



# Cleaning & Maintenance of Eco-Friendly Carpets

YOUR GUIDE TO A SIMPLE  
MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME FOR  
CORDELIA RANGE

  
**SANDRINGHAM**  
CARPETS



A simple maintenance programme including regular, interim and periodic cleaning will keep your pure wool loop pile carpet looking good.

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## Preventative Measures

### **Prevention is the best cure: Install Walk-off Mats to All External Doorways**

It is paramount to start with preventative maintenance. Walk-off mats installed at all external doorways (and from service areas where dirt, grease and moisture are present) will significantly reduce tracked soil particles. This simple practical solution will help to reduce up to 80% of all soiling, which will otherwise come into contact with the pile of your carpet.

Walk-off mats must be of sufficient size to allow for two or more footsteps. Clean or change these on a regular basis to prevent the buildup of soil, which will reduce the effectiveness of the mats to reduce soil.

Regular maintenance and replacement of filters in heating and air conditioning systems will contribute to a reduction of airborne soil particles.

## Regular Maintenance

### **Vacuuming**

Frequent vacuuming is an effective and essential method for reducing the presence and build-up of loose soil particles in the carpet pile. The removal of such particles is a key process as embedded soil is abrasive and, over time, will have a negative impact on the visual appearance of the carpet and be a significant factor in premature wear. In light use areas weekly vacuuming should be sufficient to reduce soil build, but in heavier traffic domestic use and commercial applications, a shorter frequency including daily vacuuming may be required.

Specific vacuum types are more effective with different carpet constructions and it is important that the machine chosen is suitable for use with the carpet installed. The vacuum must be well maintained, with clean working parts, especially those engaged in contact with the carpet pile. Most vacuum manufacturers recommend their machines are most efficient when the soil collection cylinder or bag is operated no more than half full and that filters are changed 3-4 times per year, or more in heavy use environments.

### **Recommended Procedures for Vacuuming:**

- Vacuuming should begin as soon as the carpet is laid. It is very important that any residual dust from building and installation work is removed from the carpet pile before it is put into use.
- For loop pile carpets, use a suction only vacuum to prevent distortion or fuzzing of the carpet surface.
- Vacuum cleaning should be carried out both before and after other cleaning operations such as hot water extraction and low moisture soil extraction.
- In large open areas of an installation, sweeping actions can be used up and down, overlapping each one slightly to ensure complete coverage.
- The starting point should be varied each day to make sure that the carpet is not always brushed in the same direction.
- The vacuum cylinder or bag should be kept less than half full for best results and any filters should be changed on a regular basis.
- A new carpet will contain a proportion of loose short fibres, which should be removed by regular vacuuming. The removal of this short fibre from the carpet in the first few weeks after installation is a process sometimes called 'shedding'. The fibre removed by vacuuming represents a very small proportion of the overall pile weight and will in no way affect the carpet's long term performance.
- With loose laid rugs, never shake by holding the perimeter edges as this can cause damage to fringes or loosen



taped and other types of edge finishes. If beating the rug to remove embedded dirt is necessary we recommend the rug is turned over onto a protective sheet, with the pile side down against the sub-floor and then beat the rug from the back to dislodge embedded dirt and particles. Once turned over with the pile on the surface, vacuum the pile. Repeat as necessary.

### **Type of Vacuum Equipment and Recommended Use:**

#### ***Suction only vacuum machine (recommended for loop pile carpets)***

Cylindrical or tub shaped machines with a hose attached are not as efficient as upright machines for removing grit, lifting the pile and maintaining the appearance of a cut pile carpet. However, they are suitable for use with loop pile structures as their cleaning action is less aggressive than that of an upright machine.

#### **Tips for proper maintenance of vacuum equipment:**

1. Machines need to be cleaned free from threads, which become wound around the rollers preventing them from working effectively.
2. Belts and brushes should be inspected and replaced when damaged or broken.
3. Adjust the settings of your vacuum equipment: The brushes should just rest into the pile, too deep and the motor will be laboured, too shallow and the cleaning efficiency is lost.
4. Warning lights should not be ignored, and bags or cylinders must be emptied regularly to optimise the suction and airflow required for effective soil removal, a guide being when around half full.
5. Filters need changing 3-4 times per year, or more in heavy use environments.

