

## Carpet Care Specification Guide

Applicable to all Interface Carpet  
Products

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# *Introduction*

There are many factors that can affect the appearance of carpet including color, pattern, yarn fiber, and of course maintenance. Maintenance is important because a routine carpet maintenance program can preserve and maintain your floor covering and extend the life of your carpet investment. A routine maintenance program includes daily care such as vacuuming and spot cleaning, in addition to interim and periodic restorative cleaning by hot water extraction. Excessive soiling and stains may require that different methods, or a combination of methods, be utilized. However, even restorative cleaning typically will not bring back the beauty and appearance of the carpet if the overall maintenance program has been neglected. Routine care means a longer lasting product. However, it is important to implement a maintenance program from the very beginning. Having the right equipment and cleaning solutions along with a properly trained technician is critical to the success of the program. An effective maintenance program is carefully planned and executed on schedule.

## Comprehensive Maintenance Program

An effective maintenance program consists of five key elements:

- Soil Control – containing the soil entering the building using walk-off mats at entrances. This includes outside matting, inside matting and mats at certain other high traffic interior areas. Ideally, walk-off mats cover about 15 steps. Interface offers many options for walk off carpeting. Contact your Interface AE for more information.
- Vacuuming - removing dry soil matter. Regular vacuuming is the *single most important* part of a carpet maintenance program.
- Spot and Spill Removal – quick response to spills is the key. The faster spills are dealt with the less chance that they will become stains.
- Interim Cleaning – used regularly, interim cleaning can put off the need for restorative cleaning.
- Restorative Cleaning – deep cleaning designed to remove trapped soils. Hot water extraction is the most effective method and the *only* restorative method recommended by Interface.

## Identifying Your Specific Maintenance Needs

Just as various areas of your office or building are subject to different uses, each area demands a different level of maintenance and care. Heavily trafficked areas such as entrances and corridors require more frequent vacuuming and cleaning. Areas around vending machines and desks need daily attention to spills and stains. Also, certain areas may require different types of equipment to be used. A comprehensive maintenance program should have a chart or diagram of the building's floor space outlining proper cleaning frequency rates, methods and equipment. Implementing a well-designed maintenance plan can add years of useful life to your carpet investment.

## Commercial Carpet Cleaning Frequency Chart

Traffic Soil Rating	Carpet Owner/ Maintainer		Professional Carpet Cleaner/ Restorer	
	Vacuuming	Spot Cleaning	Interim Maintenance (Between Restorative Cleanings)	Restorative Cleaning
Light <500 foot traffics per day	1 to 2x per week	Daily or as soon as spots are noticed	1 to 3x annually	1 to 2x annually
Medium (moderate) 500-1000 foot traffics per day	Daily in traffic areas. Overall 3 to 4x per week	Daily or as soon as spots are noticed	3 to 6x annually	2 to 4x annually
Heavy 1000 – 2500 foot traffics per day	Daily in traffic areas. Overall 4 to 7x per week	Daily or as soon as spots are noticed	6 to 12x annually	3 to 6x annually
Very Heavy >2500 foot traffics per day	1 to 2x daily in traffic areas. Overall 7x per week	Daily or as soon as spots are noticed	12 to 52x annually	6 to 24x annually

\*Recommended frequency guide per IICRC S100  
(Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, and Restoration Certification)

# *Maintenance Techniques*

An ideal maintenance program is designed to help prevent soil from reaching the carpet, and to remove soil before it causes damage. To keep your carpet clean and looking like new, such a maintenance program uses a combination of methods tailored to your facility's needs. Cleaning frequencies are based on the specific needs of trafficked areas in your facility.

## Preventative Maintenance

Maintaining your carpet's appearance means more than choosing the right cleaning method. Choosing the right products up front contributes greatly to the overall performance of your floor covering. The use of walk-off mats helps keep soil from entering the building. Outside mats are designed to scrape dirt and debris off shoes while interior mats are designed to remove smaller soil particles as well as help absorb moisture. Interior walk-off mats should extend a minimum of six feet inside the entrance. At 15 feet, these mats can effectively remove 80% of soil and moisture before it reaches the carpet. Mats also can be effective in other interior areas including elevators, around water coolers and food station areas, and at stair thresholds. Walk-off matting should be maintained the same way as interior carpet using the frequency guidelines for 'Very Heavy' cleaning based on the chart on page 4.

