

# The Guru's Guide To **BETTER CLEANING**



An invaluable  
compilation of  
handy Hints, Tips &  
Information to assist  
you achieve your  
professional best in the  
cleaning, restoration  
and rejuvenation of  
Carpets, Rugs, Mattresses,  
Upholstery (leather & fabric),  
Curtains & Furnishings,  
Hard Floor Surfaces  
...and much, much more.

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## ABRASH - COLOUR VARIATION IN RUGS

Authentic oriental rugs, by their very nature, have many variations because they are hand made rather than machine made. This hand manufacture results in certain distinct, beautiful and unique characteristics that set oriental rugs apart from lesser reproductions. Rugs made by hand will always have certain variations in their surface colouration, density of hand knotting the pile, irregularities in shape along the edges or borders, and differences along the fringes or fringe ends.

One of the most common and typical characteristics of a real oriental rug, and especially among older or "nomadic" rugs, is the beautiful colour variation known in the trade as "abrash". The effect of abrash is to create or produce differing colour patterns, colourations, various shades of hues. Gradations can often be seen within one colour or colour field in the design, such as the blues, reds, browns or other colours. These variations may appear as bands or horizontal bars, but other shapes or sections of colour variations are possible. Abrash colouration can vary from very subtle shade differences to distinct or even bold variations in certain colours of the rug.

Abrash results from differences in the dyeing process. Small quantities of skeins of pile yarn are dyed by hand before the rug is made. Each dye lot is hand knotted into the rug; but when another dye lot is next used, some colour variation is inevitable. Connoisseurs of antique and semi-antique oriental rugs value the beauty and hand made appearance that is typical of abrash.

Sometimes abrash colour variation is covered over or obscured by soiling and compaction of the rug pile with use and wear. When the rug is cleaned, much surface soiling is removed and the pile is groomed and made more erect. The true and authentic pile colouration is now revealed, along with some abrash colour variations that were there at the time of manufacture. In addition, there is a possibility that slight variations in pile direction or "shading" will also be seen after a thorough cleaning. One or both of these effects show up as colour variations in the rug.

These distinct colourations are not defects at all but are characteristic of the many variables and dye lot differences that went into the original hand made rug. Indeed, some of the highest quality rug manufacturers spend a lot of time and money simulating this abrash in their machine woven rug designs. Abrash is part of the beauty and distinctive natural appearance of hand made oriental rugs, and even of some machine made rugs which try to reproduce real abrash.

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## ANIMAL STAINS

Dogs and cats may be our best friends, but not necessarily the best friends of our carpeting, draperies, and upholstery. Neglected animal stains have been a problem ever since people and animals bonded together in companionship.

**URINE:** There are two types of reactions that can take place between the chemicals in an animal's urine and those in the dyes and fibres of textile furnishings. The first type of reaction is immediately noticeable. Some dyes can change colour as soon as urine

comes in contact with them. Often the original colour can be restored by immediate application of the standard ammonia solution (see below).

The other reactions develop slowly over several days to several months and can result in permanent changes to the dyes and fibre. Not only can the dyes change but some fibres may become weakened or destroyed by the aged urine. The decomposing urine can also produce an objectionable odour. After cleaning, these areas are more obvious because the soils which hid the changed colour and damaged fibres have been removed. Also, dyes weakened by urine can be removed or bleed during cleaning.

The next time you encounter an animal 'accident', immediately absorb as much liquid as possible. Treat the area with the standard detergent solution (see below). Absorb this into white tissues or towelling. Then blot the area with the standard ammonia solution. Again absorb this into towelling. Then blot the area with the standard vinegar solution. Absorb the area with towelling until it is as dry as possible. Place several dry white terry cloths over the area and weigh down. Allow to dry a minimum of six hours.

**FECES:** Pet feces tend to be easier to deal with than urine. Compact deposits can be quickly removed with a plastic bag. The surface should then be cleaned with the standard detergent solution and blotted dry. Rinse the area with water and blot again. Follow this treatment with a disinfectant recommended by your veterinarian.

Loose feces require the same clean-up procedure as described above for fresh urine removal. This should also be followed with an application of disinfectant. If your pet's food contains red dye to make it 'look meatier', this could leave a red discolouration at the sight of the 'accident'. A professional cleaner may be able to remove this.

A word of caution; some disinfectants may cause discolouration of textile furnishings.

**GENERAL INFORMATION:** If immediate action is taken to remove the animal stain, little or no change in colour should occur and that 'accident' will not become apparent after your carpet or other textile has been professionally cleaned. However, if the pet 'accident' is forgotten or never discovered, it will return to haunt you. Dried urine will smell like strong ammonia when humidity is high or when the spot is wet again. Feces and urine can contain harmful bacteria. A spot that is small on the surface of carpeting is often many times larger on the underside. The urine can damage both dyes and textile fibres as described above. The change usually isn't noticed until the textile furnishing is cleaned. The damage caused by aged urine generally requires professional restoration, possibly colour tinting, and sometimes removal of the offending carpet and cushion.

A professional cleaner has methods available to minimise the discolouration, disinfect the area and reduce the smell. It is often possible however, to completely restore the original appearance of a textile furnishing that has been damaged with aged pet urine.

**STANDARD SOLUTIONS:** Test these solutions first by applying a small amount in an inconspicuous area to determine its effect on the fibre and dye. Wait 30 minutes to an hour to see if any colour changes or other problems arise.

**Standard White Vinegar Solution:** One part white vinegar to two parts water.

**Standard Ammonia Solution:** One tablespoon clear or sudsy, uncoloured household ammonia in one cup of water.

**Standard Detergent Solution:** One teaspoon neutral white or colourless detergent in a cup of lukewarm water. Make sure the detergent is bleach free.

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## BACKING SEPARATION

The underside of your carpet has begun to separate from the top. This is a common occurrence with fairly new, as well as older carpets, and especially those exposed to heavy wear or chemical reaction.

Your carpet is actually like a triple-decker sandwich. The topmost layer is the face yarn which is held firmly in place because it is tufted or sewn into the middle layer or "primary" backing. The third layer of fabric which rests against the floor is called the "secondary" backing. The two backings are "glued" together by a thin layer of latex, a type of rubber cement.

Like most other rubber articles, latex will deteriorate with age. It becomes brittle and crumbly and loses the ability to hold the two backing layers firmly together. Heavy traffic, heat, as well as spills of various sorts, can also cause embrittlement and eventual weakening of the latex.

In a few cases your carpet cleaner may be able to remove the old latex and re-glue the two backings together. However, this could be a costly procedure because it is time consuming and requires a great deal of skill.

If your carpet has begun to show backing separation, discuss it with your professional ASE cleaner and rely on their experienced advice.

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## BENZOYL PEROXIDE

One of the most common problems in recent years has been the occurrence of colour loss in carpet and upholstery resulting from a chemical named benzoyl peroxide. Benzoyl peroxide is contained in acne medications, other skin care products, dog mange medicine, adhesive activators, etc. It is a powerful bleaching agent and can discolour most dyes used on carpet, upholstery or other textiles. The chemical discolouration appears as mysterious areas of bleached or lightened colour, in places

where no apparent spillage has occurred. The bleached areas are often of a yellow, pink, orange or off-white colour.

Widespread use of acne medications containing benzoyl peroxide has increased the problem. Although the colour loss can occur soon after the chemical touches the fibres, it often does not appear until sometime later. The reaction is accelerated by high humidity, heat and moisture. It is particularly common for these spills to appear after rainy weather, or soon after a carpet or upholstery cleaning. Spillage of this medication may have been overlooked only to have the forgotten spill reappear later. In addition to spillage of the medication, it is easy to unknowingly transfer the chemical onto the fibres from the hands or face. The medication does not readily wash off the skin, leaving enough behind to get onto carpet or upholstery where it causes colour loss to appear without warning.

The bleached areas are permanently discoloured, as the dye has been chemically damaged. These colour changes, that may become apparent after cleaning, are sometimes blamed on the cleaner or cleaning process. However, the problem is due to the hidden benzoyl peroxide component of these acne medications which is activated by heat and moisture.

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## CARPET

### Absorbent Pad Cleaning

Bonnet cleaning is a method usually used for interim maintenance of carpet. In light to medium soil conditions it can be very effective in restoring the appearance and removing surface soil. It is best for low pile commercial carpet and is not recommended for high pile carpet. It may even void warranties in some situations.

#### Procedure:

1. Vacuum the carpet thoroughly.
2. Apply Hydro-Break using a pump-up or electric sprayer.
3. Dampen a Microfibre or regular bonnet with your Hydro-Break solution.
4. Using a 175rpm rotary floor machine and bonnet, buff the carpet with overlapping strokes. This is the soil extraction part of this method. The bonnet absorbs the soil and spend solution.
5. Neutralise by misting a solution of Fab Set on the carpet.
6. Set the pile with a brush or Grandi Groomer if necessary.
7. Apply Maxim Carpet Protector.
8. Enhance drying with air movers and proper ventilation.

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## CARPET INSTALLATION

Correct installation is imperative for any carpet to perform successfully, both during use and after cleaning. Here are some points to consider anytime carpet is installed or reinstalled.

Most residential and some commercial carpet is installed over a cushion (or pad), and is fastened to the floor by stretching the carpet onto pins protruding from wood strips around the perimeter of the installation area. The wooden strip with projecting tacks

or pins is known as "tackless strip", so named because it contrasts with the now-obsolete installation method whereby carpet was tacked directly to the floor.

A properly installed carpet must be fully stretched according to the manufacturer's specifications. All the "give" in new carpet must be removed during installation, so that no buckling, rippling or "growth" occurs during use. Unfortunately, many carpet installers now use a "knee kicker" device rather than a proper power stretcher. The knee kicker is seldom, if ever, capable of adequately stretching carpet to correct specifications. With use the carpet shifts, especially in high traffic areas, and appears lumpy, with buckles, bumps and waves (or worse) and often requires installation.

Another carpet installation problem is poor seaming when carpet sections are joined. Over time and with wear, the defective seam comes apart. A seam is no better than the quality of the seaming tape used and the care taken by the installer who joins the carpet section.

Cut carpet edges first must be beaded or "buttered", with a line of carpet adhesive. The edges are then brought together, forming the seam, which is held in place with hot-melt seam tape or other manufacturer-specified method. Very few carpet installers do this step properly, if they do it at all. Low quality installation usually involves the use of a poor grade adhesive seaming tape, with the least amount of glue.

The result is a weak seam, prone to break open when subjected to normal use or to the ordinary mechanical action of carpet cleaning.

Some woven carpets, such as Axminster or Wilton, call for specialised seaming methods. Many are made with natural fibre backing, such as jute or cotton, and even minimal shrinkage during wet cleaning may be enough to break open seams. These special woven carpets, and certain custom-made carpets, require either hand-sewn seams or use of only top grade seaming tape to properly join carpet sections. A split seam is the likely result of improper or insufficient seaming during installation; usually it is not the fault of the carpet cleaner.

Stretched-in carpets absolutely **MUST** be power stretched to avoid buckles and ripples later on. Alternatively, many commercial carpets may be glued down, using a contact-type adhesive, which is a better method for carpet in high-use areas or under moving furniture. Proper trowel-notch size and "open time" (time it takes for the adhesive to develop "legs"), as well as proper floor preparation and adhesive selection are all required for a successful installation. A newer method of contract carpet installation is "double glue down". In this process the cushion is glued to the floor, then the carpet is glued to the cushion.

Many customers find "new carpet odour" objectionable. To minimise odour, it helps to air a new carpet before it is installed. The carpet retailer or the installer may be able to unroll the carpet and air it for a few days prior to delivery and installation. An in-plant rug cleaner, with controlled drying room facilities, also may be able to assist with airing new carpet.

Once the carpet is installed, keep all areas well ventilated. Open windows, open the air conditioner's fresh air vent, keep inside doors ajar, and move as much fresh air as possible through the newly carpeted area. In a short time the new carpet will be "right at home", bringing great pleasure to all.

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## CELLULOSIC BROWNING

Occasionally a brownish discolouration appears on a carpet or rug after it has been cleaned. One of the causes of this discolouration is a condition called cellulosic browning. In order for this discolouration to develop, several factors must be present - a cellulosic fibre, moisture, and slow drying. A high pH or shampoo residue may also contribute to the occurrence.

Cellulosic fibres are present in all jute carpet or rug backings and are a major source of cellulosic browning. The drying time following carpet cleaning depends on humidity; during rainy periods and summer months, the air contains more moisture, making it more difficult for the moisture in the carpet to evaporate.