## **Cleaning**

If you have taken the time to care for your carpet with regular vacuuming and prompt attention to localised stains caused by tracked dirt or liquid spillage, you may not need to use an intensive deep cleaning process even if your carpet is a light colour. When the carpet does start to look soiled and deep cleaning is required to revitalise the appearance of the pile, we recommend that you employ a reputable professional carpet cleaner to undertake the work.

Whilst there are several water based household carpet cleaning systems available either to purchase or hire, carpet cleaning and restoration is a skilled job and should only be undertaken by a trained and experienced professional carpet cleaner.

Always ensure the carpet is cleaned using a high-quality cleaning agent, preferably one that is Woolsafe® recommended. Before re-using the carpet after any deep cleaning procedure always ensure the carpet is completely dry and vacuum to avoid rapid re-soiling of the pile surface.

## **Spillages and Stain Removal**

Spillages not tackled immediately by the correct processes may develop into an unsightly long-term stain. In areas where food and drink are served and consumed spillages of all types are to be expected. Some foods and drinks contain natural colourants, which penetrate the fibres of the carpet, where they become locked in, acting as a type of dyestuff. Food and drink spillages often contain traces of sugar or fats/oils and are therefore sticky; if untreated the surface residue of the stain may come into contact with the soles of shoes or wheeled appliances and become tracked to other parts of the installation, thereby spreading the problem and making soil and stain removal more expensive and time consuming.

#### **Cleaning Kit: First Aid for Your Carpet**

Quick reaction is the key to the effective removal of most types of tracked soil or liquid spillages. Having a ready



prepared "first aid kit" for your carpet will help. We recommend your kit includes the products listed below:

- ✓ Spatula or blunt instrument for removing dry spillages
- ✓ Diluted shampoo solution for water based stains
- ✓ Stain remover for oily/greasy type substances
- ✓ Chewing gum remover
- ✓ Wet vacuum pickup cleaner
- ✓ Clean white cloths
- ✓ Small soft bristle brush
- ✓ Access to water supply

### Steps for Stain Removal:

1. Immediate attention to any spillage is essential to prevent the penetration of the stain into the carpet fibres. The longer the stain remains untreated, the more complicated it will be to remove and this can cause permanent stain setting:
  - A. For solids, the first step is to scoop up or scrape off loose dirt using a blunt instrument such as a spoon or spatula. If the spill is of a dry powdery nature use a vacuum cleaner on the correct setting to remove from the surface, gently brushing if necessary to assist in the process. It should be noted that some dry spillages are also greasy and, if they are not removed as detailed in the steps below, they may result in a stain, which attracts soil more quickly than surrounding areas of carpet. Any remaining residue should then be treated as suggested by the next steps in our guide.
  - B. For wet spillages, these should be wet vacuumed as soon as they occur to avoid staining, or soak up liquids with white absorbent cloth/towel.
2. Prior to overall usage of a cleaning product, undertake a small test on an inconspicuous area of the carpet to be cleaned and allow the test area to dry. If you notice discolouration of the pile fibres, immediately cease using the product. Only use certified cleaning materials, which are recommended for the pile fibre of the installed carpet.
3. Use cleaning treatments for each specific stain as instructed in our guide:
  - Apply the cleaning products to a cloth, not directly to the carpet, unless the product instructions specify so.
  - Always work on stains from the outer edge towards the centre and gently blot, never rub as this can cause pile distortion and spread the stain.
  - Never rub the pile surface to remove a stain or spillage as this will irreversibly distort the pile.
4. Ensure the carpet is blotted with a clean white cloth or white paper towel until the pile is dry. Between any additional steps in the treatment process always remove excess moisture.
5. Thoroughly rinse out water-based spot treatments from the pile with clean water after cleaning to remove solvent residues.
6. Place several layers of white paper towel over the spillage area and put a flat weight on them until dry. A hair dryer may be used to speed up the drying process but do NOT overheat the area. Rapid re-soiling will occur if you do not allow the carpet to dry thoroughly before walking on it.
7. If the stain is not properly removed after the treatment, do not overuse the cleaning products and contact a professional carpet cleaner immediately.

