

# Carpet Tile Maintenance Guidelines

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## The importance of Carpet Maintenance

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Correct maintenance of carpet will not only extend the life of any carpet investment but will also help to preserve a satisfactory level of appearance and comfort within the working environment.

As part of a company's image, millions of pounds are spent on buildings and interior design concepts and poorly maintained carpets can adversely affect a facility's image, reduce product performance and accelerate the need for carpet replacement.

Interface recognises the need to maintain and extend the life of the carpet investment for environmental as well as financial reasons and offers a solution by providing a detailed carpet maintenance guide.

Interface can also offer training and supplemental support for the in-house maintenance team as well as more customised maintenance programmes tailored to a specific facility's needs.

### PRODUCT SELECTION

Maintaining the carpet investment means more than choosing the correct cleaning methods. Selecting the right products – in terms of construction, design and colour – from the outset contributes greatly to its long term performance and appearance, for example:

- **Construction:** A dense pile construction can help to minimise wear problems due to soil ingress.
- **Colour:** As well as creating a distinctive image & statement the choice of colour can also serve a practical purpose. Colour plays an important role in determining soil hiding with, for example, mid to dark colours being better than light, bright colours or very dark colours.
- **Design:** Patterned carpets are the most effective at soil hiding with random designs being particularly useful.

Taking these factors, and more, into consideration Interface has classified its products according to their soil hiding potential. This should help in product selection but it should be made clear that this does not remove the need for a proper maintenance programme on the product during use.

Our Account Managers, in conjunction with our Site Service experts, will work alongside you to try and assist in choosing the correct product for the areas in question and the correct maintenance programme for your facility's needs.

## Identifying your specific needs

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Just as interior areas are subject to different levels of use each of these areas will require an appropriate level of maintenance and care. For example, heavily trafficked areas such as entrance lobbies and corridors require effective daily vacuum cleaning whilst areas around vending machines and desks need daily attention to spills and stains.

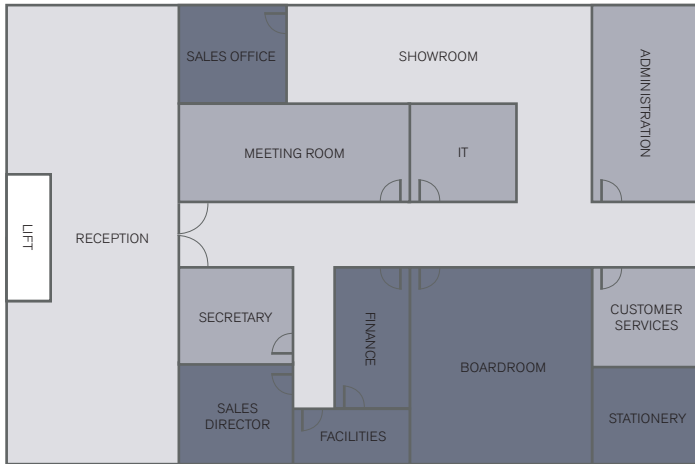
The building layout, type of usage, traffic patterns, hours of operation, etc., all need to be assessed when developing a maintenance programme and the following guide provides detailed advice on approved maintenance techniques and solutions.

Routine care from the outset means a longer lasting product and improved long-term appearance and so the aim of the Interface maintenance guide is to maximise the life of your carpet and protect your investment.



## Planned maintenance

With a clear maintenance programme, like the one shown below, facility managers and cleaning contractors will know where to concentrate their efforts at a glance. In this way, routine, interim and periodic maintenance can be scheduled at appropriate intervals as part of the programme.



