

A Guide to Professional Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning



PRO-CARE
PROFESSIONAL CARPET & UPHOLSTERY CLEANERS
RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL



Cleaner, Healthier, Safer, Drier!

CONTENTS

- 1) **PROCARE**
About us & contact details
- 2) **THE IMPORTANCE OF VALUE AND PRICE**
- 3) **DIFFERENT CARPET CLEANING METHODS**
- 4) **MISLEADING SALES METHODS**
- 5) **COSTLY MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT CARPET CLEANERS**
- 6) **MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN CHOOSING A CARPET CLEANING COMPANY**

As an established and well respected carpet and upholstery cleaning Company may we take this opportunity to introduce ourselves and our service.

Our Company is a member of the National Carpet Cleaners Association, the one of the recognised trade Association.

As specialist cleaners of carpets and upholstery, we use the most up-to-date equipment and products in our field, coupled with professionalism and flexibility which makes PROCARE a premiere carpet and upholstery cleaning company at competitive prices.

We are sure that you hold a very high regard for the need to keep up appearances in all areas of your property, but should problems arise speedy solutions are of the highest priority.

You may already use an alternative cleaning company but we would like the opportunity for you to consider PROCARE.

As we hold customer awareness in high regard, we have compiled this booklet as a general guide for your assistance in choosing a carpet cleaning method and company to satisfy your requirements.

Contact details

PROCARE
6 Braeside
Naphill
Bucks
HP14 4RY
Office (01494) 566167
Mobile (07798) 742835

THE IMPORTANCE OF VALUE AND PRICE

PRICE IS WHAT YOU PAY.

VALUE IS WHAT YOU GET.

When you select a carpet cleaning company you will choose from a wide variety of cleaning methods and prices.

The carpets (and upholstery) in your home are probably the biggest investment you will make after the property itself. Therefore it makes sense to take proper care of them to ensure you get the best possible return on your investment. Although proper, professional cleaning may seem expensive it is a fraction of the cost of replacements.

If you want your carpets to look good, be healthy and give years of dependable service then you need to take care of them. Ideally you should have them cleaned by a qualified technician every six months to one year depending on the amount of soiling, foot traffic etc. other factors also need to be considered. Do you have pets? Do you have young children? Maybe both?

Do you want a clean healthy carpet?

Which is more important to you? A clean carpet or a clean healthy carpet? YES there is a difference, a big difference.

Each carpet cleaning method has it's advantages and disadvantages. Some methods will get out only dirt. Others will get out dirt and grease. Still others will get out virtually everything, and as you would expect some are more expensive than others.

Have you ever seen how dirty and little boy's trousers are when he plays outdoors? If you have then you will know that you can brush off his trousers and make him think they are clean. But if you want the job done properly you can machine wash them in hot water and detergent and you will know that they are clean. The same is true of carpets. You can hire anyone to 'brush off' your carpets and make you think they are clean. Or if you want the job done properly you can hire a professional honest company who will thoroughly clean your carpets so that you will **know** they're clean.

Carpet cleaning falls into three main categories;

PREVENTATIVE	for carpets that are cleaned on a regular basis, usually monthly. Mostly used in commercial buildings as a Maintenance programme.
CORRECTIVE	most carpet cleaning falls into this category, a reasonable level of soiling, carpets that are cleaned fairly regularly.
SALVAGE	carpets that are heavily soiled and/or have not been cleaned for a considerable period of time.

DIFFERENT CARPET CLEANING METHODS

There are two primary methods of carpet cleaning; Dry cleaning and hot water extraction. Many people believe (and are not informed otherwise) that dry cleaning carpets is like dry cleaning clothes. This is not true. All carpet cleaning methods use water in one form or another. We have outlined below the most common methods of cleaning.

TEXATHERM

This unique process combines the superior results of a wet cleaning system with all the benefits you would expect from a dry cleaning system. Texatherm cleans, disinfects and applies an anti-static coating. It also is guaranteed not to stretch or shrink your carpets. It is environmentally friendly and leaves no soil attracting sticky residues. It is also one of the quietest methods on the market.

DRY ABSORBENT POWDER

The dry compound method spreads moist absorbent powder throughout the carpet. The powder is allowed to dry and is then sucked into a vacuum. This method leaves dry sponge particles in the base of the yarn and because it is not rinsed out it is not very effective.