### Useful Information on Specific Stains:

#### ***Oil/Grease based stains***

If greasy or oily spillages/stains are left within the carpet pile they will attract soil and can re-appear as a dirt spot or stain, even after overall cleaning has been carried out. Small marks can be removed using a solvent based product.

#### ***Water based stains: Tea, coffee, cola, fruit juice, blood or urine***

Where the carpet is stained by blood, urine, faeces or vomit spillages should be handled with extreme care. Protective



gloves should always be worn in these instances.

Soft drinks such as cola and juices contain a high percentage of sugar and dry to leave a sticky residue in the pile, which will attract soil unless removed. It is very important that the correct procedures are followed. Time spent at this stage removing spillages or fresh stains will save considerable time later.

### **Chewing gum**

Chewing gum can be removed by using a freezer type spray to chill the gum allowing it to be broken away from the pile, then rinsing the residue with a solvent spotter.

The alternative is to use a gel type solvent. Perforate the chewing gum residue and apply the gel sparingly. After 3 or 4 minutes the gum dissolves and can then be blotted from the carpet using clean paper towels. The gel residue must be blotted out with clean water. In this process, take great care not to over apply the gel or rub the carpet.

## **Helpful Hints for Carpet Maintenance**

- All areas of the installation should be inspected on a regular basis to identify potential problems and minimise the long-term damage
- Barrier matting fitted to external access doors and internal wipe off areas should be thoroughly cleaned using the methods and frequencies recommended by the manufacturer
- Only use the cleaning products that are compatible with the fibre of the carpet installed. The use of incompatible cleaning products may cause irreversible damage to your carpet
- Frequency of cleaning recommendations for all carpet areas, as outlined in this maintenance guide should be followed closely
- Be careful when moving furniture with wheels by placing a protective barrier between the wheels and the carpet
- Ensure there is always plenty of fresh air ventilation when applying cleaning products
- Low residue shampoo solutions should be used to avoid any build-up of shampoo and possible rapid re-soiling
- The carpet should never be subject to excess wetting or left in a wet condition for long periods of time
- And remember... the longer the carpet lasts, the less it costs over its lifecycle.

## **Contract Related Cleaning**

### **Wheelchair, Luggage or Service Trolley rubber wheel marks**

The carpet in highly concentrated traffic areas such as internal ramps and lift cars, which are designed to allow easy access for wheelchairs, luggage and service trolleys may be subjected to high friction rubber transfer markings, especially on turning points.

Due to the amount of concentrated weight transferred through the wheels and the friction created by their turning action these marks can be a significant cause of soiling if left untreated for any period. The rubber transfer markings will become sticky and a small mark can be compound into a much larger marker as soil from feet and wheeled traffic builds up on the original stain. These transfer marks can be removed quickly and safely from the fibres using a Woolsafe® approved gel type solvent. The treated pile area must be thoroughly rinsed out otherwise any remaining gel residue will continue to attract soil.

Targeted treatment of rubber transfer marks should be programmed just prior to regular maintenance of the overall carpet to avoid leaving visible clean spots on the carpet.

### **Interim Cleaning Method**

To minimise operational disruption within the area of an installation where maintaining the appearance of the carpet



is a key requirement, but cannot be achieved by the regular vacuuming cycle, we recommend a programme of interim cleaning, which should be carried out to an on-demand cycle. The interim cleaning cycle may be varied to take into account the specific causes of the soiling. This is a complete cleaning system, which is more intensive than vacuuming and spot cleaning and if carried out regularly and correctly, will reduce the need for deep cleaning, improve the overall pile surface appearance and extend the usable lifespan of the carpet.

#### ***Interim Cleaning Method - Low Moisture Soil Extraction Shampoo***

In this method, a low moisture cleaning solution containing only 5-10% moisture is fed from a container onto a full width rotary bristle brush, which massages the foam into the carpet pile. At the same time, as well as cleaning the carpet pile, the brushing action helps to lift the pile and restore surface appearance. The built-in vacuum extracts residual soil and moisture.

#### ***Operating Procedures***

Spillages, spots and stains should be removed before interim cleaning is carried out.