### Daily Maintenance

- Areas to be vacuumed daily
- Daily spot and stain removal

### Programmed Cleaning

- Three monthly clean of heavy traffic areas
- Six monthly clean of medium traffic areas
- Twelve monthly clean of light traffic areas

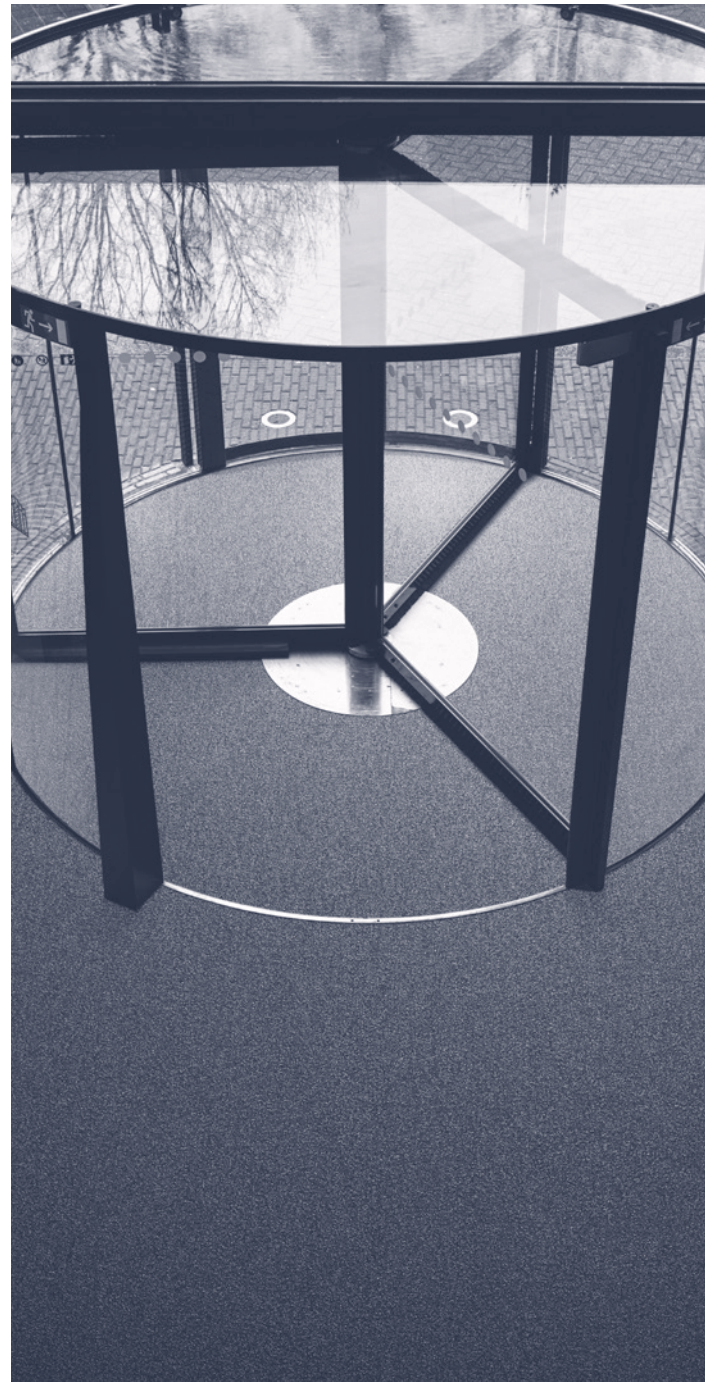
## Preventative maintenance

### BARRIER MATS

Barrier mats are an integral part of any maintenance programme as they are designed to capture inbound soil at threshold points i.e. entrances.

This soil can be removed by vacuum cleaning so that it does not spread to other areas. Barrier mats should be cleaned daily and even replaced regularly to prevent the build up of soil as otherwise they become ineffective.

A minimum of 3-5 metres of barrier matting should be placed at the point of entry based on volume and level of traffic flow. Ideally this should be a combination of primary and secondary barrier systems.



## Routine maintenance

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It has been established that 80% of the soil, which can be deposited in a carpet, usually originates from outside the building, hence the provision of suitable barrier areas, for example Barricade One and Two, at entrance points is the first line of defence against soiling.

However, carpets will still collect soil and so the following recommendations are designed to minimise the effects of soil on both the durability and appearance of your carpet.

The frequency of cleaning must be based on the specific needs of trafficked areas within your facility.

### VACUUM CLEANING

An effective vacuum cleaning programme is essential for the success of any carpet maintenance plan. Grit and dirt if not vacuumed thoroughly can become an abradant that could damage fibres, if left in the carpet to build up. In addition to removing soil vacuum cleaning also enhances the appearance of the product by lifting and restoring the pile.