## Chair Pads

Chair pads are NOT required with any Interface carpet.

## Vacuum Cleaning

A good vacuuming program is essential to the success of your carpet maintenance efforts. Effective daily vacuuming reduces the frequency of periodic maintenance procedures required to maintain clean carpet. In addition to removing soil, vacuum cleaning also helps to lift and restore pile particularly for cut pile carpet. Proper equipment and technique are critical to the success of a vacuuming program.

A CRI approved, dual motor commercial upright machine with cylindrical brushes should be used and set so that brushes are in contact with pile surfaces. Dual motor machines with independent motors for suction and brushing are preferred for this task. In most cases upright vacuum cleaners are advised. Dual motor vacuums with top loading soil bags and HEPA filters are also highly recommended. The Carpet and Rug Institute has a Seal of Approval program that grades various maintenance equipment including vacuum cleaners. For a list of certified dual motor upright vacuum cleaners see the CRI website at [www.carpet-rug.org](http://www.carpet-rug.org). Canister, back pack type machines without brushes and riding sweepers with rotary brushes are generally **not** recommended.

The frequency of needed vacuuming is determined by your comprehensive maintenance plan, but should be done daily. Heavy traffic areas such as lobbies, entryways and barrier mats, particularly those exposed to various weather conditions, may require more frequent vacuuming. Vacuuming these

areas more than once a day will help prevent soil from being tracked into other areas. The procedure for thorough vacuuming involves using slow overlapping strokes to make sure that the entire carpet surface is covered. Strokes should be no longer than 2 -3 feet in length to avoid constant bending. Vacuum bags should be replaced when they are no more than 2/3 full.

NOTE: FOR FLOR S AND SUPER FLOR PRODUCTS, A SUCTION-ONLY VACUUM IS RECOMMENDED OR IF EQUIPPED, USE THE SUCTION-ONLY SETTING ON A STANDARD UPRIGHT MODEL.

### Spot Cleaning

Daily removal of spots and spills helps maintain the carpet's appearance between scheduled cleanings. Immediate action against spots and spills also reduces the probability of a permanent stain. It is important to use solutions that are appropriate for the specific type of spot or spill – water based, oil based, or solids (including gum). Use spotting solutions sparingly and always try to remove the spot with water only before using a spotting solution. If available, using a portable extractor will significantly improve the ability to remove spots.

#### Treating Water-Based Spots

For liquid spills, start by blotting up as much of the liquid as possible with a clean white cloth. If the spill is semi-solid or has hardened, gently scrape it with a spoon or spatula and then blot the spot with a damp cloth. Always work from the edge of the spot towards the center. Never rub across a wet spill in a manner that causes the stain or contamination to be spread from the original area.

If spot remains after using water, refer to our spotting guide and choose the appropriate solution. Apply a minimal amount of solution to a clean white cloth and blot the solution. Rinse with water and allow the area to dry about 1 hour and then vacuum. Repeat the application if necessary. Protect the freshly cleaned area until the carpet is completely dry. Do not brush aggressively on the spot.

#### Treating Oil-Based Spots

When removing oily stains such as paint, grease, tar, asphalt, always check for color fastness by applying your cleaning solution to an inconspicuous area of the carpet. Spray or pour the solvent onto a white cloth and press / blot it onto the carpet. Check the cloth for any evidence of dye transfer to the cloth. If color transfer is evident, do not use the solution. If colorfastness is not a problem, apply your solution sparingly to a clean white cloth and press the cloth onto the spot.

Again, do not rub across the stain, but blot gently from the outer edge toward the center of the spot. Repeat the procedure until the spot has been removed. Rinse with water and allow the area to dry about 1 hour and then vacuum. Protect the freshly cleaned area until the carpet is completely dry.

