

CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO CARPET CLEANING

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Established 1998

Read this guide and you'll discover:

- How to avoid four carpet cleaning rip-offs!
- 6 costly misconceptions about carpet cleaning.
- Crawlins' critters and crud: a guide to the slime, grime and livestock that's seeping, creeping and galloping through your carpet.
- Which methods clean best.
- 8 mistakes to avoid when choosing a carpet cleaner.
- The importance of value and price.
- Why you want a clean, healthy carpet.
- 100% no-risk guarantee.
- 4 steps to a fresh, clean, healthy carpet.

**Provided as an educational service by:
Action Cleaning Systems Inc.**

"The Cleaning You Deserve"

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Dear Homeowner,

Choosing a carpet cleaner isn't easy.

Why? Because you're bombarded with misleading advertising, confusing claims and simply bad information.

From super-low prices and high-pressure sales – to unqualified technicians and near-worthless methods – how do you ever find a qualified, competent, professional carpet cleaner?

You start by reading this Consumer's Guide. In this fact-filled booklet, you'll discover how to avoid four carpet cleaning rip-offs, eight mistakes to avoid when choosing a carpet cleaner, and four steps to a fresh, clean, healthy carpet.

We wrote this guide to help you better understand carpet cleaning. Now, with this information, you can make an informed, intelligent decision.

And if you have any questions about carpet or upholstery cleaning, you're invited to call us at (630) 654-2084.

We've dedicated our business to educating consumers.

We'll be happy to help you in every way.

Cordially,

Steve D'Aquila

Action Cleaning Systems Inc.

Specialists in Carpet Cleaning

HOW TO AVOID FOUR CARPET CLEANING RIP-OFFS

RIP-OFF # 1: UNBELIEVABLY LOW PRICE. To some degree, all of us are attracted by low price because we want to work within a budget. But some carpet cleaning companies use price as the bait for their false and misleading advertising. They offer a cheap price-usually between \$3.95 and \$9.95 per room-and then, once they're in your home, they pressure you into buying "add-ons." It's as if you were buying a car and found out that the dealer was charging you extra for the tires and steering wheel. Carpet cleaning is not as cheap as some unethical carpet cleaners would like you to believe.

RIP-OFF # 2: BAIT AND SWITCH. Dual process carpet cleaning describes the process of shampooing or heavy preconditioning. Followed with hot water extraction cleaning. Unfortunately, unethical carpet cleaning companies often use dual process as a bait-and-switch technique. Here's how it's done: first, they "bait" you with a basic cleaning (single process) at an unbelievably low price. Then, when you call, they try to "switch" you to more expensive dual-process cleaning. If you don't fall for their switch and choose their basic service. You will likely receive poor workmanship using little or no chemical and they will not guarantee their work.

RIP-OFF # 3: UNSUPPORTED CLAIMS. “THIS CLEANING METHOD IS THE BEST.” You will read this in almost every ad. You’ll hear this form virtually every carpet cleaning company. Remember this: the method that’s best for you is the method that achieves your goal. If you want a method that dries quickly, then a method that takes a long time to dry isn’t the best for you. So before you choose a carpet cleaner, identify your objectives. Then select the method that best reaches those objectives.

RIP-OFF # 4: OUTDATED BELIEFS. “HOT WATER DAMAGES YOUR CARPET” Years ago, many people believed this was true because their carpets were damaged by technicians who didn’t know how to clean properly using hot water. But today, we know that simply is not true. By cleaning and then rinsing your carpet with hot water, your carpet is thoroughly cleaned in the same way that a person who showers and rinses off the dirt and soap will be much cleaner than the person who takes only a sponge bath. Obviously, each carpet cleaning company will be biased towards their own method. Each method does have it’s advantages. I always lean towards what the carpet manufacturers say. Shaw industries, the largest carpet manufacturer in the world recommends only hot water extraction cleaning with a truck mounted unit used by IICRC Certified Firms. Since 2009 all of the major carpet mills will not honor the carpet’s warranty unless it is cleaned by a IICRC company every 12-18 months.

