

CONSUMER AWARENESS GUIDE

Thank you for visiting our website. I'd like to take this opportunity to tell you more about carpet cleaning and help you choose a reputable carpet cleaning company.

Outlined below are six costly myths about carpet cleaning. I'll also offer four recommendations and give you eight important questions to ask a carpet cleaner before you invite them to your home.

Myth #1: Wait as long as possible before cleaning your carpet.

Since dirt is abrasive – like sandpaper – every time you step on a carpet, dirt grinds into its fibers. This cuts the carpet, causing it to wear out faster. A dirty carpet doesn't last as long as a regularly cleaned one will. And while vacuuming helps, it's simply not enough. The longer you wait to have your carpets cleaned, the more damage your carpet will sustain and the faster it will deteriorate.

Myth #2: The only reason to clean the carpet is to get out the dirt.

Outdoor air contains pollens, fungus, bacteria, air pollution, cigarette smoke, car exhaust – and hundreds of other chemicals. When family members enter your home, each carries the pollens, bacteria and chemicals right along with them – on their hair and skin, clothing, and shoes. Much of it ends up in your carpet. And did you know that tobacco smoke contains over 4000 different chemical compounds, 43 of which can cause cancer? Even if you don't smoke, these chemicals get on your shoes and you track them into your home and deposit them in your carpet. If you're sensitive to cigarette smoke, you'll likely breathe easier if you hire a company that will remove all these harmful chemicals from your carpet.

Myth #3: One method of carpet cleaning is as good any other another.

False as a three dollar bill!

There are two primary carpet cleaning methods: **Dry cleaning** and **hot water extraction**.

Many people believe that dry cleaning a carpet is like dry cleaning clothing. Not true. All carpet cleaning methods use water in one form or another. There are three methods of dry cleaning.

Dry Foam. Using dry foam, a carpet cleaner applies shampoo to your carpet, allows it to dry, and then vacuums up the dried shampoo. This method can leave a residue in your carpet (imagine shampooing your hair and leaving it to dry in this way!), so it isn't very effective.

Dry Chemical. This method is similar to dry foam. When dry chemical is used, the carpet cleaning attendant places a large cotton bonnet on your carpet. Using a machine, the bonnet spins from side to side, absorbing much of the dirt that's in the carpet. After the bonnet is saturated with dirt, another clean cotton bonnet is applied. Bonnet cleaning is like trying to use a large towel to rub the dirt out of your carpet. As with dry foam, it's not very effective.

Dry Compound. Using the dry-compound method, the carpet cleaner spreads an absorbent mixture resembling wet sawdust across the carpet. The machine brushes the mixture into the carpet, which (in theory) causes dirt to absorb into the mixture. When the mixture has dried, a vacuum cleaner is used to remove the material from the carpeting. Because the carpet is not rinsed in any way following this method, it is not very effective.

The second, and most preferred, carpet cleaning method is called Hot Water Extraction.

Using this method, a hot water cleaning solution is forced into the carpet under high pressure and then extracted out of the carpet. This method is also called steam cleaning, even though steam is not used.

Shaw Industries, the world's largest carpet manufacturer, highly recommends hot water extraction. There are two different types to choose from: portable extraction, done with a small machine, or truck-mount extraction, using a large cleaning machine that is mounted inside a truck or van.

Truck mount extraction cleans much better because the system can heat the water to a higher temperature and shoot the cleaning solution deeply into the carpet at a higher pressure – breaking up the dirt, bacteria and pollens. Then the machine uses intense, machine-powered suction to extract the dirt and water from the carpet. This is the method that my company, Ankle Deep, insists on using. Why?

Without question, the most effective way to clean carpeting is with a hot water unit mounted in a truck. This method utilizes the most powerful cleaning machine on the market and the only machine that thoroughly cleans carpets of dirt, harmful bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollens and tobacco residue.

Methods that use cold and warm water remove dirt, but nowhere near as effectively as the hot water truck-mounted method.

Some people believe that hot water damages your carpet. This isn't true. By washing and then rinsing a carpet with hot water, the carpet is cleaned completely – in the same way that the person who showers and then rinses off the dirt and soap will be much cleaner than the person who takes only a sponge bath.

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

Not true. Many companies own hot water cleaners – but a large number of employees don't know how to use them.

You probably know someone who bought the newest computer on the market – but didn't learn how to use it for a year or more. The same is true with carpet cleaning machines. The company may own good equipment, but the employees may not know how to use it correctly. This is why it's important to choose your carpet cleaner carefully.

The best carpet cleaning companies are those that have been certified by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification, known as the IICRC. A carpet cleaning company cannot buy this certification. The carpet cleaner must earn the certification through study, experience and the successful completion of formal, written examination. Cleaners who are certified by the IICRC have, in effect, earned a degree in carpet cleaning.

The IICRC provides written credentials to the companies it certifies. So before you choose a carpet cleaner, ask to see written proof of the companies IICRC certification.

Myth #5: Hire the company that offers the lowest price.