NOTE: IF AVAILABLE, A SMALL PORTABLE EXTRACTOR MAKES THE TASK OF FLUSHING SPOTS AND REMOVING EXCESS MOISTURE MUCH EASIER. IF STAIN CANNOT BE REMOVED PLEASE CONTACT AN INTERFACE CONSULTANT.

## Interim Cleaning

### Crystallizing Application (Encapsulation)

The crystallizing method of maintenance is a low moisture procedure similar in some respects to the dry extraction method but instead of using the powder, a liquid encapsulation solution is used. Benefits include immediate access to the area without the necessity of extended drying time. We recommend XL North's GRAB® Fortify LMC.

Follow this procedure for crystallizing application: Thoroughly vacuum the carpet. Apply the encapsulation solution using an electric sprayer or a simple pump-up garden type sprayer. Agitate the carpet pile using a low moisture applicator with counter rotating brushes\* to gently brush the solution into the fiber, dislodging and dispersing accumulated soil. Allow time for the solution to dry. Drying time will vary accordingly to several factors including humidity, air flow and air temperature but can normally be expected to be 30 - 60 minutes. When dry, thoroughly vacuum again.

NOTE: FOR FLOR AND SUPER FLOR PRODUCTS, HOT WATER EXTRACTION IS THE ONLY RECOMMENDED CLEANING PROCEDURE.

### Bonnet Cleaning

NOTE: USE OF A ROTARY BONNET OR ANY OTHER TYPE OF ROTARY MACHINE FOR CLEANING OR DRYING IS NOT RECOMMENDED AND MAY VOID ALL INTERFACE WARRANTIES.

This method has low soil removal efficacy and may significantly change the appearance of the fiber over time, including luster and color changes.

\*ONLY counter rotating brushes are acceptable for this application.

Rotary machines move the carpet fibers in one direction. Counter rotating brush machines have multiple heads that agitate the carpet fibers in different directions at once for deeper cleaning without damaging the carpet pile.

## Hot Water Extraction

Hot water extraction is an effective method for removing heavy soil and residue from carpeting. The hot water extraction method injects a solution into the carpet. The injected solution suspends the soil and contaminants in the solution for easy removal by the built-in vacuum system. It is important that all vacuum extraction machines are in motion when the solution spray head is activated to prevent flooding the surface.

The recommended technique: Prepare the carpet by vacuuming. Start by applying a pre-spray appropriate for carpet using an electric or pump type sprayer. Research by Interface has found that Artemis Bio-Oxygen Carpet Cleaner is an effective product for this step. The pre-spray application should be over the entire carpeted surface, not just the traffic lanes. Agitate the pre-spray with a dual brush counter-rotating low moisture applicator. Allow 15 minutes of dwell time. Operate the floor wand or self-contained extractor by engaging the solution valve or button and pulling or pushing the equipment for approximately three to five feet (or at a comfortable distance). Release the solution valve before reaching the end of your pass to assure that you vacuum up all of the solution.

One also may use the Artemis Bio Oxygen Carpet Cleaner in the hot water extractor to thoroughly clean and deodorize the carpet. Cover the same area two or three times both with solution and without solution (suction only) to remove as much soil and moisture from the carpet as possible. Overlap each stroke approximately two inches on the area already cleaned and proceed as described above. Make several additional passes with the solution valve off to remove as much moisture from the area as possible, always being careful not to over wet the carpet. For heavily soiled high-traffic areas this procedure can be repeated until the extracted water is relatively clear. Make sure HVAC system is on and use drying fans (air movers) on wet areas during and after cleaning to allow the carpet to dry completely. Complete the procedure with a thorough vacuuming.

NOTE: ALTHOUGH IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT WATER TEMPERATURE RANGE BETWEEN 110° AND 130° F, USING WATER WITH TEMPERATURES ABOVE THAT RANGE WILL NOT CAUSE ANY DAMAGE TO INTERFACE PRODUCTS. LIKewise, COLD WATER CAN ALSO BE USED, BUT WARM OR HOT WATER WILL BE MORE EFFECTIVE.