SIX COSTLY MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT CARPET CLEANING

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

NO. Dirt is an abrasive, like sandpaper. Every time you step on your carpet, you grind dirt into the carpet fibers. This cuts your carpet, just as if you had used a knife. A dirty carpet will not last as long as a clean carpet. While vacuuming helps, it is simply not enough. The longer you wait to have your carpet cleaned, the more damage you do to your carpet and the faster it wears out.

MISCONCEPTION # 2: The only reason to clean carpets is to remove the dirt.

NO. As you probably know, outdoor air contains pollens, fungus, bacteria, air pollution, cigarette smoke, car exhaust- and hundreds of other chemicals. When you come into your home, you carry those pollens, bacteria and chemicals in your hair and on your skin, clothing and shoes. Not surprisingly, all of those chemicals and toxins wind up in your carpet.

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

MISCONCEPTION # 3: One method of carpet cleaning is as good as another.

NO. The dry cleaning methods-which are dry foam, dry chemicals and dry compounds –do not rinse your carpet in any way. Instead, they leave a dirty residue. You might say they clean your carpet halfway. The most effective cleaning method is hot water extraction.

Hot water extraction means a hot water cleaning solution, under high pressure, is forced into your carpet and then sucked out of your carpet. Shaw Industries, the world's largest carpet manufacturer recommends hot water extraction as the primary method of cleaning carpets by an IICRC Certified Firm.

Carpet cleaning companies use one of two types of hot water extraction. If they use a large unit that operates from a van or truck outside your facility, it's called truck mounted extraction. If they use a small unit that can be brought inside, it's called portable extraction. Shaw's first choice is the truck-mounted unit and it recommends portable equipment where truck mounts don't reach.

Truck mounted extraction cleans much better because it heats the water to over 200 degrees. This breaks up the dirt, bacteria, chemicals and pollens in the carpet. The machine then uses high suction to draw the dirt and chemicals out of your carpet. This is the method my company uses.

MISCONCEPTION # 4: Having the right equipment is all a company needs to clean your carpets properly.

NOT TRUE: Many companies own hot water cleaners but very few companies teach their employees how to use them properly. This is why it's important that you choose your carpet cleaning company carefully. The best cleaning companies are those that have been certified by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification, known as the IICRC. Before you choose a carpet cleaning company, ask them to see written proof of the company's IICRC Certified Firm Certification. If they don't have it...don't use them!

MISCONCEPTION # 5: The Company that offers the lowest price is the company I should hire.

NO. I've seen so many problems arise from lowest-bid companies that I suggest you **NEVER** hire the company that quotes the cheapest price. The two most common problems are:

1. The price may not be for the services you want performed. The company may be equipped to remove only the dirt from your carpet. But you may want bacteria, fungus, pollens, dust mites and tobacco residues removed as well.
2. The price you see advertised may not be the price you pay. Many home owners have learned that the low price they saw advertised only lasted until the carpet cleaner got in their home. Then they were pressured into paying a lot more for a variety of add-ons.(some companies even break the law by using illegal bait and switch tactics.)

MISCONCEPTION # 6: Any honest carpet cleaning company should be able to give you an exact price over the telephone.

I wish this were true, but it isn't.

Honest, reputable carpet cleaning companies almost never price carpet cleaning by the room. Instead, carpet cleaning is usually priced by the square foot. So if you'd like me to tell you the exact cost of cleaning your carpet, I need to know the exact number of square feet that you want cleaned. To get an accurate measurement, I use a measuring wheel to calculate the exact size of the carpet area.

To give you an idea of how we estimate the cost of cleaning, here are the three things we consider:

1. THE TYPE OF CARPET. Certain types of carpet are harder to clean than other types.

2. THE AMOUNT OF SOILING. Carpet that hasn't been cleaned for ten years will take longer to clean than carpet that we cleaned within the last six months.

3. THE AMOUNT OF FURNITURE we have to move. If you move your furniture, you'll save money. If we clean up to furniture pieces we only charge for the carpet we clean.