The age of the carpet is also important. Jute backing deteriorate in time and undergo chemical changes. These changes produce brown or red colourants (lignin) which can wick up to the face yarns and appear on the surface of the carpet after cleaning. As the carpet dries, the brown or red colour remains on the tips of the tufts.

Cellulosic browning of a similar type occurs when newspapers are left outdoors, or gradually age indoors. Cellulosic materials in the paper turn brown and become brittle.

If browning does develop after cleaning, the discolouration can often be removed by professional carpet cleaners as it is not always a permanent stain. In other cases however, the discolouration can not be completely removed. This arises more often with wool, sisal or cotton carpets, or when the carpet is old enough for advanced cellulosic fibre degradation to occur.

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## CHEWING GUM REMOVAL

Gum removal is the bane of many carpet owners. A common removal method requires simply freezing the gum with an ice cube, then cracking off the residue with the back of a spoon. This works when the gum is only on the surface of the carpet. This method can also damage the carpet, when the gum has been worked into the pile, by breaking off fibres during gum removal. There are increasingly fewer solvents available to consumers and professional methods often require strong solvents. The ASE

laboratory has documented a new, simple gum removal method for consumer and professional use. This method is most useful in situations where there is an occasional need to remove chewed gum.

### Equipment Required:

- ▲ Hand-held electric hair dryer
- ▲ 6 to 12 squares (75mm x 75mm) of polyethylene film (e.g. cut from Zip-Loc bags)
- ▲ Extra Strength Deep-heating Rub containing 30% methyl salicylate (e.g. Extra Strength Ben Gay or equivalent)
- ▲ Clear or white mild dishwashing detergent (e.g. Ivory clear or equivalent) mixed one teaspoon in one cup of warm water.
- ▲ White towelling and a sponge

### Method:

Have squares of polyethylene film ready. Heat the gum residue with a hand-held hair dryer set on high for 30 to 90 seconds. Do not bring the hair dryer too close to the carpet because it is possible to melt some carpet fibres with high temperatures. Use the polyethylene squares to remove as much of the warm softened gum as possible. The gum can be largely "picked off" the surface of the carpet. You will need to reheat the gum with the hair dryer, then pick and wipe it with a fresh square of film several times. This removes approximately 80% of the gum residue.

Rub one gram (1/2 teaspoon) of the extra strength deep-heating rub evenly into the remaining gum residue. Heat the residue and deep-heating rub 30 to 90 seconds with the hair dryer. Wipe and pick the area repeatedly with fresh polyethylene squares. This is useful to remove the remaining bits of gum from between the carpet pile yarns. Work the area in one direction, then in the opposite direction. Repeat if necessary.

Soak a sponge in a mild detergent solution and partially wring it out. Blot the area containing the gum residue with this solution and remove the deep-heating rub, then blot the area with clean, dry, white, towelling to remove the excess solution. Blot the area with plain water to remove the detergent, then finally blot with dry towelling. Allow the carpet to dry in daylight if possible. The daylight helps to gently bleach any residual colour, especially from green-coloured gum.

In some cases, there may be a slight stickiness remaining from the gum residue after the carpet has dried. Carefully reheat the area again with a hair dryer and remove the last traces of gum with polyethylene film using the picking and wiping motion described previously. This method works very well on synthetic carpets.

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## CODE OF ETHICS

We, the owners, managers and employees of this firm are proud of our profession and of the professionalism we display in the cleaning and restoration work we perform;

We are committed to our obligation in providing the best possible service to all our customers;

We believe that all our transactions should be fair and honest;

We pledge to steadfastly avoid any false or misleading representation of our products or services;

We value our place in the community and recognise our responsibilities as local business people;

We support the aims and objectives of the Association of Specialists in Cleaning and Restoration and participate in efforts toward advancement of our industry through its programs and services;

We therefore subscribe to this Code of Ethics and will conduct our business affairs accordingly.

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## COLOUR CHANGES

Dyes are chemical compounds that are added to fibres to give them colour. Sometimes these dyes react with chemicals or gases and changes in the colour occur.

Fume fading is a reaction to gaseous pollutants, such as oxides of nitrogen or sulfur, in the air. It is a gradual change, accelerated by sunlight, heat, high humidity and the presence of acid on the fibre. The most common colour changes are blues to pink, greens to yellow, and browns to red. The colour changes usually starts at the tips of

the tufts and progresses toward the backing.

Ozone fading is caused by ozone gas in the atmosphere. It is also accelerated by high humidity and heat. Ozone is more prevalent around electrical motors, fluorescent lights and during lightning storms. It is also formed by the reaction between light and pollutants in the air. Fibres subjected to ozone fading may lighten, turn white, or change from one colour to another as in fume fading.

Some carpet fibres are dyed with Indicator Dyes. These dyes are sensitive to either acid or alkaline chemicals. An alkaline-sensitive dye will change colour if exposed to ammonia or high alkaline (high pH) detergent. The colour often can be changed back with dilute acetic acid (white vinegar). An acid-sensitive dye will change colour when exposed to vinegar or other mild acids (low pH) used in cleaning. The original colour often can be restored with dilute ammonia. These colour changes may not be permanent and often can be reversed. Other colour changes due to strong chemicals (concentrated acids and bases or other reactive chemicals) are not a result of this "indicator effect" and may not be reversible.

Colour changes that become apparent after cleaning are sometimes incorrectly blamed on the cleaner or cleaning process. In many cases however, the colour change is due to the ravages of time-the aging of dyes and fibres. Cleaning reveals the true colour by removing dirt and loosened dyes.

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## CORN ROWING

Corn rowing is a condition that may appear on carpets before or after cleaning. It looks like distinct rows of tufts have fallen over and the tips have become embedded in the carpet pile. It usually forms in a regular pattern, with every fourth or fifth row bending over, as might happen in a row of corn. The condition may develop in traffic lanes and under doors that scrape the carpet as they are opened and closed. It generally occurs perpendicular to the traffic direction.

Corn rowing appears most commonly on carpets made from fine, soft yarns, with a fairly high, cut pile. In most cases, the overall density is not adequate to support the yarns and keep them upright. If there is too much space between the row, the tufts may be bent over when they are walked on. Soft, fine yarns do not spring back as readily as other carpet yarns made from heavier and denser fibres.

Although cleaning the carpet may bring the problem to light, it is not the cause of the distorted pile surface per se. Corn rowing is simply an inherent characteristic of certain carpet constructions. Vacuuming and raking the carpet perpendicular to the traffic patterns may help in some cases. In extreme situations, we suggest you contact the manufacturer.

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## CUSTOM MADE RUGS

Custom made rugs are becoming increasingly popular each year. These rugs can be broadly classified under two categories: (a) hand tufted or hooked and (b) assembled component. Assembled component rugs are manufactured by joining together different rug components, either tufted or woven. Components are joined using a hot melt adhesive tape or by sewing or both. Custom rugs are available in a variety of contemporary designs, colours, and shapes.

Although expensive, they are elegant, often exclusive and provide an aura of opulence to the surrounding areas.

Custom rugs however, pose a challenge to carpet and rug cleaners. If proper cleaning procedures are not followed, problems can occur during cleaning. Let us examine some common problems with custom rugs and why they occur.

The two most common problems with custom rugs are shrinkage and rippling. Shrinkage and rippling occur especially with assembled component rugs. In wet cleaning of any custom rug in which different components are joined together there is always a propensity for differential shrinkage to take place. This is due to the inherent differences in the properties of the various components. The absence of preshrinking rug components prior to assembly also contributes to the problem. Further, use of components that vary considerably in properties (tufted carpet assembled with a woven one, jute backed carpet with an olefin backed one, etc.) accentuates shrinkage and rippling even more.

In addition to the two problems described above, some custom rugs can soften upon application of heat or cleaning/spotting solvents; others may show drastic changes in size as well as texture distortion due to a loose construction.

Dyes in custom rugs are often unstable and colour bleeding or colour loss may result during normal cleaning.

Due to problems described above, special procedures are required for problem-free cleaning of custom rugs. It is critical that these special rugs be cleaned by knowledgeable, professional cleaners. Your local ASE cleaner has the information and expertise to provide the best cleaning services for your custom rugs.

Finally, it should be noted that more intense cleaning is usually required to restore the appearance of an excessively soiled rug. Such thorough cleaning procedures however, have a higher propensity to cause shrinkage and rippling in custom rugs. Therefore, these rugs should be vacuumed regularly and cleaned more frequently than other rugs, before they become excessively soiled. Consult your ASE cleaner for further information and special services to preserve your expensive custom rugs.

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## DEODOURISATION

### Urine Treatment, Complete Restoration

There are three ways to approach urine odour removal: Surface Treatment, Sub-Surface Treatment, and Complete Restoration. This last method is a more involved procedure than surface or sub-surface treatment. However, it is the most thorough service you can provide for urine odour removal.

#### Procedure:

1. Determine the customers L.O.T. (Level of Tolerance). If cost is an issue, or they are unwilling to prevent the problem from happening again (like removing the pet), then you may elect to perform a surface treatment or sub-surface treatment only.
2. Locate the area needing treatment. You can find urine using 'the nose' - a moisture detector, or by finding backing stains by lifting up a corner of the carpet. The most preferred method however, is using a High Intensity Ultraviolet Light that will cause the urine to fluoresce when exposed.
3. Pull back the carpet in the affected areas and discard any contaminated padding. Examine all surfaces closely for contamination, such as, sub-floor, tack strip, base boards and walls. These areas may be treated and sealed, painted, or in the worst cases, may need to be replaced.
4. Apply a heavy spray of Urine Neutralising Treatment chemical to both sides of the carpet and allow approximately 30 minutes of dwell time. This effectively prepares the carpet for cleaning and for enzyme treatment.
5. Spray a heavy saturation of Bio-Enzyme Decontaminate to both sides of the carpet to destroy any bacteria and eliminate the odour. Cover the carpet with a sheet or roll the carpet to slow drying enabling the enzyme to be more effective.
6. Clean carpet as normal. Pre-spray with Hydro Break and extract with Point Blue.
7. Repeat steps 4, 5 and 6 as needed. Usually one or two applications are required.
8. After cleaning, apply a light mist of Deliminate to the carpet and into the air space to destroy the off-gassing of the urine and to remove the airborne odour.
9. Once the structural pieces (sub-floor, tack strip, walls) have been treated and sealed or replaced, install new padding, and re-install the carpet.

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## DRAPERY DAMAGE

Draperies and other window textiles play an integral part in enhancing the comfort, beauty and luxury of a room. A variety of fabrics are available to consumers for use as draperies. Although fabric selection, installation and use conditions vary, all draperies in general are exposed to more destructive conditions than either wearing apparel, carpet or upholstery. Draperies may receive direct or indirect exposure to the harmful rays of sunlight. Draperies also interact with the air circulation system of each room.

As a result they accumulate dust and dirt, as well as residues from cooking, smoking, heating and other combustion. Higher humidity and temperature conditions tend to accelerate the damage caused by these destructive conditions. Therefore, various problems or changes in the draperies can occur as a result of use and exposure. Sometimes the changes occur so gradually that they are not even perceived until after cleaning.

The most common drapery problem is yellowing or development of yellow streaks. This occurs because of sunlight exposure which can cause a yellowing of all fibres and breakdown of optical brighteners, sizings, coatings, or finishes. Exposure to light can also reduce the strength of most fibres, sometimes after only a few months of use. The fibre content of the drapery fabric, its construction, additives and finishes used, etc., all influence the extent of sunlight damage. The weakened drapery and/or its lining may lack the strength to withstand the normal agitation involved in cleaning. Damage or shredding of draperies may appear after cleaning because of this loss of strength. There is no way to prevent light damage, but it can be reduced by having a good lining, and rotating draperies to minimise direct sunlight exposure.

Yellowing and weakening of fibres can also be caused by environmental pollutants. When moisture in the air reacts with gases such as sulfur oxide or nitrogen oxide, weak sulfuric and nitric acid are formed. (This phenomenon can be referred to as "interior acid rain"). These acids attack drapery fibres, resulting in loss of strength. Again, these effects may not become evident until after cleaning.

Colour changes can also occur on draperies. Most dyes are affected or weakened by exposure to sunlight, atmospheric fumes, heat vents, pet residues and the like. The weakened dyes may be moved, run or bleed during cleaning.