NOTE: DRYING TIMES WILL VARY BASED ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS. PLAN ON A MINIMUM OF 3 HOURS UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS. DO NOT ALLOW FOOT TRAFFIC ON THE CARPET UNTIL IT IS DRY. ALLOWING FOOT TRAFFIC BEFORE CARPET IS DRY CAN CAUSE FIBER DAMAGE AND RAPID RE-SOILING.

# *Cleaning Solutions*

Always follow the manufacturer's recommended guidelines for using any cleaning solution. Some carpet cleaning solutions are very harsh and can damage the carpet fiber. It is important to select solutions that meet the basic standards outlined here and to evaluate each product before using it.

Interface brand carpets can be maintained using a number of widely recognized and readily available carpet cleaning agents. Interface highly recommends and uses XL North GRAB Fortify LMC for Interim/Low Moisture Cleaning and Artemis Bio-Oxygen for any extraction. We've listed additional preferences below. The Carpet & Rug Institute also has granted a Seal of Approval for some other carpet cleaners as well. For a list of these certified cleaning solutions see the CRI website at [www.carpet-rug.org](http://www.carpet-rug.org).

Avoid products with pH levels over 9.5 and products that contain toxic or flammable solvents. Do not use oil-based defoamers of any kind. Detergents designed for use in hot water extraction equipment should not contain an oil-based defoamer and caution should be used with the amount of detergent added. Oil based defoamers have the potential to leave oily residues and adding too much detergent could leave excess detergent on the carpet. Both scenarios will lead to rapid re-soiling and the need for more frequent cleanings. In addition, cleaning solutions containing optical brighteners should not be used. Optical brighteners can adversely affect the coloration of carpet and lead to premature aging or yellowing of the carpet.

Cleaning solutions used for Interim and/or Restorative cleaning should be tested for sticky residues that may cause re-soiling. To test a solution, pour a small amount in a clean glass dish. Allow the solution to air dry completely (24 hours minimum). Break up any hard residue on the surface of the glass dish and examine it. If the residue can be characterized as dry powder, dry flakes or dry crystals, the solution is acceptable. If the residue appears oily, greasy, sticky, or in waxy flakes, the solution is not acceptable since it would likely contribute to rapid re-soiling.

Spotting solutions should be used as needed and should be flushed out with clean water after the spot has been treated.

## **Interface Recommended Cleaning Agents**

Extraction Treatment - Artemis Bio-Oxygen Carpet Cleaner  
Low Moisture Treatment – XL North GRAB Fortify LMC  
Enzyme Treatment – Chemspec Enz-ALL  
Urine Treatment – urine OFF

# *Maintenance Equipment*

Using the right equipment is as important as using the right cleaning solutions and techniques. These guidelines provide the basic technical specifications you need for key pieces of carpet maintenance equipment.

## CRI Approved Commercial Vacuum

(For dual motor uprights)

Power	▪ 8 amp
Filtration	▪ Down to .3 microns or lower
Vacuum	▪ 60" water lift-motor or better @ 90+ cfm
Brush	▪ Toothed belt drive preferred ▪ Brush speed 2,500 - 5000 rpm ▪ Brush diameter 2" - 3½" ▪ Brush height adjustment essential; self-adjusting design preferred
Working Width	▪ 15" – 30" Dust Bag
Capacity	▪ 300 - 400 cubic inches

NOTE: VACUUM CLEANER SHOULD HAVE THE CARPET AND RUG INSTITUTE'S SEAL OF APPROVAL THROUGH THEIR GREEN LABEL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM. DUAL MOTOR UPRIGHT VACUUMS WITH TOP-LOADING DUST BAGS WITH HEPA FILTERS ARE STRONGLY RECOMMENDED. BATTERY POWERED VACUUM CLEANERS ARE NOT RECOMMENDED.

