will heat the water to a higher temperature. For every 18° increase in temperature above 118°F, you double the water's cleaning ability. So, if the water temperature is 154°, it will clean four times as well as water 118°. With most portable units the water is only as hot as the tap water from your sink, while the truck-powered units run about 180 to 200°.

Truck-powered steam extraction units rinse your carpet with up to 500 to 600 lbs. of pressure. The most advanced portable unit only has 300 lbs. of pressure.

The vacuum is much stronger on a truck-powered extraction unit. After we clean your carpet, it will be slightly damp. When cleaning with a portable unit, it can take up to two times longer to dry than if cleaned by a truck-powered unit.

It's not surprising that having your carpet thoroughly cleaned with truck-powered steam extraction costs more than renting a portable unit from a store. However, the end results are more gratifying.

Which cleaning method cleans best?

It is not the steam cleaning method that shrinks and rots the carpet. It is the untrained operators that have not taken the time to educate themselves about the equipment, tools, and chemicals available to them. With this in mind, let us take an unbiased look at all of today's carpet cleaning methods.

Absorbent Powder Cleaning

Theory: The absorbent powder is impregnated with solvents and detergents. This is applied over the surface fibers of your carpet and brushed into the carpet pile with special equipment. The soil in the carpet is then dissolved by the detergents and absorbed by the powder. After drying, the carpet is then vacuumed to remove the absorbent powder out of the carpet.

Advantages: This method is fast drying, and the carpet can be back in service quickly. This method requires little operator skill.

Disadvantages: This method provides low level of soil removal. A buildup of soil-laden powder can occur if not thoroughly vacuumed out of the carpet. Carpet fibers can also become distorted due to the dry brushing action. The chemical cost is high and production is slow.

Bonnet Spin Pad Cleaning – a.k.a. Dry Cleaning

Theory: Although bonnet cleaning is referred to as "dry," it is a low moisture cleaning system. This is done by spraying a detergent solution over the surface fibers of your carpet. This can be done with a sprayer of various kinds, or a specialized spray system that is attached to the floor machine. The carpet is then buffed with absorbent pads, which are attached to the floor machine. The soil is then absorbed into the pads as it buffs the carpet fibers. The absorbent pads are changed or rinsed as needed.

Advantages: This is a relatively quick system and enables the technician to cover large areas quickly. Bonnet spin pad cleaning requires minimal operator skill and is relatively fast-drying. This system is great for maintenance programs when periodically used in conjunction with a more thorough cleaning method.

Disadvantages: Bonnet spin pad cleaning is not noted for heavy soil removal. This method does not implement a rinsing action, nor does it provide deep cleaning.

Dry Foam Cleaning

Theory: Although this is considered a “dry” method, it also uses low moisture. A specialized machine is equipped with a foam generator that whips shampoo liquid into foam that is then applied to the carpet. The foam is then agitated into the carpet by brushes. Some machines are equipped with a vacuum recovery system where the foam solution would then be vacuumed from the carpet.

Advantages: Dry foam cleaning requires minimal operator skill; it uses low moisture and is relatively fast drying. This method is good for surface appearance management for commercial settings. Large areas can be cleaned in short periods of time and low moisture levels minimize problems with over-wetting.

Disadvantages: Dry foam cleaning provides low to moderate soil removal with little-to-no extraction, which can allow excessive chemical residue to build up on the carpet. Occasional steam extraction is advised when dry foam is used regularly.

Rotary Shampooing

Theory: Rotary shampooing utilizes a rotary floor machine equipped with solution tanks and brushes. The carpet is scrubbed, while a chemical is fed through the brushes. Modern shampoos dry to crystal residues that can be vacuumed out of the carpet. However, a special shampooer has been developed that is equipped with a built-in extraction system. This system is a good alternative when steam extraction is not viable. Vacuuming is important to remove loose soil and crystallized residues.