Water marks that appear as tan, yellow or brown stains with heavy irregular edges can also develop. These are a result of condensed moisture or rain transferred onto the draperies. The stain is due to either a weak dye or dirt in the fabric which is carried along with moisture as it wicks into the surrounding drapery fabric. It is not removed during dry cleaning and even special spotting are not always successful.

Shrinkage is another factor to consider. Some draperies can be observed to raise or lower with changes in humidity and temperature but, in many cases, draperies can be resized to their original length.

Abrasion damage or worn out areas can occur in draperies due to rubbing against the window sill, cornice, walls, etc.

To ensure that the draperies enjoy a maximum attractive life span, it is imperative to maintain them properly and have them cleaned regularly by reputable drapery cleaners. Your professional ASE cleaner is best equipped for this purpose and will select an appropriate cleaning procedure based on the condition of your draperies.

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## DRY ROT IN RUGS & FURNISHINGS

Older textiles and furnishings, especially those with a cellulosic fibre such as cotton, flax (linen), jute and similar fibres, can slowly degrade over time - sometimes years or decades. This lengthy, slow but relentless deterioration and weakening of the fibres leads to eventual damage that can be seen as rips, tears, slit or other structural damage in the fabric, carpet or rug. It may take a few years for dry rot to manifest itself, or it can take decades; sometimes 40-50 years or more. This misnomer 'dry rot'

implies that the rotting or damage took place in the absence of moisture, whereas the damage was previously done during some conditions of wetness and mildew. It is understood that although presently "dry", there were actually pre-existing conditions creating localised or smaller, concentrated areas of moisture buildup and damaging fungus growth therein. Once dry, the result is weakened fibres which can easily be broken and have a dry appearance, feel or sound.

One condition which may have contributed to the onset of dry rot is prior, uncontrolled wetness for long periods of time. Typical of this is the section of rug or carpet underneath plant pots, especially planters made of clay which can transpire moisture and dampness into the carpet.

Another contributing factor may be residues in the base of the rug or carpet such as those typical of animal pet stains. The buildup of salts from the pet stains become hygroscopic and thus "moisture attracting", keeping that section slightly damp for long periods of time. This condition in the textiles can thus cause moisture to be continually absorbed from the air and dampness to accumulate in the rug or fabric. The result is a slow but continual process of fungus growth and deterioration in the affected fibres, yarns and rug or fabric. Rugs suffering from this condition may often smell during hot humid weather.

The most common type of damage from dry rot occurs in cellulosic fibres that often make up the foundation (or unitary backing) of rugs and some woven carpet. Although the rug pile or face yarns may be wool or another fibre, it is actually the backing or foundation fibres that are more likely to be damaged. This ongoing condition of dry rot shows no outward or obvious signs while the damage is slowly accumulating. That is until the real damage is done and some normal moving or handling of the textile brings this latent condition to light.

But eventually the affected yarns become stiffer, less supple and eventually brittleness sets in. This later condition typically results in a subtle but distinctive "crackling" or "snapping" sound when, for example an older rug or carpet is bent or rolled between the hands. Very fine quality, very dense or tightly knotted oriental rugs are specially prone to such damage. In advanced conditions, merely lifting or moving the rug, textile or fabric for cleaning or restoration can result in slits, rips or tears in the foundation of the rug, carpet, tapestry or fabric. It is not caused by the customary and normal handling but by the progressive "silent" damage that has been occurring for years before.

Unfortunately there's no remedy to reverse this premature aging process in the affected fibres. The damage has already been done due to pre-existing conditions during use. The prescription is for a careful, thorough professional cleaning, and then any additional repairs needed to rebuild or reinforce the damaged area. An antimicrobial/antifungal treatment to arrest some of the inherent conditions leading to damage may also be considered. But there's no assurance that the dry rot will not appear again in the same or other areas of your rug or textile in the future.

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## DYEBLEEDING

Dyebleeding occurs when a coloured fibre loses dye while wet. Uncoloured or light coloured fibre or yarn may readily soak up fugitive (runaway) dyes from the darker fibre or yarn and become stained. This is most often seen in rugs and carpet where deeply dyed shades (for example reds, blues, blacks) become fugitive and bleed into white or light coloured areas.

At least two conditions cause dyebleeding in coloured fibres and yarns. The first is a defective dye or dyeing method. In such a case, the dye is either poorly selected or not properly handled during manufacture. The result is excess, unsecured, weak, and/or unstable dye. When a dye with poor stability or washfastness is used, it may bleed during or after the first few cleanings. Likewise, when too much dye is used during manufacture, the excess adheres near the outside of the fibre where it may readily wash away. Such defects in dye or dyeing method, at the time of manufacture, produce a textile product which is defective. Unfortunately for the consumer, these defects are not visible at the time of purchase.

In the second condition, dye is affected by use. Sunlight, atmospheric fumes, common chemicals, animal/pet residues, etc., can weaken dyes over time. Once dyes are weakened they may run or bleed with cleaning.

If pre-testing or experience does not indicate a potential dyebleeding problem, the carpet cleaner should not be held liable for using what would otherwise be usual and customary cleaning procedures. The best guarantee of satisfaction is to use an experienced, reputable ASE cleaner.

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## FLATWOVEN RUGS

Flatwoven rugs, or “flatweaves”, comprise numerous types of rugs with names such as Aubusson, Berber, dhurrie, drugget, killim (kilim or kelim), Navajo, rag rug, soumak, and Zapotec. These rugs are usually handwoven in a tapestry-like construction, and have a flat surface without a distinctive raised pile. Many flatwoven rugs are reversible.

The most popular flatweave types are the dhurries with cotton or wool face yarns, killims with wool face yarns, and rag rugs made of cotton or polyester fabric scraps.

Dhurries traditionally are woven in India and Afghanistan; killims usually are woven in Turkey, but also are produced in other countries, including the United States.

These popular rugs provide excellent service, along with good value and a pleasing appearance. Unfortunately, they also characteristically exhibit some problems when cleaned.

The warp, or lengthwise yarns, in most flatwoven rugs are generally cotton, although they may be wool, or occasionally silk, in older or finer rugs. These lengthwise yarns are hand-wound onto the loom before weaving. Irregularities in warp and weft positioning, tension and weave structure appear in woven goods from even the best weavers. Additionally, there may be a range of variations in yarn twist and diameter. Cleaning reveals these inherent irregularities, which may or may not be visible before cleaning, in the form of curling, rippling, striping or buckling in the rug. The sides or edges of these rugs are specially prone to curling.

Some flatwoven rugs may have pattern markings placed on the warp by the weaver. These are usually marked with coloured chalk or red ink (red, blue or black) to aid in the weaving. The markings are completely hidden as the rug is woven, but since the markings are seldom colourfast they can bleed during cleaning. Since the cleaner has no way of predicting this inherent problem in advance, it is not the cleaners fault.

The yarns on the surface of the rugs are sometimes bright bold colours that may bleed when cleaned. Your professional ASE cleaner takes precautions to avoid this condition by using the most appropriate cleaning techniques. Despite cautious handling of such rugs, there is some unavoidable risk of dyebleeding (or colour run) after cleaning. It may not be possible to remove dyes which have bled. This problem is linked to poor dye selection and improper dyeing and handling during manufacture. In addition, most dyes are weakened by age, exposure to sunlight, atmospheric fumes, pet urine and spills, all of which contribute to dyebleeding before, during and after cleaning.

Many flatweaves have fringes that are continuations of the warp yarns, which are part of the rug's weave structure. All fringes fray and darken with age and dirt. Only special chemical treatment can lighten the fringe colour. Some cleaners prefer to leave the fringe “natural” looking.

Flatwoven rugs have limited cleanability, because their flat surface readily shows soil, dirt, dust, spills and stains.

Many dhurrie rugs are designed in pastel colours and, hence, always appear more soiled than darker rugs. Flatwoven rugs therefore, should be vacuumed regularly and cleaned more frequently than other rugs. Application of a fluorocarbon-based protective treatment may be advisable. Consult your ASE professional cleaner for further information regarding special services for preserving your beautiful flatwoven rugs.

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## FORGOTTEN SPILLS

Sometimes stains that have been hidden by soil are revealed after cleaning. These stains, which did not immediately cause discolouration, are often from spilled liquid containing colourless sugar that remained on the fibres. After long exposure to the air, they changed to insoluble brown stains. The stains may look like brownish discolourations but often they remain unnoticed because of the accumulated soil covering them. Some food and drink stains may inevitably turn even darker from the

necessary drying action after a thorough cleaning.

Other kinds of stains can be caused by water soaking through and dissolving materials that cause browning, or dissolving fugitive dyes from the back of the carpet, rug, or upholstery. Because the fibres act as wicks, moisture will rise to the surface to evaporate, and discolouration will be left. Consumers who try to remove stains by using the wrong cleaning compounds and procedures may only make the stained areas more noticeable.

Professional cleaners use specialty cleaning and stain removal treatment to improve the appearance of forgotten drink spills. Even with the best treatments, some coloured residue or caramelised sugar stain resulting from the prior spillage may remain.

To lessen the possibility of stain damage, immediate action should be taken; thoroughly absorb all moisture and, when possible, put a half-inch thickness of clean, white, absorbent material, such as paper or cloth towelling, over the area and weigh it down. Keep replacing with fresh absorbent material and repeat as needed. Then call your professional ASE cleaner to learn how to remove the spot safely before it becomes a permanent stain.

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## HAITIAN COTTON

Haitian cotton is an upholstery fabric made from 100% cotton, grown in Haitian or India. The fibres are not thoroughly processed; as a result bits of cotton seeds, stems, and other plant components are in the yarn. These specks of brown give the fabric its natural and rustic appearance. The yarns are thick, coarse, and usually off-white, cream, or tan in colour. Occasionally, they are dyed with colours such as red or blue, or may be two-toned.

Haitian cotton fabrics are very susceptible to cellulosic browning. The spillage of plain tap water is sometimes enough to produce discolouration. The seed particles will also release a brown dye when wet, and this stain may be impossible to remove completely.

Complications of this type could normally be overcome by professional cleaners, who can use a variety of dry cleaning solvents to supplement water-base cleaning solutions. Unfortunately, the weave of Haitian cotton fabric is too loose to stand alone and must be manufactured with a latex backing to bind the yarns together into a fabric. This backing is softened or degraded by dry cleaning solvents, so texture changes as well as colour changes may occur with any type of cleaning.

Haitian cotton can not always be safely cleaned by normal upholstery cleaning methods. Some professional cleaners may have specialty cleaning chemicals and techniques designed for handling Haitian cotton and similar fabrics. These techniques require more time and expense. The degree of cleaning that is possible may still be less than is normally attainable, and some risk of staining may be present. Your professional upholstery cleaner can advise you on the cleaning of your Haitian cotton upholstery.

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## HARD SURFACE

### Tile Cleaning, Identification

It is important to know the capabilities and the limitations of the Steamway Hard Surface cleaning system. Identifying the kind of flooring is an important step in knowing what you can clean with this system. It is important, at least initially, to focus on the easiest, most plentiful and most profitable type of tile to clean. The tiles that fit into this category also carry the least risk for complications. They are the man-made,

non-porous, scratch resistant and acid resistant tiles.

#### Procedure:

1. Determine if the tile is man-made or natural. Every natural stone tile would be different in the details and usually has a 1/16" bevelled edge rather than a curved or cut edge. Man-made tiles have a consistent pattern/appearance.
2. Determine the porosity of the tile. Some tiles and stones will show immediate absorption of water. There is a range of porosity and even the most dense stone, like granite, will allow some absorption. It could take over ten minutes to fully penetrate the surface. Most ceramic, porcelain and Italian quarry tile are non-porous. The more porous the tile, the more potential problems in cleaning.
3. Check the scratch resistance of the tile and for potential coatings. Select an inconspicuous area and scratch the surface with a steel pocket knife. If the surface scratches, then the Turbo would not be the best extraction tool. Usually, if the tile is not scratch resistant, it is either natural, porous or both. Also, check for coatings by scraping across the tile and grout in the inconspicuous place to determine if there is wax or urethane present. Coatings usually require a stripping process which adds complications to the job.
4. Finally, determine the type of grout you are cleaning, and check if it has been previously sealed. In the same inconspicuous place, try to cut the grout with the knife. Epoxy grout will cut like plastic and cementitious grout will crumble into a powder. Epoxy grout does not need to be sealed. Add a few drops of water on cementitious grout and it will darken readily unless it has been previously sealed. If it has not been sealed, you will want to sell this service. If it has been sealed, the grout will clean up easier and may not need to be resealed.