## Low Moisture Applicator

Power	▪ 2-8 amp
Width	▪ 12 " - 22"
Brushes (2)	▪ 10 " - 20 " Counter-rotating
Brush speed	▪ 400 rpm

## Hot Water Extractor

Power	▪ 10 - 15 amp
Fluid Delivery	▪ (minimum) ½ gallons/minute - 50-100 psi
Tanks	▪ 8-20 gallon solution ▪ 8-20 gallon recovery
Vacuum	▪ 100 " - 140 " water lift at around 90-100 cfm
Vacuum Shoe	▪ 11 " - 18 " wide
Wheels	▪ Non-marking 4 " - 10 " diameter

NOTE: WHILE TRUCK-MOUNTED UNITS GENERALLY GIVE OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE, HIGH QUALITY SELF-CONTAINED UNITS ARE EQUALLY EFFECTIVE AND ARE THE PREFERRED METHOD FOR MOST COMMERCIAL ACCOUNTS.

# *Spot Removal Guide*

The chart below is a guideline for spot removal. Follow each step in order, proceeding to the next step only if the previous step failed to remove the stain. The use of a portable extractor with water is highly recommended for a first attempt at spot removal and can be used after each step to flush solution. For unknown spots use water first then try dry cleaning solvent, followed by detergent solution.

If you cannot remove the spot following these guidelines, call Interface maintenance support at 1.800.336.0225, ext. 54401 in the U.S. or ext. 52117 in Canada.

## Spotting Solutions

Interface offers a maintenance kit with our recommended chemicals and usage instructions, but below are some general guidelines:

1. Detergent Solution - Mix 1/4 teaspoon colorless mild detergent in 1 cup water.
2. Ammonia Solution - Mix 1 tablespoon clear household ammonia in 1/2 cup water.
3. Vinegar Solution - Mix 1/3 cup white household vinegar in 2/3 cup water.
4. Dry Cleaning Solvent – Apply isopropyl alcohol (standard rubbing alcohol) to clean cloth and blot. DO NOT apply directly on carpet.

Type of Stain or Spill	First Cleaning Option	Second Cleaning Option	Third Cleaning Option
Beer	1	3	
Blood	1	2	
Butter & Margarine	4	1	
Candle Wax	Scrape away as much as possible with a	4	
Catsup/ Tomato Sauce	1	2	
Chewing Gum	Harden gum with ice until brittle enough to scrape away	4 or use a commercial chewing gum remover	
Chocolate	Scrape away as much as possible with a	1	2
Cocktails	1	3	

Coffee	1	3	
Cough Syrup	1	2	

Crayons	Scrape away as much as possible with a	4	
Egg (raw)	Blot up as much	1	2
Food Coloring	1, until color no longer	2	
Fruit Juice	1	2	
Furniture Stain	4		
Glue	1	4	
Grass	1		
Gravy	1	2	
Greases	Scrape away as much as possible with a	4	
Ice Cream	1	2	
Ink (Ballpoint)	4		
Ink (India)	4		
Jam and Jelly	1	2	
Lipstick	Scrape away as much as possible with a	2	
Merthiolate & Mercurochrom	1	2	
Mildew	1	2	
Milk	1	2	
Mucilage	1	2	
Mud	Scrape away as much as possible with a	1	2
Mustard	1	3	
Nail Polish	4	Apply amyl acetate or non-acetone based nail polish remover to cloth and blot.	
Oils	4		
Paint (Oil-Based)	4		

Paint (Water-Based)	1	2	
Rubber Cement	Roll the glue off if it has	4	
Rust	Apply rust remover or warm oxalic acid	2	
Shoe Polish	4		
Soft Drinks	1	2	
Soot	1	4	
Tar & Asphalt	Scrape away as much as possible with a	4	
Toothpaste	1	3	
Urine	Blot up as much as possible if	1	3
Vomit	Blot up as much as possible if	1	2
Wine	1	3	

## *Consultants*

For more information about carpet maintenance, please contact one of the following consultants or visit us online at [www.interface.com/maintenance](http://www.interface.com/maintenance).

### United States

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Belleville, ON K8N 5S2

## *Additional References*

Interface – [www.interface.com/maintenance](http://www.interface.com/maintenance)  
Carpet and Rug Institute - [www.carpet-rug.org](http://www.carpet-rug.org)  
The Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification - [www.iicrc.org](http://www.iicrc.org)