CRAWLIN' CRITTERS AND CRUD: A GUIDE TO THE SLIME, GRIME AND LIVESTOCK THAT'S SLEEPING, CREEPING AND GALLOPING THROUGH YOUR CARPET.

Asphalt, Bacteria, Car Exhaust, Chemicals, Dirt, Dust, Dust Mites, Earth, Food Particles, Fungus, Germs Gravel, Grease, Grime, Grit, Hair, Industrial Waste, Lint, Mud, Pet Stains, Pollens, Pollutants, Rock, Sand Scum, Smoke, Soil Soot, Tar, Tobacco Smoke, Urine, Vomit.

Plus, don't forget living creatures, such as dust mites, fleas and critters that live, hide and breed in your carpet.

WILL YOU HELP US?

We're trying to find at least one thing that's in your carpet for every letter in the alphabet. We don't have anything at all for these letters : J,L,N,O,Q,W,X,Y,Z. If you can think of something that could be in your carpet that begins with these letters- or any other letters- please call or e-mail us and we'll consider including them in our next consumer's guide.

WHICH METHOD CLEANS BEST?

DRY FOAM: The carpet cleaner applies shampoo to your carpet, allows it to dry and then (without rinsing), sucks the dried shampoo into a vacuum. Can you imagine applying shampoo to your hair, letting it dry and then removing it with a vacuum? This method leaves dirty residue in your carpet, which is one reason dry foam is not very effective.

ABSORBANT PAD (bonnet cleaning): This method is similar to dry foam, except that the company sets a large cotton bonnet on your carpet. A floor polishing “buffer” buffs your carpet. The rotating motion causes the bonnet to absorb dirt from your carpet. This method is also called bonnet cleaning. This method is used in some commercial applications but is not very effective for residential rugs.

DRY, ABSORBANT POWDER: The dry-compound method spreads a moist, absorbent powder through the carpet. The powder is allowed to dry and then sucked into a vacuum. This method leaves dry sponge particles at the base of the carpet yarn. Because the carpet is not rinsed, this method is not very effective

HOT WATER EXTRACTION: This is a fancy way of saying that a hot water cleaning solution under high pressure is forced into your carpet and then sucked out of your carpet.

In a recent Technical Bulletin, Shaw Industries, the world’s largest carpet manufacturer, “recommends the hot water extraction system. It provides the best cleaning.

You can choose from two different types: Truck mount extraction. This is done with a machine mounted to a truck or van. Or a powerful portable extraction unit.

Which type to choose? Shaw's technical bulletin states "cleaning can be done from a truck mounted unit outside the facility with only the hose and wand brought inside, or where a truck mounted unit cannot reach by a portable, self contained systems brought into the facility. Today, the industry has stepped up and manufactured some very powerful portable units. When used correctly, these portable units can be effective.

Shaw recommends the truck mounted unit first. And this isn't surprising. Hot water, high vacuum and high pressure cleans better. The system heats the water and shoots the rinse at high pressure into the fibers. Then a powerful vacuum then extracts the dirt and grit from your carpet. This also allows for *quick dry time*.

No question, the most effective way to clean carpeting is with a hot water unit. It's the most powerful cleaning machine on the market and the only machine that cleans your carpet(s) dirt, harmful bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollens, tobacco residue and dust mites.

Some people believe that hot water damages your carpet. This is not true. By rinsing your carpet with hot water, we clean the carpet completely. The same way that the person who showers will be cleaner than the person who takes a sponge bath.

8 MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN CHOOSING A CARPET CLEANER

MISTAKE #1: Choosing a carpet cleaner based on equipment alone. No question, your carpet cleaning company needs first rate equipment. But they also need employees who are skilled at operating that equipment. Many companies own hot water extractors, but very few companies teach their employees how to use them properly. The best way to know that the company's employees have been properly trained is to choose a company who is a Certified Firm with the IICRC.

MISTAKE # 2: Choosing a carpet cleaner based on low price. Low price could be a problem in three ways:

(1) Low price can be the bait that attracts your phone call. But once the cleaner gets into your home they pressure you into a more expensive job.