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## LATEX DECAY

Latex is an adhesive material applied by the carpet or rug manufacturer to anchor tufts to the back, give additional weight and to hold the backing onto the rug.

Latex starts to deteriorate as soon as it is put into service, similar to the rotting of automobile tyres, elastic bands in garments and rubber bands. The breakdown is caused by gases in the air, floor waxes, traffic and sunlight.

A complex mixture, latex contains many chemicals affecting both its wear properties and cost. Chemicals are added to latex in an effort to retard its breakdown, but can not prevent its taking place. Other chemicals are added to reduce cost. Such chemicals could be compared to gravel in a concrete mixture; they take up space but have no adhesive properties. Increased use of this material reduces the adhesive power of the latex causing an earlier breakdown and therefore a separation of the backing from the rug.

The more expensive latex compounds will better withstand aging as well as cleaning, but even these will deteriorate eventually. The rate of the deterioration is influenced by the ingredients of the rubber mixture as well as the conditions under which it is used. The breakdown will not take place evenly, but will appear in smaller areas in the form of "bubbles" or separation. In many cases it is more apparent along the rug edges exposed to gases in the air.

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## MILDEW

Mildew is a destructive growth that feeds on a variety of organic materials such as cotton, wool and leather. While dormant mildew exists freely in the environment, conditions of dampness and warmth can provide the ingredients for rapid growth, frequently within 72 hours.

Some individuals are sensitive to mildew and experience an allergic reaction in its presence.

Since mildew feeds on organic materials, it eventually causes a loss of fibre strength and unsightly staining or discolouration. These effects are not reversible. Once deteriorated by mildew, textile fibres are permanently affected. The gray splotches that sometimes develop on walls and fibres following water damage are colonies of the mildew fungi and represent an advanced stage of growth.

The characteristic musty odour of mildew results from its digestive action. The odour disappears when the mildew has been eliminated and the absence of odour is evidence that improvement has occurred.

A variety of fungicidal solutions are available which kill mildew without damaging fabrics. They must come in direct contact with the organism to be effective; and the procedures sometimes require multiple treatments. Because many household items utilise organic materials, these furnishings are frequently affected by mildew, especially in humid environments. Oriental rugs, upholstery fabrics, and clothing in closets are frequent victims. Thorough drying is an essential step in mildew removal.

Complete and permanent elimination of mildew requires that the conditions which stimulate mildew growth - primarily dampness - be eliminated. No matter what germicides are employed, a continuing damp condition at temperatures over 18°C will eventually result in renewed mildew growth.

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## MYTHS ABOUT ORIENTAL RUG CLEANING



*The Guru  
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What do you or should you know about the care and maintenance of your valuable oriental rugs? Haven't you ever wondered which are the safe and effective stain removal products or cleaning methods for your prized oriental rugs? Or how often the rugs should be professionally cleaned? Should you attempt to do it yourself, consumer cleaning methods or leave this job to the rug experts?

Have you pondered such questions or worried so much that you've clenched your fists until your knuckles turned white or you've tightened or clenched your jaw in anticipation? Well worry no more since honest answers are available from trusted rug cleaning experts; members of Advanced Specialized Equipment, are here to help you. These experts can answer your questions, allay any undue concerns and do a first class professional cleaning for you.

Have you ever been told never to clean or even vacuum your oriental rug; or to never use water for spot removal or cleaning of any rug? Or have you heard some "gospel" from the retailer, maybe an "old wives tale" about how to supposedly care for and maintain your beautiful oriental rug? Or that cleaning will remove all of the wool fibres' lanolin and natural lubricants or somehow damage the rug? In fact, long before you even saw the rug the original lanolin and natural fibre residues were removed. This occurs during wool fibre processing such as scouring, and again during dyeing of the pile fibre and yarns.

Did you know that regular professional cleaning can prolong the life and appearance of a valuable rug? Proper cleaning will remove most embedded soils and stains, helping to return the rug to its prior lustre, colour and design clarity through an improvement in overall appearance and useful life of the rug.

And were you aware that a proper rug pad or cushion can add measurably to the safety, appearance and long life of your prized oriental rugs? Specially designed rug cushions are available to prevent rugs from slipping and sliding over your hard floors. And special cushions are also available to minimise rug sliding and wrinkling when laid over wall to wall carpet? The appearance of the surface or top of your rug is aided tremendously by the pad underneath your rug.

What happens when your rug begins to ravel and fray, especially as a result of periodic vacuuming? Can it be repaired or made to look better? Yes, the rug ends and fringes can be restored, repaired or a new fringe sewn onto the top of the oriental fringe, thus improving the rugs appearance while preserving its original integrity.

You've paid handsomely for a beautiful oriental rug in silk pile, but is the pile fibre really silk? Fibres such as rayon, acetate, mercerised cotton or others, and so called "art silk" can be made to resemble silk but are not silk at all. Sometimes they use a less expensive or inferior substitute to make the pile and the real fibre content may be obscured.

For assurance that you are getting real silk seek the advice of an ASE Certified Rug Specialist.

Has your rug begun to feel harsh, make a slight crackling sound when you pick it up or roll it? It may indicate the presence of dry rot in the cotton backing yarns. This can eventually cause serious weakness in the rug's foundation. Your rug expert can tell if the rug has indications of latent dry rot and advise accordingly.

An oriental rug has a "dry clean only" label. Why is it there and what does it mean and how or why somebody dry clean an oriental rug? Although so called "dry" rug cleaning is a safe way to clean most rugs, it may not always get the rug as clean as other methods such as the more customary wet cleaning. And the term does not mean dry cleaning as you know it when applied to renovation of one's clothing.

What are the choices of the best methods to clean different types of oriental rug fibres? In most cases a professional wet cleaning is the preferred and safe method. But occasionally there are times, such as with silk rugs, or those which may not be fully washfast, and thus at risk for dye bleeding, that modified or other specialty methods of cleaning might be considered. Trust your ASE rug cleaning expert to advise the best method to clean your particular oriental rug.

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## NEW FURNISHINGS

Congratulations on the purchase of your new textile furnishings. We hope that you will be pleased with the carpet, rug, upholstery or draperies you have just acquired. Here are a few hints to help you enjoy these new items and ensure their proper installation in your home or workplace.

Almost all new furnishings will give off some odour until they are fully aired. This may be true whether it is a rug, carpet, pad or cushion, or products used to install the

carpet. It may also include the foam, fabric and construction materials used in furniture manufacture or the fabrics, linings, vinyl or foam backing used on some draperies. The odour is related to a low level of emissions from the new furnishings.

Most emissions drop significantly after the first day or two following the carpet installation or removal of the plastic covering protecting new upholstered furniture. In those situations in which the odour lingers, it is usually due to poor ventilation.

Any odours if noticeable at all, will generally disappear within a few days to a week for most textile furnishings.

The key to minimising the odour and speeding up the "airing out" process is to ventilate, ventilate and ventilate. Ask the retailer to unwrap or unroll the textiles for a day or two prior to delivery and installation to minimise the new product odour.

Open the windows or doors to let in fresh air. Run the fans or air conditioner on the "fresh air" ventilate or exhaust setting. If you work in an office building without windows, or with those that don't open, ask the building manager to be certain that the fresh air intake is open on the central air handling system. If the odour is objectionable, request to be moved to another room or area of the building, or try another part of your home, until the odour has subsided or disappeared.

The small initial emissions and odour don't pose any known health risk. But some people more sensitive to these emissions at first experience some allergic or flu-like symptoms; again, fresh air is the best remedy. Some have also asked if carpet contains formaldehyde. You'll be pleased to know that it does not and has not for more than ten years.

Another common question asked is whether the excess pile fibres (for fuzz) removed during vacuuming of new carpet is normal. It is and does not indicate anything unusual. After the initial wear period and vacuuming the loose surface fibre will be removed. This has no bearing, however, on the carpet's eventual service life.

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## ODOURS

Removal of odours will depend upon what is producing them and under what conditions they are treated.

Odours are most commonly caused by spills. Spilled material produces an odour, or the odour develops from bacteria which is producing decay on the spillage. If the spilled material has not penetrated deeply into the fibre and thorough washing methods can be used, complete removal can usually be expected. The deeper the material

penetrates into the fibre and the longer it remains, the more difficult it will be to remove completely. When limited amounts of cleaning solution must be used, only a small proportion of the odour may be eliminated. It is most difficult to satisfactorily remove odour producing stains from the backing of wall to wall carpeting and upholstered furniture.

Odours produced from materials such as animal waste are virtually impossible to eliminate completely. Often the most practical solution is to replace the affected part of the carpet and underpad or cushion with a new piece. In severe cases the plywood subfloor may also need to be cleaned or deodourised and then sealed. Some odours, such as those produced by mildew, although removed, will recur with new mildew growth.

Natural fibres, dyes, finishing agents, foam or latex backing compounds may also have odours. If one is present in a new textile, a good airing should dispel. It may however, take from days to a few weeks for the new odour to disappear.

On an old fabric, the most satisfactory solution is to attempt to replace the odour with a more pleasant one.

Professional cleaners and restorers use highly effective deodourisers, special deodourising equipment and freshening fragrances to reduce or eliminate unpleasant odours.

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## ODOURS & COLOUR PROBLEMS IN AREA RUGS

In recent years there's been a profusion of lesser quality, odorous area rugs that have appeared in the consumer marketplace. Most of these are hand tufted rugs from the Asian subcontinent, particularly imported from India, Pakistan or China. One of the common problems with these rugs is a tenacious unpleasant odour that emanates from the latex back coating or adhesive which is a part of the carpet construction. Unfortunately this foul odour is built-in and no amount of professional cleaning or

deodourisation will permanently remove it. New rugs should never smell this way and good old rugs seldom do either.

The odour can vary from mild to strong and oppressive. One characteristic smell typical of these rugs is of diesel fuel or burnt oily type residues coming out of the latex. But other odours such as curry and more are possible. These rugs may even smell bad right in the store, but the odour appears more concentrated and noticeable in the smaller rooms and spaces of your home. The mass market importers often sell these shoddy rugs, and this foul condition is a defect in the rug from manufacture and distribution.

Area rugs with this foul odour problem are usually hand tufted. The pile fibre is usually wool but it also could be acrylic, cotton, olefin or others. The construction has the pile inserted through a primary backing and latex glue or adhesive is applied to the underside of the backing fabric to help secure the pile yarns in place. Also, this same latex adhesive is used to glue the secondary backing fabric to the rest of the rug. The secondary backing fabric, usually a coarse cotton duck fabric and often dyed green, blue or other colours, is what you would see when looking at the back or underside of the rug.

We believe the odour is caused by defective, low quality latex adhesive used at the time of manufacture. There may be diesel oil odours absorbed into the latex during shipping from India, or the odours used to cover up other problems.

When cleaning the carpet to remove stains and soiling, or in attempts to eliminate the odour, the carpet is often wet cleaned. It's possible that during or after any normal process of wet cleaning or in-plant rug cleaning, one may notice a foul latex odour. This is not a result of the cleaning but a continuing degradation and off gassing of odorous components from the latex adhesive in the carpet. The cleaning industry's best experience is that this odour can not be permanently removed.

In addition there are discolourations and dye transfer problems associated with Indian or lesser quality Asian area rugs that further compound their defective nature. When these area rugs with dyed backing are placed on top of light colour carpet, the poorly dyed cotton scrim or canvas backing may "crock" or transfer its green, blue or otherwise offensive colour onto the carpet or rug underneath. During wet cleaning, fugitive dye markers used to stencil the pattern for hand tufting can bleed up to the surface of the rug pile. With cotton hooked rugs, discolouration from cellulosic browning can occur during cleaning and dyeing. In addition, some of the darker colours can bleed during cleaning. None of these offensive conditions should ever occur with a well made oriental or area rug.

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## PAINTED RUGS, BLEEDING RUGS

"Painting" of both new and old rugs has become epidemic. A recent trip to the New York rug market revealed room after room of employees painting old rugs. The problems with painted rugs are many and the consumer needs to be informed of the consequences. First, if the paint is not washfast - and it usually isn't - the rug will be prone to subsequent colour bleeding during professional wet cleaning. Second, the painting is often used to cover over worn areas but this is not disclosed to the

customer. If the painting is in fact disclosed, then the buyer should pay a fair price for the painted rug. They should not pay for a rug that was obviously worn but was now been painted over in a circumspect or event deceptive manner.