The use of proper equipment and techniques are critical to the success of any vacuum cleaning programme and heavy duty upright vacuums with a brushing action are recommended.

Carpet sweepers take up surface soil but do not remove soil which was worked down between the tufts. Therefore for thorough cleaning a vacuum cleaner which incorporates strong suction together with a revolving brush agitator or beater bar should be used. Height adjusters are fitted to most cleaners to allow efficient cleaning of carpets of varying constructions.

The frequency of vacuuming is determined by visual inspection but ideally should be carried out daily. Heavy traffic areas such as lobbies, entrances/exits and barrier mats - particularly those exposed to various weather conditions - may require more frequent vacuum cleaning and any maintenance programme should reflect that. Vacuuming these areas more regularly will help prevent soil from being trafficked into other areas. In areas such as Conference and Boardrooms, vacuum cleaning can be carried out when necessary, though not less than once a week.

For thorough cleaning be sure movements are slow and methodical when vacuuming

### PILE LIFTING

Should be used to precondition carpets for general cleaning. This is an effective method of lifting crushed pile and loosening dry soil. Heavily trafficked areas using a cut-pile product will particularly benefit from this being carried out on a weekly basis. Loop pile products require less intensity and can be pile lifted less frequently.

For best results apply the pile lifting machine against the direction of the pile.

**NB: Pile lifting should not be carried out on Elevation III, The Scandinavian Collection, Straightforward II or any other microtuft product.**



## Routine maintenance

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### SPOT CLEANING

Localised stains caused by accidental spillage will occur. As part of the maintenance programme daily removal of spots and spills should be carried out to help maintain an acceptable appearance level between scheduled cleaning.

Immediate action should be taken when confronted with spots and spills where practically possible; this will reduce the probability of a permanent stain.

Endeavour to classify the stain – i.e. Water, Oil or a combination of both – as it is important to use those solutions and techniques which are appropriate for the specific type of stain to be treated.

When carrying out spot cleaning always remember:

#### DO

- Take immediate action where practically possible to avoid permanent staining
- Try to classify the stain.
- Use a clean white cloth and work from the outer edge towards the centre of the spill to prevent spreading.
- Remove excess moisture using absorbent cloths, towels etc and protect the cleaned area until the carpet is completely dry.

#### DO NOT

- Rub or agitate vigorously as this could distort or damage the pile and create lighter patches on the floorcovering.
- Over wet the carpet.

### TREATING WATER BASED STAINS

For liquid spills, blot 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 sponge.

Always work the outer edge of the spot towards the centre. Never rub across a wet spill in a manner that causes the stain or contamination to be spread from the original area.

After blotting water-based spots, promptly remove the remaining residue with a small amount of dry compound. Sprinkle the compound over the spot and use a hand brush to gently agitate the compound.

Allow the area to dry (about 15-30 minutes) and then brush the compound again. If the compound seems to stick to the carpet, gently brush the area again, and then vacuum. Repeat the application if necessary. Avoid aggressive brushing as this may damage the pile.

For difficult to remove coffee, tea, juice or soft drink stains, use a recommended stain remover after spot cleaning. Apply according to the instructions and leave to dry. Repeat if necessary. Contact your local technical team for more information on recommended stain removers.

**NB: Some stain removers must not be used on products which contain wool or which are susceptible to bleaching.**



## Routine maintenance

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### TREATING OIL BASED STAINS

For the removal of oily stains such as paint, grease, tar, asphalt, etc, specific carpet spotters should be used.

Colourfastness should always be checked by applying the solution to an inconspicuous part of the carpet. Spray the spotter onto a clean, white cloth and press in onto the carpet.

Check for any dye transfer to the cloth. If colour transfer has occurred, then do not use the solution. Otherwise, apply the spotter sparingly to a clean, white cloth and press the cloth onto the stain.

Again, do not rub across the stain but wipe gently from the outer edge towards the centre of the stain. Repeat the procedure until the stain has been removed and after any chemical treatment, the spot should be flushed out with water to remove any excess. Protect the freshly clean area until the carpet is completely dry. Follow with an application of dry compound as explained in treating water based stain.