The carpet must be thoroughly vacuumed, ideally starting with an empty bag or cylinder, to remove as much debris and soil as possible.

**NOTE:** Bonnet buffing is not suitable for use on wool rich carpets

### **Deep (Intensive) Methods of Cleaning - Hot Water Extraction**

However carefully vacuuming, spot cleaning and interim cleaning methods are carried out, there will come a time when overall deep cleaning is required to restore the appearance of the carpet pile and get rid of settled soils that cause gradual dulling of colours. Hot water extraction is one of the best deep cleaning methods available as it effectively flushes soil, grit and other debris from the pile of the carpet. It is important that for wool carpets the deep cleaning must be performed with warm (not hot) water.

#### ***Hot Water Extraction***

Hot water extraction machines use pressurised spray jets to transfer the water/cleaning solution deep into the carpet pile. The cleaning solution and soil particles are then extracted from the pile with a vacuum head, which follows behind the jets. Some machines incorporate a brushing action between the spray head and vacuum to agitate the pile.

#### ***Operating Procedures***

Spillages, spots and stains should be removed before intensive cleaning is carried out.

The carpet must be thoroughly vacuumed, ideally starting with an empty bag or cylinder, to remove as much debris and soil as possible.

Hot water extraction machines can be used in two:

#### *Method One*

This method uses a surfactant solution in the tank, which is sprayed onto the surface of the carpet and immediately vacuumed up by the vacuum head. This is an acceptable method; however, there is little dwell time between spraying and extraction therefore, it is possible that not all the soil is deep clean removed.

#### *Method Two (recommended)*

The hot water extraction tank is filled with a diluted fibre conditioner without shampoo. A pre-spray solution is then applied to the carpet using a power spray with a fine spray nozzle. The chemical is left for a few minutes to impregnate the pile fibres and the carpet is then treated with the hot water extraction machine filled with the fibre conditioner rinse. This flushes the pre-spray from the carpet leaving the fibres in a very clean condition and less likely



to attract further and rapid re-soiling.

It is extremely important, whichever system is employed, that the carpet is not allowed to become over wet otherwise shrinkage can occur, leaving gaps around the perimeter of the installation or splitting of seam joins, both of which are caused by carpet shrinkage.

After cleaning, the carpet should not be walked on until completely dry or rapid re-soiling will occur. As the drying time is a critical requirement, the carpet area undergoing water cleaning needs to be closed off from use until dry. Dependent on ambient conditions, we would expect the carpet to be completely dry in about four hours, although this can be reduced by employing fans and moisture extractors within the area where cleaning operations have taken place.

*Note: It is recommended that only trained professionals should carry out the above procedures. Prior to commencing a cleaning procedure, the cleaning contractor should ensure the proposed cleaning solution and method of application is compatible with the carpet, by undertaking a control test before proceeding with the overall cleaning process. A risk assessment should be carried out prior to the commencement of any cleaning works, which outlines the processes to be undertaken, any specific health and safety considerations and the suitability of the proposed cleaning method in relation to the carpet and installation.*

**The Key Points in the use of Hot Water Extraction are as follows:**

- a. Only use trained professional carpet cleaners to undertake the work required
- b. We recommend the low residue pre-spray/fibre rinse method
- c. Only products suitable for use on wool rich carpets should be used. Woolsafe® products have been through rigorous appraisal processes and are generally compatible with our wool rich products
- d. If the shampoo method is used, only use a low residue type product, which is not engineered to attract soil
- e. Dilution and application rates as recommended by the manufacturer of the cleaning solution should not be exceeded
- f. The carpet should be cordoned off from use so that it cannot be walked on whilst still wet. This not only reduces the risk of re-soiling but also helps to prevent potential slip and fall accidents when walking from a damp carpet onto a hard surface
- g. Good ventilation or a commercial air mover are essential in closed areas, especially when large areas are wet cleaned
- h. It is very important that the carpet is not allowed to become over wet during hot water extraction or any other cleaning process as shrinkage may occur around the perimeter of the area and any seams/joins may open or split.

## DISCLAIMER

The information in our cleaning and maintenance guide is provided in good faith. No responsibility is accepted by Sandringham Carpets for claims in relation to post installation maintenance procedures or treatments.