Advantages: Rotary shampooing is very economical and requires low equipment cost. This method has a fairly high production rate, provides excellent agitation and relatively deep cleaning. Overall this method produces good cleaning results.

Disadvantages: Over-wetting and pile distortion can occur. This method requires a high level of operator skill for best results, and chemical residue can increase re-soiling.

Hot Water Steam Extraction

Theory: This method is recognized for its superior cleaning results obtained by the rinsing ability. The process of steam cleaning includes the injection of cleaning solution into the carpet fibers, followed by immediate extraction. Preconditioning of especially high traffic lanes is very important in this process. The use of emulsifiers breaks the

bond between the carpet fibers and the soil so that they can be rinsed more thoroughly out of the carpet. Several types of tools are available today that provide increased agitation for use in combination with this method.

Advantages: Steam cleaning is recognized by most carpet manufacturers, like Shaw Industries, and fiber producers as today's preferred cleaning method for the most effective soil removal. State-of-the-art equipment enables high rates of production and less residue, if proper chemicals are used.

Disadvantages: Hot water steam extraction requires high level of operator skill and requires longer drying times. Over-wetting can occur if the equipment is not properly operating or the technician uses poor technique. High equipment cost is another disadvantage.

A very important point to consider is that no carpet cleaning method is capable of cleaning a carpet by itself. There must be an operator. The experience and education of the operator is just as important as the method used, if not more so.

What's really in your dirty carpet?

Asphalt
Bacteria
Car exhaust
Chemicals
Dry particle soil
Dust
Food particles
Fungus
Germs
Grease
Animal and human hair
Skin particles
Residue from aerosol cans
Household products
Lint
Mud
Pet urine
Pollens
Pollutants
Vomit

Just to name a few... Oh yeah, don't forget those creatures- such as dust mites that live, hide, and breed in your carpet.

Six costly misconceptions about carpet cleaning

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

No, dirt is abrasive, like sandpaper. Every time you step on your carpet, you grind dry particle soil into the fiber. This soil cuts your carpet fibers, just as if you had used a knife. This cutting causes the carpet to wear out faster and causes fiber distortion. When the dry particle soil scratches your carpet fibers, it will not reflect light like it did when it was new; this is called fiber distortion. Unfortunately, carpet cleaners cannot correct fiber distortion, as the damage has already been done. Frequent vacuuming, cleanings, and re-applying stainshield protection can help to extend the life of your carpet.

2. The only reason to clean your carpet is to remove the dirt.

No. As you probably know, outdoor air contains pollutants, fungus, bacteria, pollens, and hundreds of other chemicals. When you come into your home, you carry those pollutants in on your hair, skin, clothing, and shoes. Not surprisingly, all those chemicals wind up in your carpet. If you or your family members have allergies, asthma, emphysema, or other breathing problems, one major source of your problem could be what is in your carpet, upholstery and air ducts. Take a step to improve your indoor air quality (IAQ).

3. One method of carpet cleaning is as good as another.

No. The dry cleaning methods, which consist of dry foam, dry chemical and dry compound, do not rinse your carpet in any way. Instead, they leave a chemical residue on your carpet. The most effective cleaning method is hot water extraction.

Hot water extraction means a hot water cleaning solution, under high pressure, is forced into your carpet and then extracted.

There are three types of hot water extraction:

Portables – Can be brought inside your home. You can also rent these from different stores.

Truck-mount – This unit is mounted inside a van or truck and has a separate engine.

Truck-powered – This unit is mounted inside a van or truck and runs off the van/truck's engine (PTO).

The truck-mount and truck-powered units achieve better results than a portable due to the higher temperature and more powerful vacuum extraction. Terry's Carpet Cleaning, Inc. uses the truck-powered steam extraction method.

4. Having the right equipment is all a company needs to clean your carpet properly.

Not true. Many companies own truck-powered equipment, but only 10% of all carpet cleaners ever get any formal training. This is why you need to choose your carpet cleaner carefully. Shaw Industries recommends you use a company certified by the

Institute of Inspection Cleaning and Restoration Certification, known as the IICRC. Any company who holds this certification is proud of it, and normally displays the logo on all of its advertising literature.