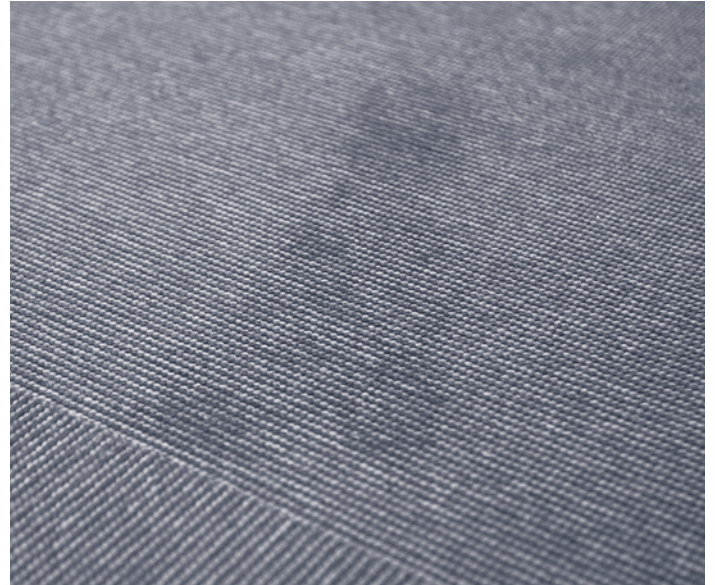
**NB: Having a small extractor machine available can be easier to flush out any spill. Spotting of heavy spillages may not remove what is resting at the base of the pile. This can only be effectively removed by hot water extraction.**

### REMOVING CHEWING GUM

To remove chewing gum, spray type removers are recommended. Lightly spray chewing gum remover onto the affected area allowing the product to freeze the gum. Then use a blunt object to gently scrape off.

Care should be taken not to damage the surface by using excess force or a sharp object.

Any frozen particles should be removed as soon as possible either by gentle brushing or vacuum cleaning.



## Interim Maintenance

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### DRY EXTRACTION

This cleaning method is easy to use and relatively non-disruptive, as areas can be used almost immediately after cleaning. Another benefit of this method is that it doesn't leave any sticky detergent residue that can re-attract soiling.

Firstly, thoroughly pile lift or vacuum clean the carpet and pre-spray with a suitable traffic lane cleaner. Then spread the dry compound onto the carpet and gently brush. Allow to dry for 30 minutes before vacuuming the particulate and soil from the carpet.

**NB: Dry extraction is not suitable for Elevation III, The Scandinavian Collection, Straightforward II or any other microtuff product.**

### ENCAPSULATION

The encapsulation method is a recent addition to the carpet cleaning possibilities. This periodical cleaning method combines outstanding results with reduced inconvenience to the workforce.

Encapsulation cleaning is quick and easy. First, a solution with 'crystals' is sprayed onto the floor and brushed into the carpet. The crystals encapsulate the dirt. The solution evaporates quickly, after which the crystals are easily removed during daily vacuuming.

The main benefits of encapsulation are the reduced water usage (90% less compared to water extraction) and short drying time (10 minutes).

**NB: Encapsulation solutions are available for spot cleaning as well as periodic maintenance.**

### BONNET CLEANING

The hot water extraction method is generally most desirable; however the bonnet cleaning method may occasionally be needed as a supplement to allow the earlier introduction of traffic.

As with all other maintenance methods, always prepare the carpet by vacuuming or pile lifting, then apply a bonnet cleaner.

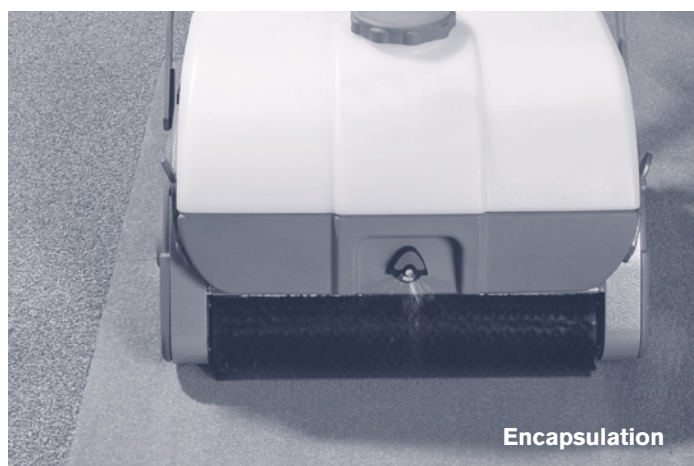
Before drying begins, agitate the area utilising a low speed (175 rpm maximum) rotary floor machine to which a 100% cotton bonnet has been attached.