Not always! Here are two important points to consider:

#1. The service that is advertised may not be the service you need to have performed. Before selecting a company, know what you want to accomplish. If you simply seek a service provider who will remove most of the dirt, you can choose from hundreds of companies that use small shampooers or other cleaning methods. You can even rent a machine at many grocery stores and do the job yourself.

But if you want your carpet to be thoroughly cleaned – if you want to remove harmful dirt, bacteria, pollens, chemicals and tobacco residues as well as the obvious dirt – then you should hire a company that uses a hot water extraction unit mounted in a truck. This is the only way to ensure that your carpet will remain healthy and free from dirt, disease-causing organisms, and harmful chemicals.

Remember: The price you see offered may not be for the service you want performed.

#2: The price you see advertised may not be the price you pay. Many homeowners have learned the hard way that the low advertised price was not the amount they ended up paying. If you've hired a carpet cleaner before, you may already have been the victim of false or misleading advertising. You probably learned that while some carpet cleaners offer a cheap price – usually between \$3.95 and \$9.95 per room – they then pressure you into paying a lot more after they get to your home. Some of them may even break the law by using illegal bait and switch tactics.

As in all businesses and professions, the carpet cleaning industry has its share of bad apples. Some are unethical and a few are dishonest. Using misleading advertising and false promises, they cast a dark shadow on our entire industry.

But you'll also find carpet cleaners – professionals like me – who work hard to earn your trust, your respect, and your return business. Mine is a company built on honesty and integrity, and I believe that old-fashioned customer service and courtesy are the cornerstone of any successful company.

Myth #6: An honest carpet cleaning company should be able to give you an exact quote over the telephone.

Consumers often believe that if the estimated price is \$6 per room, and they have four rooms, the total price of the service will be \$24. But this isn't always the case. An estimate is an estimate until a carpet cleaning expert can come on site and see the scope of the job: the condition of the carpet, the total square footage, and so forth.

Honest, reputable carpet cleaning companies usually price carpet cleaning by the square foot. So, if you'd like to know the exact cost of cleaning your carpet, you need to know the exact number of square feet that need cleaning. To determine square footage, measure each room from wall to wall.

Also, different service packages are available. At Ankle Deep, we offer a FREE Carpet Audit. During this Audit, we review the maintenance history of your carpet and the existing concerns that you have. We'll discuss the conditions present in the carpet, review the level of use, and then make our recommendations, offering a maintenance prescription or service package for your carpet.

To recap: both the square footage and the specific service or services to be performed are needed to give an accurate carpet cleaning quote.

If you're ready to have your carpets cleaned,
I'll offer you these (4) recommendations:

Recommendation #1: Commit to getting your carpets cleaned. The longer they remain dirty, the sooner they'll wear out and the longer you'll be breathing in the pollens, fungus, chemicals, dust mites and other potentially dangerous irritants that live in your carpet.

Recommendation #2: List your objectives. Do you want only the dirt removed, something you could do yourself by renting a machine? Or do you want the bacteria, fungus and chemicals removed right along with the dirt, which will require a hot water truck-mounted cleaner, like the one I use? Do you want to work with an honest, reputable company – or are you willing to risk working with a company that offers you the lowest price, even if the company might not be in business tomorrow?

Recommendation #3: Ask specific questions and listen carefully to the answers. Here are the questions to ask a potential carpet cleaning service agent over the phone before they ever come to your house:

1. What method of carpet cleaning do you recommend?
2. What type of equipment do you use to clean carpet?
3. What does your equipment remove from my carpet?
4. How often should I get my carpets cleaned?
5. What training have you had in cleaning carpet?
6. Are you a member of any trade associations and, if so, which ones?
7. Are you certified by the IICRC and will you show me your certificate?
8. Do you guarantee your work?

Recommendation #4: When you're satisfied that you're working with an honest, competent professional, invite him to your home and ask for a specific quote in writing. A written quote gives you the assurance that you know exactly what the service will cost you – no surprises.

By following these four recommendations, you'll gain all the information you need to make an informed decision.

If you want your carpeting to be completely and thoroughly cleaned then I invite you to call me. I'll be happy to answer your questions. I'll come to your home, complete a FREE Carpet Audit, and provide a written quotation – without obligation.

I know that many consumers are skeptical about carpet cleaning companies. They should be! Before I got into the business, I was skeptical too!

That's why I fully guarantee my work. That's right. **I fully guarantee every carpet cleaning job we do. If you aren't happy with our work, we'll re-clean the area for free. And if you still aren't pleased, you pay nothing.** Not one cent. What could be fairer?

I hope you've found this Consumer Awareness Guide helpful.

If you have questions or comments – or if you would like to schedule a Free Carpet Audit including a written quotation, please call our office at 954-491-4772.

On behalf of Ankle Deep – thank you for your kind attention.

Harold Fletcher – President



"For Your Everyday Needs, Or When Disaster Strikes"

(954)491-4772, (954)491-4775 fax

Email: main@ankledeep.net

Website: www.ankledeep.net