(2) Low price can be for a single process cleaning. Rarely does the consumer know what this means. The option costs are very high and done ineffectively.

(3) Low Price means the cleaning company has cheap equipment and untrained staff. Your carpet will not be cleaned effectively.

MISTAKE # 3: Choosing a carpet cleaner based on a single telephone call. Instead, invite the person to your home and ask for a specific written quotation. You will then know exactly what the cleaning company recommends. You won't be the victim of high pressure tactics when the technician steps into your living room.

MISTAKE # 4: Choosing a carpet cleaner who does not offer a money back guarantee. Every carpet cleaning company should be fully accountable for its work. And if your aren't pleased with the job in every way, you shouldn't have to pay for it. Not all cleaning companies offer a guarantee. If they do, the guarantee may be limited. Ask the cleaning company if they offer a money back guarantee and then make sure the carpet cleaner includes his guarantee on this written quotation.

MISTAKE # 5: Choosing a carpet cleaning company without getting comments from their other clients.

Any company can say anything about their past jobs. Sadly, some of what they say may not be true. Make sure you ask for references or read comments from current customers so you can depend on the carpet cleaner and their work.

MISTAKE # 6: Choosing a carpet cleaning company who isn't certified by the IICRC (Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification).

If your carpet cleaning company isn't a close friend, you may know whether they have the knowledge or experience to clean your carpet well. If you want to be sure you're hiring a competent professional, make sure they are IICRC Certified. The company must earn this status to be a certified firm. An proper insurance, experience, and oral and written exams are the criteria to qualify for this status. It's like having a college degree in Cleaning and Restoration.

MISTAKE # 7: Choosing a carpet cleaning company who is not a member of <http://www.ethicalservices.com>.

The most trusted and reliable way for homeowners to find a **cleaning, restoration, or remodeling professional** to invite into your home.

Their database makes it easy to see what your neighbors have to say about the service providers in your area. To discover what [carpet cleaning service providers](#) serve your area, [click here.](#)»

MISTAKE # 8: Choosing a carpet cleaning company who doesn't use a truck mounted water extraction system.

Truck mounted systems are the Rolls Royce of carpet cleaners. This is what we use. Portable systems are good, but they are not as good as truck mounted systems. Truck mounted systems use hotter water, higher pressure and stronger suction.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VALUE AND PRICE

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

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

Shaw Industries, the world's largest rug manufacturer recommends hot water extraction from a truck mounted unit.

Here's why: a truck mounted unit cleans much better than a portable for three reasons:

(1) It heats the water to a higher temperature. For every 18 degree increase in temperature above 118 degrees, you double the water's cleaning ability. If the water temperature is 136 degrees F, it will clean twice as well as water that is 118 degrees F. 154 degree water will clean four times as well as 118 degree water and so on until you reach a water temperature of 250 degrees. Our truck mounts are capable of 250 degree heat.

(2) Truck mount cleaning shoots the cleaning solution into your carpet at higher pressures. That breaks up the dirt, bacteria, chemicals and pollens. 300 to 450 pounds per square inch is the optimum pressure for truck-mounted hot water extraction.

(3) Truck mounts use stronger extraction(suction) to draw out the dirt, chemicals, bacteria, pollens and tobacco smoke residue out of your carpet.

Not surprisingly, having your carpet thoroughly cleaned with a truck-mount hot water extraction costs more than renting a shampooer at the corner grocery store.

If you bought the cheapest carpeting you could find, then renting a small shampooer might be all you need. No question, it will get out some of the dirt- but the key work here is “some”. It will not get out many of the pollens, chemicals, bacteria and dust mite residues.

On the other hand- if you want your carpet to look good and give you years of dependable service- then you need to take extra good care of it. This means you need to have it cleaned by a skilled, qualified technician at least every six months to one year. This depends on the amount of soiling and foot traffic it receives. And you need to have it cleaned thoroughly and disinfected as only a truck-mounted hot water extractor can do.

WHY YOU WANT A CLEAN, HEALTHY CARPET!

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

Each carpet cleaning method has advantages and disadvantages. Some methods will get out only the dirt. Other methods will get out dirt and grease. Still others will get out virtually everything.