Be extremely careful to cover the area thoroughly so that the carpet pile has the opportunity to be agitated in several directions to loosen attached soil and other contaminants.

After approx. 15m<sup>2</sup> turn the bonnet over and clean the same area if necessary. As the area is covered, soil and contaminants will accumulate in the bonnet, which should be rinsed with specific solutions, before proceeding. After the area has dried completely, the carpet should be vacuum cleaned or pile lifted.

**NB 1: The bonnet should be frequently checked for cleanliness as, once soiled, it will need to be replaced before proceeding.**

**NB 2: Care should be taken when using this method, especially on cut-pile carpets, as improper treatment can damage the yarn and fibre.**



## Periodic Maintenance

### HOT WATER EXTRACTION

Despite regular vacuum and spot cleaning the carpets appearance will in time become dulled due to an accumulation of dirt and stains that regular cleaning cannot remove. It then becomes necessary to wet clean the carpet.

Interface recommends that carpets are deep cleaned periodically using the hot water extraction process. This method is effective in removing soil and residue from carpeting. It works by injecting water and cleaning agents into the carpet and suspending the dirt in the solution which is then removed by a built-in vacuum system.

Always prepare the carpet by spot cleaning and thorough vacuum cleaning prior to hot water extraction. The method uses a hot water extraction machine filled with extraction liquid diluted according to the manufacturer's instructions.

The recommended technique is to operate the floor wand or self-contained extractor by engaging the valve or button which releases the cleaning solution, and pulling or pushing the equipment for approximately 1 to 2 metres (or at a comfortable distance). The solution valve should be released before reaching the end of the pass to ensure that all of the solution is vacuumed up.

The same area should be crossed two or three times again with the solution valve off to remove as much moisture from the carpet as possible. To continue to clean the floor, overlap approximately 5 cms into the area already cleaned and proceed as described above. In extremely soiled areas it may be necessary to make two or three additional passes with the solution valve on. Then 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.

To reduce drying times, fans may be placed on wet areas during cleaning. The carpet should be left and allowed to dry for as long as possible before use, and the procedure should be finished with a thorough pile lifting.

### DO NOT

- Allow water temperatures to exceed 50°C (120°F) on the carpet.
- Allow foot traffic on the carpet until it is completely dry as it can cause fibre damage and rapid re-soiling.



Hot water extraction



## Floorcare Solutions

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Some commercial carpet cleaning solutions are very harsh and can damage both the surface pile of the carpet and the backings. It is therefore important to select solutions that meet the basic standards outlined here and to evaluate each product before using it.

Interface modular flooring may be maintained using a number of widely recognised and readily available carpet cleaning agents.