DRY FOAM

The carpet cleaner applies shampoo to your carpet, allows it to dry and then without rinsing, sucks the dried shampoo out of the carpet. Imagine applying shampoo to your hair, allowing it to dry and removing the dried shampoo with a vacuum. This method leaves dirty residue in your carpet and is not very effective.

ABSORBENT PAD (Bonnet Cleaning or Dry-Chem)

This method is similar to dry foam except the company uses a large cotton bonnet on your carpet. Using a machine that is usually associated with floor polishing, the bonnet is rotated across the carpet causing the bonnet to absorb dirt from the carpet. Like dry foam this method is not very effective unless it is done as a preventative measure on a regular basis. For our commercial clients we use this method when the carpets are maintained on a monthly basis.

HOT WATER EXTRACTION

This is the term used for describing the method where a hot water cleaning solution is forced under pressure into your carpet and then sucked out. This method is sometimes incorrectly referred to as 'Steam Cleaning'. Although some fibres can safely be cleaned using water that reaches boiling point (producing steam) others cannot. The disadvantage to this system is that the drying time can be longer than other methods and therefore restricting your use of the rooms.

There are two types of hot water extraction methods both following the same principle. One is a truck-mounted machine where only the hose and wand are brought into the premises. The disadvantage with this are not everyone has a private drive (hoses across public footpaths are a hazard) and secondly the security aspect, in that one door must be left open for the how to pass through. The other method, most commonly used is a large self contained machine that can be brought into the house and operated. The advantage of this machine is that it is portable and can be used in almost any situation.

MISLEADING SALES METHODS

1 UNBELIEVABLY LOW PRICES

To some degree all of us are attracted by low prices because we want to work within a budget. But some carpet cleaners use price as the bait for their false and misleading advertising. They offer a cheap price, usually between £9.00 and £15.00 per room and then once in your house they pressure you into buying 'add ons'. It is almost as if you were buying a car and then found that the dealer charged extra for the tyres and the steering wheel. Carpet cleaning is not as cheap as some unethical carpet cleaners would have you believe.

2 BAIT & SWITCH

Dual process carpet cleaning describes the process of shampooing and heavy preconditioning followed by hot water extraction cleaning. Unfortunately unethical carpet cleaners often use dual process as a 'bait & switch' technique. First they 'bait' you with basic cleaning (single process) at an unbelievably low price. Then when you call they try to 'switch' you to a more expensive dual process cleaning. If you don't fall for the switch and choose their basic service you're likely to receive poor workmanship using little or no chemical and they will not guarantee their work. This system of operation is illegal and should be reported to the Trading Standards Office.

3 UNSUPPORTED CLAIMS : THIS CLEANING METHOD IS BEST

You will read this in almost every add. You will hear this from almost every carpet cleaner. Remember the method that is best for you is the method that achieves your objectives. If you want a method that dries quickly then a method that takes a relatively long time to dry is not for you. So before you choose a carpet cleaning company identify your objectives, then select the method that best reaches your objectives.

4 OUTDATED BELIEFS; HOT WATER DAMAGES YOUR CARPET

Years ago many people believed this was true because their carpet were damaged by 'technicians' who did not know how to clean properly using hot water. But today we know this to be false. By cleaning and then rinsing your carpet with hot water - your carpet will be thoroughly cleaned - in the same way as the person who showers will be much cleaner than the one who only takes a sponge bath. Obviously each carpet cleaner will be biased towards his own method and each method has its own advantages.

COSTLY MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT CARPET CLEANERS

1 You should wait as long as possible to have your carpets cleaned

No, dirt is abrasive, like sandpaper. Every time you step on your carpet you grind dirt into the carpet fibres. This cuts your carpet just like using a knife. This cutting causes your carpet to wear out faster. A dirty carpet will not last nearly as long as a clean one, and while vacuuming helps, by itself it simply is not enough. The longer you wait to have your carpet cleaned the faster it will wear out resulting in costly replacements.