Why do some dealers or retailers paint over oriental rugs, whether worn or new? One common scenario is to hide worn areas of an older rug where the foundation has become exposed. Using dye markers, coloured inks water or solvent based tints, the lighter coloured worn areas where the foundation is exposed are "tinted" or coloured over in an attempt to match the original pile colour and disguise the wear. The surface painting or tinting is quicker and less expensive than reknottng or inserting new pile, which is the proper way to restore a worn area or missing pile. By merely painting over the wear spot, these worn areas will quickly return to their prior faded appearance during use by the customer.

A second and more serious problem, however, is that the surface painting will often bleed into surrounding areas of the rug when liquids are spilled or when the rug is washed. Many of the surface colours, when overpainted, are not washfast and can bleed profusely even with the best of professional cleaning and care.

Some newer oriental rugs are also painted, either on the back or on the face (pile side). New rugs from India and Pakistan are sometimes "painted" on the back (or underside) of the outer border or fringe. When painted the colours in the outside border are typically black, dark blue, red or kelly green; and these colours are prone to bleed or colour run when wet.

Other reasons for painting the pile of oriental rugs, even though new or not noticeable worn, is to enhance surface colours and/or to eliminate colour variations. These variations in surface dye colour are known as "abrash". Though normal or pleasing to most, abrash colouration may be disliked or misunderstood by buyers and thus some dealer decides to "paint" over this special effect. It's a strange way to go.

But how can you know if the rug you have purchased or are considering to buy has been painted? First, ask the dealer or retailer several related questions. Has the rug ever been tinted or painted over, and how do they know one way or the other? Ask if the dyes and rug colouration are guaranteed to be washfast, i.e. can the rug be safely wet cleaned? They may assure you it can, even when it cannot, so get the assurance in writing. The best way to determine washfastness is the simple Turkish towel test mentioned later. Dealers selling painted rugs are not the most trustworthy. So if you're not assured or confident about the purchase, then avoid it and look for another rug or rug dealer, or both.

Inquire also if the dyes are natural or synthetic in origin. Naturally dyed rugs are often more aesthetically pleasing, and more expensive, but your main concern should be "Are they colour fast?" That is, are the dyes and colours resistant to premature light fading and to colour bleeding when wet? Some naturally dyed rugs (and certain painted rugs) may have excellent colour fastness but many others do not. If the dyes are not "fast" or secure and the pile has been "painted", then the rug cannot be successfully washed and adequately cleaned.

Our best advice is to do a simple pre-test to check for fugitive dyes, pour surface colouration, or rug painting. The test is easy for anyone to do. Any suspicious areas should be tested, or do the test on all darker colours or major coloured areas. Moisten a white (or Turkish) towel with tap water, and then rub or blot persistently on all colours. Do this on both the face or pile and on the back where appropriate. If any colour comes off or transfers onto the towel, it is indicative of a latent colour bleeding problem that can cause serious problems later.

Testing the colours on the surface or pile applies to both new and old rugs. If any colour transfers or would appear to bleed during the test, then do not buy this rug. We cannot recommend buying a "painted" rug or any rug that is not colourfast.

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## PROTEIN FIRES

Dinner was in the oven, but what remains is a charred clump of roast, chicken or other meat - and a penetrating, rancid odour. It is called a protein fire, and professional restorers recognise it as a special category of damage.

Unlike the typical kitchen fire, protein "fires" produce little visible smoke residue. The low level of heat reduces the animal fat and protein to a fine mist, leaving a clear, almost invisible film. That can be a problem, because the casual observer sees no black

residue and mistakenly assumes the condition to be minor. In fact, the obnoxious odour, combined with the absence of visible smoke, makes protein fires one of the most frustrating types of damage.

Standard smoke odour removal processes are seldom effective with protein odour. Attempts at a quick fix often fail. An important first step to recovery is a thorough washing of all affected surfaces, using appropriate cleaning agents. Because the burned material is consumed slowly, the residues are able to penetrate cabinet interiors, soffits, range hoods, closets and ducts. Some painted surfaces develop a beige-to-pink discolouration which may be permanent. When cleaning is not sufficient, sealing with clear sealants or repainting may be required.

Affected upholstery, carpets and clothing also require thorough cleaning to remove the odour-generating residue. Textiles frequently release the odours better than hard kitchen surfaces.

Experienced restorers follow a progression of steps until the problem is resolved. The important thing is to understand that protein residue is more damaging and more persistent than its appearance would suggest. Repeated treatments or trial-and-error approaches do not mean the restorer is inexperienced! They are an essential part of solving the protein problem.

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## REAPPEARING STAINS

Have you recently had your carpets cleaned, only to find a mysterious stain appear where it may not have been noticeable before? Or was the cleaner successful in removing certain stains when the carpet was just cleaned and still damp, only to have some stains reappear after the carpet had thoroughly dried?

This common situation known as reappearing or wicking stains is caused by staining matter from a prior spillage having dried down at the base of the carpet pile.

Although the surface staining may have been partially or fully removed from the tips of the carpet pile fibres, some of the discoloured matter remained behind and unseen, hidden down in the pile.

During a thorough wet cleaning, the hidden stain normally becomes moistened or wetted. Once wet out, the stain becomes mobile and wicks up to the surface of the pile as the carpet dries. Since wall to wall carpet dries from the bottom up, this leaves the top part of the pile as the last to completely dry. And this is how the mysterious staining matter now wicks or finds its way up to the carpet surface.

You can usually remove most or all of this reappearing stain by moistening it and then blotting with absorbent white towelling. Lightly mist the stained area with water and blot the towels. Cover the stained area with towelling, add a layer of aluminium foil or wax paper on top of the towelling, and then weight it down (for example with a telephone book). Wait 30 minutes or so and then remove. Repeat as needed until the stain is removed.

A second approach is to use a multi-purpose carpet spotter or drycleaning fluid type spot remover, that is if you have used such products before and know they are safe on your carpeting. Follow the manufacturer's directions exactly and pre-test the product for safety before using. Use the product sparingly, don't overdo it. You can also rinse lightly and again blot with absorbent towels as the last step.

A third alternative is to apply one of the dry extraction carpet cleaning compounds (a "powder" type carpet cleaning product). Lightly massage or brush the cleaning compound into the stain. Leave it to work for 30-60 minutes to absorb the staining material and then thoroughly vacuum. Like the above methods, any of these approaches should remove most or all of the reappeared stain.

Consumers who try to remove stains by using the wrong cleaning products, compounds or methods may only make the stained areas more noticeable. If in doubt about any of these procedures or their safety, contact your professional carpet cleaning member of Advanced Specialized Equipment.

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## RIPPLES

Carpeting, like most other textiles, is made under tension. Tension is necessary so that the loom will function properly, producing a carpet uniform from one portion to the next.

Yet carpeting differs from most textiles in that the backing may be composed of several layers, which are not generally preshrunk. When backing yarns absorb moisture, the fibres swell, resulting in the relaxation of the yarns previously held under tension.

Moisture which produces swelling may result from humidity, spills or cleaning.

If two adjacent areas of a carpet or rug are not manufactured under the same amount of tension, unevenness or rippling can develop. This will also occur if the tension of the second carpet backing is not uniform with the primary backing.

Each case of rippling is different. The ripples may extend across the entire width of the carpet, from the edge to the middle, in the middle only, along the edges, or in one small section.

For area rugs and oriental rugs this situation can sometimes be corrected by wetting the backing and tacking the rug out in a stretched position. However, the ripples may recur when moisture is again present.

Ripples can also be caused by dragging heavy furniture across the carpet or by sliding and pulling of carpet in traffic areas caused by walking.

Improper carpet installation may also cause ripples. If installation over padding is not done by power stretching, the carpet will still have some capacity to stretch. It will likely stretch in heavy traffic areas, and this may result in buckling which is a form of rippling. In this case, the carpet must be restretched and reinstalled.

When rippling or buckling occurs on wall-to-wall carpet, contact the carpet retailer or installer immediately. Some installers warranty their work against stretching or buckling for 12 months following installation and can restretch the carpet to fit properly. Other retailers or installers may have different policies on restretching wall-to-wall carpet.

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## RUG FRINGES

The cleaning of Oriental and area rugs is a complicated and intricate process. A major concern during this process involves the rug fringes. Rug fringes are prone to some deterioration with normal use due to the fibre content of the fringes (usually cotton), their loose or low twist and their open ends. These characteristics make rug fringes susceptible to untwisting and texture loss during normal use - vacuuming, walking, etc.

There are additional reasons why fringes may require special treatments during or after cleaning. The first reason is cellulosic browning. Rug fringes are mostly made of cotton, a cellulosic fibre, which undergoes natural changes with time. These changes may lead to the development of a brown stain or discolouration called cellulosic browning. The second is the possible change in the colour of the fringes during cleaning. This form of colour change often occurs as fugitive dyes from the wet rug are being absorbed by the fringes.

There are other ways to clean or reclean rug fringes. The first approach is recleaning the fringes by hand, with or without mild acid rinsing, and rapid drying with a blower. The second, a stronger treatment, involves bleaching, with or without rinsing, and rapid drying.

If browning or colour bleeding is severe, it may not be eliminated by the first approach, the milder treatment. The second approach will result in white fringes but may also cause some physical deterioration of the fringes. This deterioration is generally manifested in their strength loss, fibre loss and/or "stringy" texture.

Each procedure has its advantages and disadvantages. The first treatment does not weaken the fringes but may leave them off-white or slightly discoloured. The bleaching process will whiten the fringes but may result in a change in texture of the fringes. The fringes may also look stringy and break off during subsequent vacuuming and wear. The choice of procedures best suited for a particular rug comes from knowledge and experience.

Eventually all rug fringes will wear out from normal use and care. Many professional rug cleaners can renew the appearance of your rug by replacing or refringing the old, worn rug fringes.

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## RUG SHRINKAGE

There are few soft floor coverings which are guaranteed against shrinkage, therefore, dimensional changes of your rug should be expected during cleaning. Your skilled professional rug cleaner takes every step economically possible to minimise this inherent characteristic.

During the spinning and weaving process, fibres and fabrics must be kept under tension for proper functioning of equipment. For example, warp yarns are held under tension on

a loom during a rug's construction. Stretching occurs during this and other operations and fibres and fabrics remain stretched until moisture causes them to relax. Shrinkage at this point is often referred to as relaxation shrinkage.

The amount of shrinkage which can be expected will depend upon the construction of the rug and the fibres used in the backing. Most shrinkage is due to the type of backing fibres used. The density of the face fibres will also have a bearing on the amount of shrinkage. The type of face fibre has no relation to the amount of shrinkage.

Shrinkage which causes dimensional changes results entirely from wetting the backing yarns. Moisture causes the fibres to swell and this forces the weave threads to contract, causing the overall floor covering to shrink. Most of this type of shrinkage will occur during the first thorough wetting (usually the first cleaning).

On some rugs, as much as 10% shrinkage will take place. It is more realistic to see about 2% shrinkage of the average rug.

Shrinkage can also take place in the home due to the rug's backing yarns absorbing moisture from humid air.

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## SEWER BACKUPS

Sewer backups show no concern for floor coverings - they contaminate oriental rugs as thoroughly as bath mats. People intuitively understand that the dense structure of carpeting can provide a breeding ground for bacteria. This makes sewage and carpeting a troubling combination.

Not all backups are identical, of course. Sewer backups can range from clear water to raw sewage. Also, carpets vary in their construction and method of installation.

Can sewage-contaminated carpet be restored to its original wholesome state?

There are some germicidal treatments available to eliminate sewage-borne bacteria. When combined with proper cleaning techniques, these germicides may restore many carpets to safe and attractive use. To be effective, however, the germicidal and cleaning procedures should fully saturate the carpet. Unfortunately, treating the carpet surface alone will not provide adequate protection.

This is good news for oriental rugs, area rugs, and wall-to-wall carpet installed on tack strips. These can be treated in a rug cleaning plant with excellent results. But it is bad news for direct glue down carpet, carpet tiles, and wide expanses of carpet, which do not lend themselves to in-plant treatment. Contaminated carpet cushion (padding) cannot be effectively treated and should be discarded.

What if the water was clean?

Even water that looks clean and clear can carry harmful bacteria. If it came out of a sewer it should be presumed to be contaminated.