If virtually everything is being cleaned thoroughly you can be sure that the price will be more expensive than others.

If all you want is a cheap, rinse-the-dirt off the top cleaning- then I respectfully ask that you call another company.

But if you want to protect your health- if you want to protect your investment in carpeting- if you want to protect your family from the countless bacteriam fungus pollens and dust mites tatht reside inyour carpet, then you're invited to call us.

The truck-mounted hot water unit is the most effective cleaning system available today. Likewise, it's one of the most expesive units on the market. We bought this unit for a good reason: more families want the good-health benefits that come from having a fresh clean carpet.

Have you ever seen how dirty a little boy's pants get when he plays outdoors? If you have, then you know you can brush off his pants and make him think they are clean. Or if you want the job done right, you can machine wash them in hot water and detergent and you'll KNOW they're clean.

The same is true for your carpet. You can hire someone for \$25 to \$50 who will brush off you rcarpeting and make you think it's clean. Or if you want the job done right, we will wash your carpets with hot water and safe GREEN detergents using our state of the art equipment and you'll KNOW they're clean.

If you want your carpet thoroughly cleaned, if you're willing to invest in your family's good health, you're invited to call us. You'll receive a written estimate at no cost or obligation. If you give us the "go ahead" your further protected with our...

100% NO-RISK GUARANTEE

We want you to be super-pleased-in fact-absolutely delighted with every carpet and upholstery job we do. So every job comes with our iron-clad, risk free guarantee. What does this mean? Simply this: if you are not happy with our work, we'll reclean the area for free. And if you still aren't pleased, you pay nothing. Not one red Cent. Many companies don't guarantee their work- but we feel nothing is more important than your complete and total satisfaction. We stand behind every job 100%. If you ever have any questions or concerns about our work, please call us right away.

4 STEPS TO A FRESH, CLEAN, HEALTHY CARPET

If you're thinking about having your carpets cleaned, we encourage you to follow these four steps:

STEP # 1: Make a commitment to yourself to get your carpets cleaned. The longer they remain dirty, the sooner they will wear out. The longer you wait, the longer you have to breathe all the pollen, fungus and chemicals that hide in your carpet.

STEP # 2: List your objectives. Do you want only the dirt removed or do you want all the bacteria, fungus, chemicals and dust mites removed? This will require hot water truck-mount extraction like we use. Do you want to work with an honest, reputable company-or are you willing to risk working with the company that offers you the lowest price-knowing that the company might not be in business tomorrow.

STEP # 3: Ask questions. The way you learn about a company is to ask specific questions and listen carefully to the answers. Here are eight tough questions to ask a carpet cleaning company before you hire them to clean your carpet:

1. What method of carpet cleaning do you recommend?
2. What type of equipment do you use to clean carpet?
3. What will your equipment remove from my carpet?
4. How often should I get my carpets cleaned?
5. What training have you had in cleaning carpets?
6. Are you a member of Ethical Services.com?
7. Are you certified by the IICRC and can you prove your certified firm status?

STEP # 4: Once you're satisfied that you're working with an honest, competent professional, invite them into your home and ask for a specific quote in writing. A written quote gives you the assurance that you know exactly what your job will cost-no surprises.

By following these four steps, you'll gain all the information you need to make an informed, intelligent decision. If you want a quick, cheap carpet cleaning job, you can shop with the coupon ads or rent a shampooer from the grocery store and do the job yourself.

But if you want your carpeting to be completely and healthfully cleaned-removing the bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollens,, and tobacco products- then we invite you to call us.

We'll be happy to answer your questions, come to your home and give a free written quote-without cost or obligation of any kind. To reach us call (630) 654-2084.

THANKS AGAIN!

...for reviewing our new CONSUMERS GUIDE TO CARPET CLEANING. I hope you found this information helpful.

If you have any questions or comments-or if you'd like us to give you an exact written quotation to clean your carpet or upholstery-please call us at (630) 654-2084.

We've dedicated our business to consumer education and service. We'll be pleased to help you in every way. We look forward to your call!



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