2 The only reason to clean carpet is to remove dirt

No, as you probably know, outdoor air pollens, fungi, bacteria, pollution in the form of car exhaust, industrial waste, cigarette smoke and hundreds of other chemicals. When you come into your home you carry these substances in on your clothes, shoes and hair. Not surprisingly all those chemicals and toxins end up in your carpet.

If you suffer from allergies such as asthma, emphysema or other breathing problems your condition could well be aggravated by the pollens, bacteria, pollution etc. in your carpet (and upholstery).

3 One method of carpet cleaning is as good as another

No. You can choose between two primary method; dry cleaning and hot water extraction. These methods are explained in detail in the section entitled 'Different Cleaning Methods'. One point that should be remembered is that many people believe that dry cleaning carpets is like dry cleaning clothes, it is not. All carpet cleaning methods use water in one form or another.

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

Not true. Many companies own hot water extraction equipment but few teach their employees how to use it properly. That is why it is important that you choose your cleaning company very carefully. One safeguard is to choose a company whose employees have been certified by the IICRC (Institute of Inspection Cleaning and Restoration Certification) or NCCA (National Carpet Cleaners Association). A company cannot 'buy' these certificates as with many trade associations but must earn certification by study, experience, attending courses and passing formal written exams. Topics covered include carpet identification, carpet fibres, dyes used, treatments applied, chemicals available and the relevant chemistry and of course cleaning methods.

Both the IICRC and the NCCA provides written credentials and a membership number. So for your protection before you choose a company ask to see proof of IICRC or NCCA membership. *If they don't have it then don't use them.*

COSTLY MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT CARPET CLEANERS

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

No. Over the years we have seen many problems arise from lowest bid companies. The four most common problems are as follows,

- The person doing the work has had no training and has no experience. This often results in problems being caused as a result of cleaning.
- The company is not established in your area and should you have a problem and a need for them to return, they have disappeared.
- The price may not be for the service that you wanted.
- The price you see advertised may not be the price you pay. Many homeowners have learned that the low price they saw advertised lasted only until the technician got to their home. They were then pressured into paying a lot more for a variety of 'add ons'.

6 Any honest carpet cleaning company should be able to give an exact price over the phone.

I wish this was true but it isn't..

Honest reputable carpet cleaning companies never price by the room. Instead carpet cleaning is usually priced by the square foot. So if you would like us to tell you an exact price we would need to know the square footage. Ideally we would do this by visiting your home, viewing the carpet/s and providing you with a no obligation quotation. To give you an idea of how we cost cleaning here are a few of the things we consider;

- The type of carpet, as certain types of carpet are harder to clean than others.
- The amount of soiling. A carpet that has not been cleaned for ten years will take longer to clean than one that was cleaned in the last six months.
- The amount of furniture which will need moving.

These and other factors determine what method is best, what chemicals should be used and most importantly the amount of time required to complete the job.

MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN CHOOSING A CARPET CLEANING COMPANY

1 Choosing a company on price alone

As already mentioned low prices are low for a reason. When shopping around always ask how long the job will take. Although it is not possible to give an exact period of time a company should be able to give you an approximate guide. Bear in mind that it will take any reputable company at least ten minutes to get their equipment out and ready and then a further ten minutes when the job is finished to clear up and reload.

2 Choosing a company on a single telephone conversation

Instead invite the company to your home (always ask for the name of the person who will be calling) and ask for a written quotation. This way you will know exactly what is recommended, what you can expect and you will not be the victim of high pressure sales tactics. Many companies will not offer this service or worse do not turn up for appointments and again this can be a telling sign as to the professionalism and integrity of the company.

3 Choosing a company that does not offer a guarantee

It is not possible to guarantee complete stain removal, but having said this in our view every company should be accountable for its work. Not all companies offer guarantee or if they do it may be 'limited'. Ask if they offer a money back guarantee and then make sure it is included in the written quotation.

4 Choosing a company which is not certificated by the IICRC or the NCCA

Unless your carpet cleaner is a good friend you probably will not know whether he/she has the knowledge or experience to clean your carpets properly. If you want to be sure you are hiring a competent professional make sure he/she is IICRC or NCCA certified.

5 Choosing a company not based in your local area

By using a company that is not based in your area you could be dealing with a company that has set up a postal address for a promotional period only. Should you need to contact them after the work is completed may prove difficult.