Saturation cleaning and germicidal treatment of carpeting are difficult to perform at the damage site. Both sides of the carpet must be cleaned and treated along with the floor and baseboards, all without cross-contamination. On-site treatment is most effective when just a portion of the carpet has been exposed to contaminants.

How can i be sure the treatment is effective?

The principal indicator of contaminated sewage is the presence of bacteria from the family *E. coli*. Germicides used after sewer backups should be designated to be effective against *E. coli*. Swab samples can be collected at the site and incubated in a growth medium to indicate that wholesome conditions have been restored.

Economics also plays a part. The age, condition, and replacement cost of the carpet will influence the cost-effectiveness of restoration. With so many factors to consider, the best assurance of satisfaction is to retain an experienced ASE professional.

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## SHADING

A carpet or rug may seem to change colour in certain areas. When you look at the carpet from one angle, these areas will appear to be lighter than the rest of the carpet. Viewed from the other side, these spots appear darker. This condition is called shading.

Carpet pile has a natural slope in one direction. As long as the tufts slant in the same direction, the carpet has uniform colour throughout. However, some of the tufts may slant against this normal pile lay, causing a variation in the way light is reflected from the napped surface.

Changes in the lay of pile usually develop gradually in traffic areas or in front of frequently used articles of furniture. However, shading may also occur in areas of less traffic and under furniture. It can even be present in brand new carpets! Shading occurs most frequently on dense, deep, velvety, cutpile carpets. Many Chinese and dense-pile Indian rugs will show some pile distortion after use or the first cleaning. Although it can affect multi-coloured or printed design carpet, the problem is most obvious on solid coloured carpets.

In some cases, shading becomes more apparent after the carpet is cleaned which may lead you to believe the shaded appearance developed during the cleaning process. But, this phenomenon *cannot* occur overnight, it must develop gradually over time. The shading was probably not visible before cleaning because of lighting, the placement of furniture, or uniform soiling over the entire surface.

Little can be done to prevent or correct shading; it is an inherent characteristic of certain types of carpet. It can be slowed by vacuuming or brushing the pile in one direction during daily or weekly maintenance.

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## SHEDDING & PILLING

Shedding is the fluffing or fuzzing of short, loose fibres which remain in a new carpet after manufacture. Shedding is a normal process which does not damage the rug, nor indicate any defective condition. New carpet and rugs tend to shed loose fibres for several months. If during this time the carpet is not vacuumed thoroughly and regularly, the fluffing may continue for as long as a year, sometimes longer. The fibres coming out are those which are not anchored into the back of the carpet. They are short fibres which

are not tightly held in the tufts or fibres which have fallen into the pile during the shearing operation. Even though the volume of fibre lost may appear to be great, the actual amount is small when the total amount of fibre is considered. This loss will not appreciably change the wear life.

in some cases only the end of the fibre is worked out. Sometimes the fibre is tightly twisted or entangled in the tuft. When this situation occurs the fibres entangle and form a fuzzy ball, referred to as a "pill". Pilling is not a problem if the pills break off or are pulled out by the vacuum as they form. A strong fibre such as nylon will resist this breaking. This results in small spider-like pills over the entire surface of the carpet, perhaps more concentrated in the areas of greatest traffic.

These pills can generally be removed by lifting the main ball portion with the thumb and forefinger and, with scissors, cutting the fibre which holds the "ball" onto the carpet. Take care not to pull any excess fibre from the carpet or damage the pile when cutting.

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## SILK TEXTILES

Silk fibres are being used increasingly in textile furnishings such as rugs, upholstery and draperies. Silk is a luxury fibre used in the manufacture of expensive, high-fashion products. It can be dyed and printed to produce very beautiful designs and bright shades. These properties make silk a beautiful, very desirable fibre.

Silk, however, also characteristically exhibits several problems when cleaned. Silk dyes may be soluble (dissolve) in water, detergent and/or dry cleaning solvent. Silk is also

prone to colour bleeding and the formation of water spots, ring marks or perspiration stains. Colour bleeding is more of a problem with dark colours than with pastels. Being delicate, silk is susceptible to abrasion, yarn slippage, sunlight damage, discolouration and can show texture changes. These problems often are revealed or accentuated by normal cleaning.

In order to minimise the problems described, special procedures are required for cleaning silk. The choice of method depends on various factors such as the age and condition of the silk textile, spots and stains present and consumer expectations. In general, it is more prudent to dry clean silk. Some silks can be wet cleaned successfully, but others cannot. Wet cleaning of silk aids soil and stain removal but may result in texture distortion, which is often permanent.

Remember, more intensive cleaning usually is required to restore the appearance of an excessively soiled rug or fabric. Such thorough cleaning procedures, however, have a higher propensity to cause damage. Silk textiles, therefore, should be maintained (vacuumed regularly) and cleaned more frequently, before they become excessively soiled. It is also advantageous to use silk textiles prudently. For example, use silk rugs in areas with no foot traffic (as wall hangings) or at least, limit the amount of foot traffic on them. Avoid using silk draperies in sunny windows and protect them with drapery linings. Consult your professional ASE cleaner for further information regarding special services to preserve your silk textiles.

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## SMOKE DAMAGE

Smoke is an inevitable by-product of fires. We may think of it as simply a dark cloud, but smoke also contains finely dispensed liquids and gases. In fact, the most dangerous components of smoke are the invisible gases present during the fire.

After the fire, the gases disperse but the smoke solids and liquids remain on exposed surfaces. These deposits are more accurately called "fire residues" than "smoke", because they are no longer the same as the heated cloud generated by the fire.

Fire residues vary in character. Some appear as dry particles, others as smeary flakes, still others are sticky and viscous. The type of residue depends on the items that burned and their rate of combustion. Smoke residues often emit obnoxious odours which persist long after the fire.

Questions of toxicity arise, particularly when the odour is intense. Off-gassing from fire residues may cause eyes to tear, particularly in confined spaces. While no studies have been performed on the effects of breathing fire residues after a fire, it seems obvious that they cannot be healthful. It is important to remember, however, that fire residues are not the same as the fire gases and therefore do not pose the same threat to health.

In typical residential fires the introduction of outside air by direct ventilation will temporarily lower odour levels as well as allergic responses. Complete and permanent return to pre-damage conditions requires both removal of burned components and effective restoration procedures. Thorough cleaning with appropriate detergents does neutralise and remove fire residues.

Occasionally fire residues seem to penetrate finishes or stain-absorbent surfaces. These are permanent changes in the materials themselves rather than loose fire residues. Because fire residues are often acidic, prompt removal from exposed metals is important in order to minimise corrosion.

It is important to note that, in an overwhelming majority of cases, prompt and effective restoration can return smoke-damaged items to their original attractive and wholesome state. Your professional ASE restorer can analyse the character of the smoke residues left after your fire, as well as provide the expert restoration work required.

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## SOIL FILTRATION LINES

Soil filtration lines are dark soiled areas that develop gradually on carpet. They are most common around the edges of a room next to the wall, under floor length draperies and under doors. But they can develop anywhere there is an air space such as between floorboards or spaces in the subflooring. Also known as soil lines, smog lines and perimeter soiling (when they occur around walls), the problem is usually more obvious close to heating ducts, electric floor outlets, and gas valves. Bedroom doors that are

closed at night, especially where windows are left open, are likely to develop these lines.

The soiling is caused by the passage of air through or across the carpet. Air carries microscopic particles of dirt, dust and soot. As air passes over the carpet, these soil particles settle and become embedded in the carpet pile yarns. In areas where the air flows over the carpet more rapidly than normal, the carpet acts as a filter, extracting the soil particles from the air. The soil is very fine and can penetrate deeply into the yarns. Special techniques by a professional carpet cleaner are usually required to improve the appearance of soil filtration lines.

Unfortunately the discolouration cannot always be removed completely. The degree of removal depends on the amount and type of soil, length of time the soil has accumulated, amount of air flow, colour of carpet and type of fibre. The lines can be removed from most synthetic fibres. However, in severe cases, especially on light coloured carpets, traces may remain after cleaning. It is usually very difficult to remove filtration soiling completely from wool or olefin carpets.

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## SOILS

Soil found on a carpet can be classified as spots and stains; surface litter (paper, pet hair, lint, etc.); gritty unattached particles; and that which is adhering to the fibres. Spots and stains are discussed in other ASE flyers.

Surface litter can be picked up with a vacuum. Although unsightly, generally this material does not soil or harm the carpet.

Most gritty, unattached soil is tracked in on the feet; the longer it remains on the carpet, the more damage it causes. Gritty soil scratches and produces pits on fibres, dulling them and making them appear to be more soiled than they are. Grit also produces a cutting action that removes fibres and shortens the life of the carpet. Remove this soil by daily vacuuming of traffic areas and overall vacuuming at least once a week.

Soil that gives the carpet its dirty look is composed of sticky oils and greases containing tiny pieces of soil materials. Thorough professional cleaning can remove most of this type of soil. The longer oily soil remains on the fibre, the more difficult it is to remove.

Some oily soils change chemically and produce a yellowish film on the fibre that is impossible to remove. Other oils actually dissolve into some synthetic fibres, becoming part of the fibres themselves. These cannot be removed without damage to the fibre.

For proper carpet maintenance, remove spots immediately, vacuum traffic areas daily, vacuum thoroughly once a week and have a professional cleaning when traffic areas begin to show soil.

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## SPOT REMOVAL

With prompt use of the correct procedures on a fresh spillage or recent spots and stains, you can minimise or remove spills or spots from textile furnishings such as carpet, rugs or upholstery. The best time to remove any stain is as soon as it occurs. Once dried or aged, that same spot has migrated well inside the fibre or hardened so that removal is much more difficult. Here a few tip on spot removal to help avoid a permanent stain. Your Advanced Specialized Equipment cleaner can advise on professional treatment if needed.

1. Remove residue and blot. Blot up or remove as much of the fresh spillage or discolouration as possible. Keep blotting using absorbent or paper towels for 15 to 30 minutes or more, until no further residue can be removed. Weight down the absorbent towelling with a telephone book or any large book, and keep changing the towels to a fresh or unused area each 5 to 10 minutes. Blot only, do not rub and do not press down heavily onto upholstery fabric as you may damage it. Be patient, continue the blotting until no further discolouration is seen.

2. Moisten lightly and blot again. If the stain is water based such as cola, fruit punch or juice, tea, coffee, latex type paint, or animal/pet urine, you can moisten the absorbent towels with water and repeat the blotting process above to see if any more of the stain or residue is removed. An alternate method is to dissolve a few drops of a mild, colourless dish washing liquid in a cup of water, moisten the stain or towels and blot as above. Be certain to rinse with water any detergent or soap residues even after the spot is removed.

If the stain is oily or greasy such as butter, milk, crayon, shoe polish, tar or asphalt, motor oil or lipstick, etc., use an evaporating type drycleaning solvent or cleaning fluid. Many professional cleaners sell these products. Follow the product directions and safety warnings. Apply the spotting solution to your absorbent towelling rather than to the stain and again blot as in 1 above. Repeat as necessary.

3. Check with your fibre company, carpet mill or upholstery manufacturer. Most of the fibre companies and several carpet mills or upholstered furniture manufacturers have toll free numbers or consumer "hot lines." Contact any of these manufacturers as soon as possible. Obtain their specific recommendations for stain removal procedures and confirm that the spot removal product is safe to use on their fibre, carpet or upholstery. If not, you may void the warranty as to stain resistance (where appropriate).

4. Avoid use of any harsh chemicals, strong cleaners or "home remedies". There is always some risk in spot removal of damaging the textile, irreversibly altering the stained colour, or otherwise "setting" the stain. This is especially true if using strong chemicals, improper products or procedures. Avoid over use or overwetting the stain as this may cause it to spread or be absorbed deeper into the carpet pile fibres or fabric. Harsh rubbing or use of cleaners with optical brighteners will result in variations in colour, pile direction or "shading". These changes may remain even after stain removal or following a thorough cleaning.

5. Multi-purpose carpet or upholstery stain removers. There are spot and stain removal products specially formulated for consumer use. These can be effective on certain water based and some oily or greasy stains. If you have used these successfully before and know how they work, you may try it on your current spillage (if in doubt about the product's safety or applicability, do not risk further damage). Follow the product directions and pre-test all spot treatments in an inconspicuous area before using, otherwise colour damage may result. Avoid over usage of the product (less is often better than more). Rinse and blot any residual chemicals or spotting agent as the last step.