5. The company that offers the lowest price is the company you should hire.

No. I have seen so many problems arise from the lowest-bid companies that I suggest you NEVER hire the company that quotes the cheapest price. The two most common problems are: The price may not be for the services you expect to be performed. The company may be equipped to remove only the dirt and not the bacteria and pollutants. The price you see advertised may not be the price you pay. Many homeowners have learned that the low price they saw advertised only lasted until the carpet cleaner got to their home. Then they were pressured into paying a lot more for a variety of basic add-ons. Some cleaners even break the law by using illegal “bait-and-switch” tactics.

6. Any company should be able to give you an exact price quote over the telephone.

I wish this were true, but it's not. Honest and reputable carpet cleaners almost never price carpet cleaning by the room. Instead, they usually charge by the square foot (length x width.) So, if you would like a guesstimate over the telephone, please have your room sizes ready. When we clean your carpet we will use an electronic measuring device to get an accurate measurement.

Most of your more reputable carpet cleaners will charge by the square foot and will have additional charges for “specialty” services, such as pet treatment, dye removal, and excessive spills. Charging by the room makes it harder to give an exact quote over the telephone, since most homeowners do not provide accurate measurements. So even though we cannot give you an exact quote here are things we consider when quoting a price.

Is it residential or commercial?

Is the home occupied or is it vacant?

Will we need to move furniture or will you already have this done?

What is the total square footage to be cleaned (open areas, traffic areas, or wall-to-wall)?

Are there any steps or bathrooms that need to be cleaned?

Is pet treatment a concern?

Is there excessive spotting, gum, or spills?

Are there other areas of concern like red dye spots?

The amount and type of soil (this mainly applies to commercial accounts).

Type of carpet/upholstery – true oriental rugs, wool carpets and natural fiber furniture (cotton, silk, or rayon) will cost more than synthetic.

How to Avoid Four Carpet Cleaning Rip-Offs

UNBELIEVABLE LOW PRICE. To some degree, all of us are attracted by low price because we want to work within a budget. However, some carpet cleaners use price as the bait for their false and misleading advertising. Carpet cleaning is not as cheap as some unethical carpet cleaners would like you to believe.

BAIT-AND-SWITCH. Dual process carpet cleaning describes the process of shampooing or heavy preconditioning followed with hot water extraction cleaning. Unfortunately, unethical carpet cleaners often use dual process as a bait-and-switch technique. Here's how it's done: First they "bait" you with a basic cleaning (single process) at an unbelievably low price. Then, when you call, they try to "switch" you to more expensive dual-process cleaning. If you do not fall for their switch and choose their basic service, you will likely receive poor workmanship using little or no emulsifiers.

OUTDATED BELIEFS; "HOT WATER DAMAGES YOUR CARPET." Years ago, many people believed this was true because their carpets were damaged by "technicians" who did not know how to properly clean using hot water. However, today we know this is false. By washing then rinsing your carpet with hot water, your carpet is thoroughly cleaning in the same way that the person who showers with soap and water will be much cleaner than the person who only takes a sponge bath. Obviously, each carpet cleaner will be biased toward his own method. Each method does have advantages, so I suggest you look at what Shaw Industries says. Shaw Industries, the largest carpet manufacturer in the world, recommends hot water extraction with a truck-mount or truck-powered unit. Shaw also recommends that you call an IICRC certified firm.

UNSUPPORTED CLAIMS; "THIS CLEANING METHOD IS THE BEST." You will read this claim in many ads, and you will hear this from virtually every carpet cleaner. Remember this: the method that is best for you, is the method that achieves your goal. If you want a method that dries quickly, then a method that takes a long time to dry is not the best for you. Before you choose a carpet cleaner, identify what your needs are.