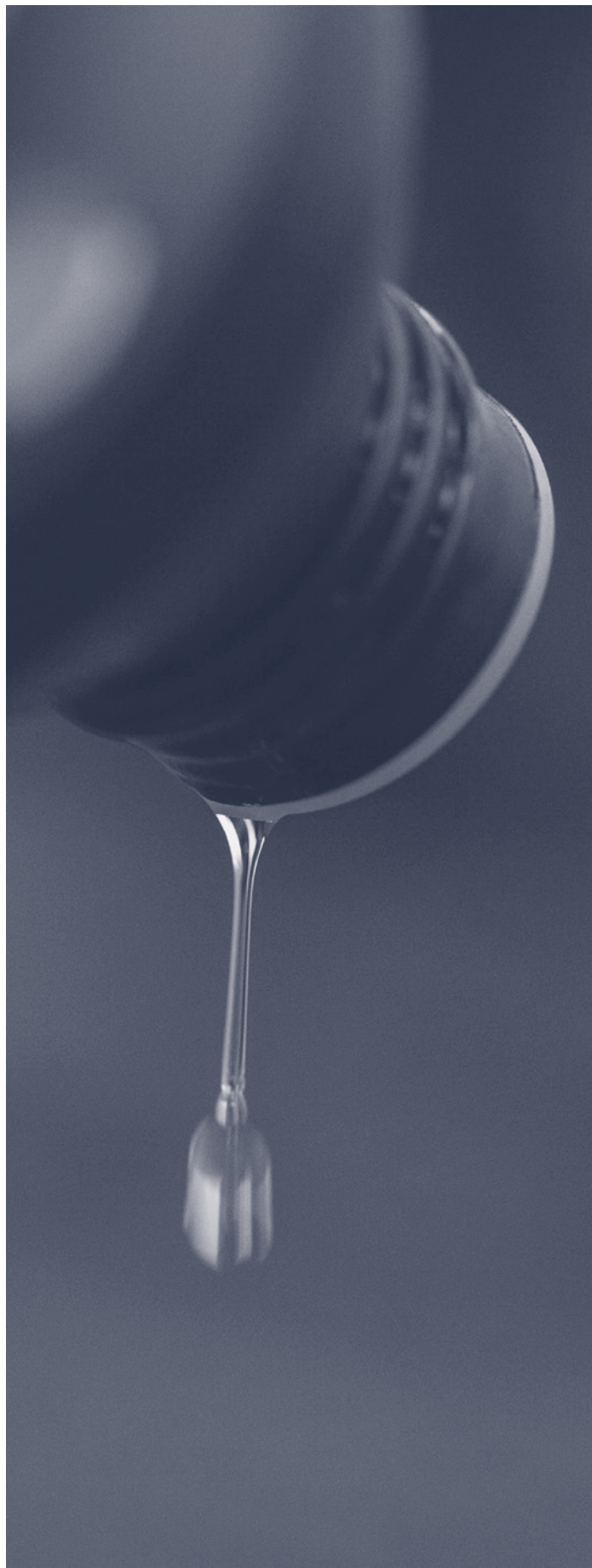
### Generally:

- Products with pH levels over 9.5 or which contain toxic, odorous or flammable solvents should be avoided.
- Products designed for use in hot water extraction equipment should not contain oil-based defoamers (based defoamers can leave oily residues causing rapid re-soiling).
- No product should include optical brighteners (optical brighteners can adversely affect the colouration of the carpet).
- All cleaning solutions should be tested for sticky residues that may cause re-soiling. To test a solution, a small amount of concentrated detergent/cleaning solution should be poured into a small, 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 characterised 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 be likely to contribute to rapid re-soiling.
- Spotting solutions should be used as required and should always be flushed out with clean water after the spot has been treated.

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### Cleaning Solution Specifications

- Maximum pH 9.5 in dilution preferred.
  - Solvents at a maximum of 10% by volume.
  - No optical brighteners.
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## Miscellaneous Maintenance

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### CARPET TILE REPLACEMENT

Carpet tiles that have become badly stained or damaged can be replaced from attic/spare stock.

A damaged tile can be removed by slipping a knife edge under one corner and peeling it from the floor, if they have been installed using traditional glues or tackifiers. If they have been installed using TacTiles, simply lift a corner of the tile. To learn more about TacTiles, our sustainable installation system, please refer to our installation guide or contact your nearest sales centre.

When damaged carpet tiles are being replaced, care should be taken to ensure that the face pile of the surrounding tiles is brushed upright and that the replacement tile is fitted carefully to prevent pile fibres from becoming trapped between joints.

Carpet tiles taken from attic/spare stock are likely to have a newer appearance than the ones being replaced. If Interface random designs are used, the recommended installation method is non-directional and old and new tiles are more likely to visually integrate completely into the floor design.

In other ranges, any new tiles can be noticeable. If this is the case the new tiles should be installed in less visible areas. Any flooring product should follow Interface's recommended installation instructions.

### ACCESS FLOORS

The relevant access floor manufacturer should be contacted for recommendations for carpet cleaning in relation to the methods and techniques recommended in this guide. Low-moisture methods and techniques are generally preferred.

**Note: Please refer to our Installation Guide for best practices when installing carpet tiles.**



## Queries

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For further information please contact the Technical Department on 0800 313 4465 or visit:

[www.interface.com](http://www.interface.com)



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