6. Some stains are tenacious or impossible to fully remove. Without prompt treatment using the right methods, a fresh spill or spot will dry into the fibres and be much harder or maybe impossible to remove. Prompt attention to spot and stain removal is really your best ally. Some spillage or stains, however, contain dyes, colourants, bleaches or strippers that can permanently discolour the fibres and no heroic treatments may remedy the discolouration.

7. Contact your Advanced Specialized Equipment professional for expert advice, special treatment or a free copy of the ASE TIPS care booklet. If in any doubt, play it safe and don't experiment. Call an ASE professional and let them recommend how to proceed, or to schedule a visit to see if specialty stain removal or professional cleaning can further improve the situation and remove the stains. To contact an ASE cleaner in your area, phone 1800 068 901 or visit the ASE website at [www.cleanology.com.au](http://www.cleanology.com.au) for a referral or more information.

*NOTE: While this information is offered in good faith and appropriate to the best of our knowledge, ASE and its members accept no responsibility for claims arising from the treatments, products or procedures suggested herein. If stains fail to respond or any difficulties arise, immediately stop and contact your professional carpet cleaner.*

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## SPOTTING

### Plant Stains

Plant stains can be a combination of several components. As a plant is over-watered it will run out of the pot and onto the carpet, saturating the carpet beneath. On its way through the potting soil, the water can pick up all sorts of minerals, soils and dyes that can be difficult to remove. To make the situation worse, if the potted plant is in a basket the water can pick up tannin and additional dyes.

The worst part about plant stains is the fact that the water will remain under the pot for extended periods, providing an excellent growth medium for mold. The mold will do more than stain the fibres. It can actually eat away at the fibres of the carpet and backing, assuming that there is anything organic to be consumed.

Once the plant is removed and you are asked to remove this stain, it may be too late to do a really effective job. Be sure to qualify the situation with the customer and do not offer guarantees.

#### Procedure:

1. Mix 1/4 oz of Strepene in a Trigger Sprayer or dilute Fab-Set or use a mix of parts A & B of Stain Magic in equal proportions.
2. Spray the solution on the stain in sufficient quantity to saturate the affected carpet fibres.
- 3a. When using Strepene, watch the stain carefully and be prepared to rinse with clear water as soon as the stain is gone. Strepene may bleach the fabric or carpet if left for too long. Do not leave unattended.
- 3b. When using Stain Magic, cover the stain and the damp area with cellophane to hold the moisture in. Allow the product to work until dry. It will dry to a powder that can be vacuumed away with a Rug Rat. There is no need to rinse.

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## SPOTTING

### Recurring Spots

There are three main reasons that a spot will return:

1. Wicking from the backing due to over-wetting or slow drying.
2. Residue from your spotting agent
3. Residue from an oily or sticky spill.

All three of these circumstances need to be considered when spotting, and prevented, to eliminate the chance of a spot coming back. If you do have a spot return, following the procedures below will help you take care of the problem.

#### Procedure:

1. Rinse the spot free of any other chemical that may be or left behind from a previous spotting attempt.
2. Wet the area heavily with Bridgepoint Avenge to dissolve residues all the way to the padding. You may even want to add a little bit of water to ensure complete saturation.
3. Extract the entire area using the Spot Lifter, by Water Claw.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 as needed until spot is completely gone.
5. Spray a light mist of Fab-Set over the area and buff with a towel, or dry vac with your extraction machine.
6. Quick dry with an air mover or Blue Blower.

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## STATIC

Do you “snap, crackle and pop” when you walk across your carpet? Do you feel a slight shock when you touch a metal object like a door knob? This is static, generated by the friction from your shoe soles against the fibres in the carpet. In the spring or summer months there is usually enough humidity or moisture in the air to carry off the static charge as it forms. When the weather turns dry and the humidity is low, however, static electrification due to walking across carpet is much more likely to occur

and to cause an annoying or unpleasant shock.

The tendency to generate an unpleasant static charge at lower humidity varies from fibre to fibre and carpet to carpet. It's possible to build up on your body surface an electrostatic potential of 2,000 to 5,000 or even 10,000 volts or more. By touching a metal object and conductor such as a door knob, the static charge is transferred from you to it in the form of a noticeable or unpleasant shock, although at extremely low current so that no danger exists.

Individuals also vary in their response to this static discharge. Below about 2,500 volts of static charge, most people have no sensation or awareness of its presence. But between 2,500 to 4,000 volts, many individuals will notice or feel the static discharge when touching a conductor or metal object after walking across the carpet. Above 4,000 volts there is an increasingly unpleasant shock and it's noticed by most people.

Untreated nylon and wool carpets are more prone to noticeable static problems, but so too may be polyester and olefin carpeting. This is especially true in the drier winter months with their low humidity. To avoid this static problem some carpets have conductive filaments or antistatic agents built into the carpet pile fibres. Other specialty carpets add antistatic backing fabrics and/or conductive latex adhesive to the carpet to further reduce or eliminate static buildup. But certain carpeting may not have these features and is thus prone to static buildup.

If your carpet “bites back” in dry weather, it may still be possible to obtain some relief by increasing the humidity in the affected room, office or your home. Adding a room humidifier or a central heating humidification system can accomplish these goals of raising the humidity to 30, 35 or even 40%. As the humidity goes up, this lessens both the static charge and resultant shocks.

Another procedure is the addition of an antistatic spray treatment onto the carpet and pile fibres. Home use products of this type are available, although slightly increased soiling may be a by-product of the static reduction treatment. If you select this route, follow the manufacturers directions exactly and do not over use or over apply the product. These topical antistatic spray treatments are not permanent and will become less effective after a period of time. You should expect to clean the carpet regularly or more frequently in order to maintain top appearance, reapplying an antistatic spray as directed or needed.

Even better is to rely on your ASE carpet cleaning professional to apply a topical antistatic agent to your carpet. Although this treatment is not guaranteed to be permanent, usually it is more effective and lasts longer because it is applied with professional skill, special equipment and techniques.

Need more information about the Advanced Specialized Equipment (ASE) and its members? Check out our website at [www.cleanology.com.au](http://www.cleanology.com.au) or contact your local ASE carpet and upholstery cleaning professional.

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## STUBBORN STAINS

Your textile furnishing was treated to expert, professional care during its recent cleaning. An extra effort was made to treat all stains before and/or after cleaning. Even with the best of cleaning and spot removal efforts, however, certain stains may not have come out completely. These tenacious stains were absorbed by the fibres, just like a dye, and have permanently discoloured or recoloured the fibres in the stained area. It is also possible that the prior spillage or stain produced a damaging chemical change

to the fibre and its original dyed colour. Such colour changes are usually permanent and cannot be reversed or returned to their original colour. Some common causes of permanent stains on textile furnishings are discussed below.

Many common spills will permanently stain certain fibres and affect dyes. Pet urine stains are a very common occurrence, and can lead to permanent discolouration. This discolouration may be visible before cleaning or it may become evident during or after the cleaning process. Spills of coffee, tea, cola and other drinks can also cause permanent stains, especially on wool, some nylons, cotton and silk. Even "stain resistant" nylon carpets can be permanently stained by hot coffee, hot tea and other common foods, bleach household chemicals or medicines.

Many over the counter acne creams and medications may cause lightening or colour changes on textile furnishings, however, these changes may appear during or after cleaning. The primary cause of these discolourations is the presence of benzoyl peroxide (a bleach). Benzoyl peroxide is a powerful colour remover, but often does not become fully activated until the moisture in the textile (usually carpet) is increased, usually during cleaning or humid weather. There are numerous other household chemicals that may produce stains, such as some pesticides, ammonia, strong cleaners, chlorine bleach or peroxides, chlorine from pool or spa water, furniture scratch remover, shoe dye, chemical preservatives, cosmetics and many more.

Your professional cleaner has attempted to identify the source of any residual stains or discolourations and has treated them accordingly. Unfortunately, not all stains can or will come out, even with the best professional stain removal and/or cleaning methods.

An additional service offered by some cleaners is spot dyeing of discoloured areas. This may provide a closer colour match to the surrounding, unstained areas, but is only possible on some textiles. Stronger stain removal treatments may also be possible but with these come the added risk of further colour change or colour loss. Many cleaners avoid these specialty procedures because of the difficulties and risks involved. Some cleaners will undertake these measures in selected cases, with the permission and signed damage release from the customer, for an additional service charge.

To lessen the possibility of staining, immediate action should be taken when any spillage or accident occurs. Blot up all liquid or scrape up as much of the spilled substance as possible. Then, put a thick layer (1-2cm) of clean, white absorbent material or towelling over the area and weigh it down with a large book or suitable weight. Replace the absorbent material often in order to absorb as much of the spill as possible until no more stain removal is evident. Then call your local ASE cleaner to learn how to safely treat the area before it becomes a permanent stain. The skilled professional technicians who are affiliated with ASE can give your textile furnishing the best cleaning and stain care possible.

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## SUNLIGHT DAMAGE

Almost every interior textile (carpet, rugs, upholstery, draperies and wallcoverings) will lighten in colour or fade over a period of time. The extent of damage depends on the item's location, exposure to light and elements, colour, intensity and type of dyes, and the dyeing method used.

An interior textile that has been solution-dyed (or producer-coloured) is least susceptible to sunlight fading. The pigments are added to the polymer before the fibres are formed, sealing in the colour. Most olefins (polypropylene and polyethylene), many acrylics, and some polyester and nylon fibres used in carpet are dyed using this method.

Lighter shades usually will quicker than darker shades because they contain less dye. Most dyes are composed of two or more colour components. If one colour is affected more than the other, the fading may appear as a colour change rather than a lightening of the colour. For example, many greenish hues are made from yellow and blue dyes. If the yellow dye is affected and the blue is not, the green textile may seem to be turning blue. To confirm this process for yourself, visit a museum and examine antique tapestries with trees and grass. These green colours now appear very blue because the yellow dye has faded.

In other instances colours may fade uniformly, appearing as a lighter shade of the original colour. In severe cases the colour may be completely removed, appearing to be "bleached" white. The fibre itself may also deteriorate. This is especially problematic with silk textiles.

You may be able to prevent interior textiles from fading in sunny locations by keeping the windows covered with draperies (which may fade, too) or by treating the windows with a protective coating that filters out the ultra-violet (UV) rays of sunlight. If you live in an area where sunlight fading is a problem, shop carefully for all interior textiles.

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## TEXTURE CHANGE

Does your rug, carpet or upholstery look different now that it has been cleaned? The change is probably due to the removal of soil, revealing cleaner fibres and also some earlier pile distortion.

The appearance of a textile furnishing depends on various factors including texture. Foot traffic and normal wear cause the majority of soil accumulation on floor covering or upholstery. They also produce a physical change on the face yarns of a carpet or rug.

This physical change on the face yarns begins as soon as the textile furnishing is put to use and eventually changes the texture and hence appearance.

A change in the carpet pile will always take place when the carpet is subjected to use. A comparison of the areas protected by furniture with adjacent used area should graphically demonstrate the effect of foot traffic on the appearance of the carpet or rug. This appearance and texture change is a normal occurrence to be expected and may occur either as pile crushing, fuzzing or "blooming" the tufts. The fibre used in the face yarns, yarn twist, pile density and the amount of traffic over the carpeting will determine the type and amount of distortion.

The extent of physical change cannot be determined, however, until soil has been removed. The professional cleaner makes every effort to correct distortion during a cleaning process. But in many cases distortion has reached a point where it cannot be returned to even near the original appearance. Some very sensitive rugs, carpet or upholstery will also exhibit a certain amount of unavoidable texture change even after a careful cleaning.

Texture changes that occur from normal use and wear, improper maintenance and necessary cleaning actions are usually permanent. Pile brushing and vacuuming in the preferred pile direction may help to even out some irregularities or changes in texture.

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## THANK YOU

Dear Customer:

Today we had the opportunity to clean and restore your textile furnishings. We appreciate your business. Here are some helpful hints to ensure the best appearance of your carpet and upholstery after cleaning.

1. Circulate the air with fans to speed up drying time. If possible, open a window to let in fresh air.
2. Do not allow small children or pets to crawl or walk on cleaned carpet for at least 8 to 18 hours - preferably longer - or until carpet is thoroughly dry.
3. Do not walk on freshly cleaned carpet or use clean upholstery for at least 4 hours or until dry to touch.
4. Do not remove aluminium or plastic pieces that have been placed under legs of furniture until carpet is absolutely dry.
5. Vacuum after carpet and upholstery is dry and then vacuum on a regular schedule. This helps greatly to remove periodic soil buildup.

We think that these suggestions will help keep your textile furnishings looking beautiful and fresh for a long time.

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## UPHOLSTERY

### Synthetic

Synthetic fibres are man-made as opposed to natural fibres that occur in nature.

Some synthetic fibres include:

- Nylon, Olefin, Polyester, Acrylic, Rayon, Acetate.

Since Rayon and Acetate are actually made from natural fibres, we treat those as if they were cotton. (For cleaning these fabrics refer to topic "Upholstery - Cotton". The

remaining four fibres are made from thermoplastic materials and, with minor differences, they are cleaned the same way. Polyester fabric is sometimes harder to clean due to the fact that it attracts and holds oil. Extreme procedures may be needed for polyester...call for assistance and guidance.

### Procedure:

1. Use the Burn Test to determine that the fabric is synthetic and what fibre or fibres are present. Refer Fibre Identification brochure.
2. Vacuum the upholstery.
3. Before cleaning the entire item, be sure to do a cleaning test on an inconspicuous area.
4. Use the appropriate chemicals and recommended formula and ratio mixes according to 'soil' levels to obtain best results.
5. Protect upholstery with Maxim Fine Fabric.
6. Dry with Air Movers.

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## VACUUMING

Soil is the enemy of your carpet and rugs, upholstery and draperies. One of the most important aspects of proper maintenance is to vacuum often and to vacuum correctly. Most people do not vacuum their textile furnishings enough. And even when they do, the vacuuming may still be done incorrectly or inefficiently. This fact sheet will explain how to vacuum correctly with effort-saving tips and helpful pointers.

Ground-in dust, dirt, sand or grit are the enemy, and it is your vacuum's job to remove them. But did you know that an excessively soiled carpet can hold up to 1/2kg of dirt in each square metre? This can occur especially at entrance ways and in heavily trafficked areas that are seldom vacuumed properly and not cleaned frequently enough.

Few people really know how to vacuum efficiently with minimum effort. Let's explain how, covering both vacuuming technique and equipment. Most of the damaging soils, oily or gritty particles collect where there is most usage or foot traffic. These are the areas which require most of the vacuuming. It is far better to vacuum only the heavy traffic areas much more frequently or repeatedly than it is to cover everything or everywhere with a once-over-lightly vacuuming.

Residential carpet and rugs, for example, should be vacuumed according to the amount of traffic and abuse they receive. Vacuuming should be done at least one every two weeks, preferably once each week and even twice per week if heavily soiled or trafficked. The best way to remove ground-in dirt is to vacuum against the nap of the carpet. It removes soil and helps to improve the carpet's appearance. A light vacuuming would cover the same carpet or upholstery areas with three or four overlapping strokes. A more thorough vacuuming could be six or even eight strokes over the same, heavily soiled areas. Contract or commercial carpets need to be vacuumed thoroughly at least three to five times per week. In high traffic areas, i.e., traffic lanes and entrance ways, carpet should be vacuumed nightly.

Well maintained vacuuming equipment helps both in overall soil removal and better long-term appearance. Do not allow the dirt collection bags to become more than 1/2 full. This greatly reduces suction power and vacuuming efficiency in most machines. Vacuums with cloth bags should be turned inside out at least every third emptying and be swept off. This allows for better breathing of the bag and greater soil pickup. Canister or backpack vacuums are versatile and convenient, but they may not have a beater bar, thus requiring more effort (passes or strokes) than upright vacuums to achieve similar soil removal. Canister vacuums used on carpet should preferably have a separate motor driven beater bar. We recommend the use of an upright vacuum with beater bar for carpet, and canister type vacuums for upholstery, draperies, blinds, light dusting, etc. Commercial pile filters and heavy duty dual motor vacuums are the best machines for portability combined with maximum power and effectiveness in vacuuming carpet.

Some vacuums require that they be adjusted to match the pile heights of the carpet. Higher pile and loosely textured carpet may show shading marks where the vacuum last passed over. For the most even surface appearance after vacuuming, keep the final vacuuming strokes all in the same direction.

Good vacuuming is equally important for upholstery and draperies. There are special accessories and hand tools to vacuum these fabrics. Some machines come with suction lowering adjustments to keep the fabric from binding or being drawn in the nozzle during vacuuming. Do not let the dust and soil build up. In higher soiling conditions or where there is heavy usage, vacuum every few weeks or more if needed.

You usually cannot vacuum too much, and it is more likely that your furnishings are suffering from insufficient vacuuming. It's the ground-in soil that dulls, discolours and damages your valuable textile furnishings, never the vacuuming. The loose fibres that are vacuumed out of new carpet are normal, and no reason for concern. Remember to vacuum often, vacuum properly, and well. It's worth the effort.

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## WATER RESTORATION

### Water Extraction

Water extraction is one of the most important elements of a water damage restoration job. You must remove the water in the most efficient way available in order to mitigate the loss as quickly as possible. Without proper water extraction procedures, the drying process will be slowed.

#### Procedure:

1. Complete an authorisation and consent form and have insured sign and date it.
2. Identify health and safety hazards of the job. Look for electrical problems or gas leaks. Post warning signs where needed to notify anyone who may enter the structure of potential hazards. Provide all technicians with appropriate personal, protective equipment that will be needed to perform the job safely.
3. Locate and eliminate the source or sources of incoming water. This would include finding any leaks, shutting off water to broken pipes, pumping or diverting any standing water away from structure, etc.
4. Remove any small or easily moved items from affected areas and block up larger pieces to get them off the carpet.
5. Begin extracting water from the affected area using the Water Claw by Hydro-Force. This tool will allow you to remove approximately 90% of the water from the carpet and the pad, prior to disengaging the carpet. The Water Claw comes in a variety of sizes to match whatever extraction machine you have, and they do not require any electricity or heavy weights in order to work.
6. Depending on the category of flood and the length of time prior to extraction, it may be necessary to apply a biocide after initial water extraction. Always follow label directions.
7. Advance with procedures needed to return facility to a pre-loss condition.

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## WATER STAINS

Spills, snow and water tracked in, rain through an open window, pipes bursting, leaking radiators, floods and even overwetting by do-it-yourself carpet cleaners can wet out the backing yarns of carpeting.

Followed by slow drying, this wetting will allow dye-like materials to dissolve out of the backing yarns and "wick" to the face of the carpeting. The brown discolouration which forms is usually referred to as a water stain.

After a water stain has developed, it may be impossible for even a professional cleaner to remove it. Gradual and uniform soiling on the face yarns may cause the stain to go unnoticed until the carpeting is thoroughly cleaned. Once the dirt is removed, the dye-like water stain becomes quite apparent.

Water is essential to professional cleaning of carpets and rugs, however. Your professional ASE cleaner knows the proper amount and the conditions under which water can be used on carpets and rugs. For example, in a modern rug cleaning plant where controlled drying temperatures are possible, it is a safe and normal procedure to use hundreds of litres of water on a single rug. In on-location cleaning, only the surface yarns of the carpet are wet out, which results in maximum cleaning and prevents water stains from occurring.

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## WHITE KNOTS

Authentic oriental rugs with a luxurious, hand knotted pile are a thing of beauty. One inherent characteristic of oriental rugs is known in the trade as “white knots”. These are small white or off-white spots that appear at random in a few or sometimes many places on the rug surface. These “spots” are actually knots from the rug’s cotton foundation yarns that have worked their way up to the surface of the rug, sandwiched between the pile fibres and thus exposed as part of the pile. If you look more closely,

you can also find them in the lighter coloured areas as well.

How and why do these “white knots” occur and why are they more noticeable after a thorough professional cleaning? The rug’s pile or fuzzy surface is actually hand knotted onto a foundation of warp and weft yarns. In most oriental rugs this foundation is composed of off-white or light coloured yarns. Because the cotton comes in short lengths, several pieces will be knotted together to make the appropriate length. Inevitably during the weaving process, some of these yarns will break and need to be spliced together, creating additional knots.

When a rug is new, the white knots can be obscured by the full length of the pile surrounding them although they can be close to the surface. These knots are bulkier than the surrounding face fibres, and ordinary foot traffic will force them to the surface at the same time that the pile fibres are wearing down. Since they are a different material and colour than the face fibres, they may be a cause for concern. Their appearance is normal and careful inspection can often find them in almost any oriental rug.

Immediately following completion of the rug or during distribution and retailing, the more obvious knots may be coloured over with a slight tint or dye marker. As the rug is used the knots will darken and become obscured due to surface soiling. Following a thorough cleaning, the soils, grime and possibly the tint are removed making the knots more prominent now. This is neither a defect in the rug nor a problem with the cleaning but rather a normal result from the use of the oriental rug.

If the customer wishes, he or she may have the rug cleaning professional provide an added service to hide the appearance of these knots. The trained professional can do a minor repair to retouch the most noticeable of the knots. A set of dye sticks or indelible markers, especially suited to oriental rug colourations, are used to recolour the tops of the “white knots” so that they either disappear or become much less noticeable. You, as the rug owner, may also perform the same process if you can obtain appropriate permanent markers. These knots should never be cut as you can make a hole in the foundation of the rug that could lead to a larger hole and the loss of face fibre. Given normal foot traffic and soiling, the “white knots” will also become soiled, darken and disappear until the next thorough cleaning.

White knots are a normal consequence of wear and an inherent characteristic of beautiful, hand made oriental rugs. It is a feature of these unique rugs whose face and foundation are both made by hand. It’s all part of the “mystique” of oriental rugs.

For practical tips and information about your oriental rugs, spot and stain removal, or professional cleaning, maintenance and repair, always rely on an expert. That is your trusted member of Advanced Specialized Equipment.

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## YELLOWING

Yellowing occasionally appears after professional cleaning of light coloured carpeting rugs, upholstery, draperies or other textile furnishings. This discolouration occurs for a variety of reasons, and it is usually indicative of another pre-existing problem. The yellowing is generally not noticeable until after the item is cleaned, either because the dirt is "hiding" it or some latent is catalysed by customary cleaning. This is not the fault of the cleaning process. The customer is often disappointed that the interior furnishing

is clean but did not return to its new condition. Occasionally the yellowing will be in one area but not in another, such as under furniture, or in front of a window where some other condition has initiated the yellowing only to be exposed by the cleaning method.

Common reasons for yellowing are:

### Photo-Oxidation

Some fibres are prone to photo-oxidation due to normal exposure and use. With ordinary light, sunlight, and atmospheric fumes, certain white fibres, especially when bleached or optically brightened, will eventually begin to yellow. Customary wet cleaning is sometimes enough to induce yellow colouration in white or off-white coloured wool which was previously damaged by light and atmospheric conditions.

### Stain Resistant Chemistries and Early Generation Nylon.

On some stain resistant finishes, silicone-based soil retardant finishes, and early generation nylon, the manufacturing chemistries tend to yellow with age, exposure to UV light and/or cleaning with a high pH cleaner.

### Specialty Finishes

Many textile finishes also yellow with age. These finishes can include: flameproofing, crease resistance, insecticides, anti-static and textile lubricants or softeners. All are used on textile furnishings.

### Fluorescent Brightening Agents

Some fluorescent brightening agents (FBAs) can yellow with age and exposure to UV light. These brighteners are found in many detergents and spot removers. FBAs are also used on some white coloured textiles.

### Anti-Oxidants

Anti-oxidants, such as BHT and formaldehyde, are found in carpet cushioning, some latex preparations, upholstery foam, in carpet backings and many other common construction materials. The anti-oxidants redeposit or wick up to the carpet face yarns or fabric surface and yellow on contact with oxygen.

### Dyes

Light colours such as beige or tan are often composed of several dyes. Some of these dyestuffs can fade, altering the hue towards yellow.

### Forgotten Spills

Long forgotten spills, stains and pet accidents also can yellow with age. Sugary drink stains and animal urine are examples.

### Soils

Common soil and dirt from normal use can be yellow in colouration. Abrasive action on carpet fibres from normal soiling can also cause permanent discolouration.

### Conclusions

There are many possibilities for yellowing. A yellow discolouration is more apparent when it occurs on a white or off-white background. A professional cleaner has several different techniques available that may reduce the effect of yellowing caused by many of these conditions. These include treatment with special yellow remover products, bleaches and adjusting the fibres pH to improve its appearance. Using professional chemicals, yellowing can be removed in some cases, in other cases it can be lightened somewhat, but in many situations the yellow colouration is permanent.

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