



Beaulieu Residential

Tek Newsletter

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More About Carpet Installation on Stairs

It is not uncommon for our Technical Services staff to receive calls or e-mail inquiries in regard to installing carpet on stairs. Unfortunately, a considerable number of these inquiries pertain to after-installation concerns which include, but are not limited to exposed tack strip pins, wrinkles and buckles, pile yarn lay and pattern match. And, because of the many types of stairs installers can encounter (stairs with railing and spindles, bullnose stairs, stairs with landings, spiral stairs, etc.,) an entire chapter in an installation-training manual could be dedicated to the methods and skills required. However, in order to keep our reader's synapses snapping, this newsletter will focus only on the fundamental installation procedures needed to avoid the aforementioned concerns. A stair illustration is included here for points of reference.

Starting with tackstrip installation, if carpet on stairs is installed using the Waterfall method described in our "Carpet Installation on Stairs" Bulletin, tackstrip must be installed in the stair "crotch" area on both the tread and riser, and be positioned so that the pins on the tread point toward the riser and the pins on the riser point toward the tread. The gully space between these two tackstrips should be no thicker than twice the thickness of the carpet.

If pad is used on stairs it must be secured with appropriate adhesive or staples on the tread. If the stairs has nosing the pad must extend over the nosing and be secured here using staples or tacks. Pad is not required on the riser. If carpet is installed on stairs using the direct glue-down method, both tread and riser require full-spread adhesive application.

A popular alternative to installing carpet on stairs is the Cap and Band method (the "Cap" refers to carpet installed on the stair tread, and the "Band" area refers to carpet installed on the riser). Using this installation method, tack strip is installed on the tread location and staples or upholstery nails are used to secure the carpet at the base of the riser in the crotch location. If the stairs have nosing the carpet is also stapled or tacked to the stairs under the stair nose. Another alternative is to install the carpet over pad on the tread and glue it to the riser.

Carpet direction on stair installations should be positioned so that the pile (nap) direction runs up the stairs. The only exception here would be where pattern match requirements must be considered in order to be consistent with on the floor and landing. Carpets with small patterns may allow the installer to circumvent pattern match requirements.

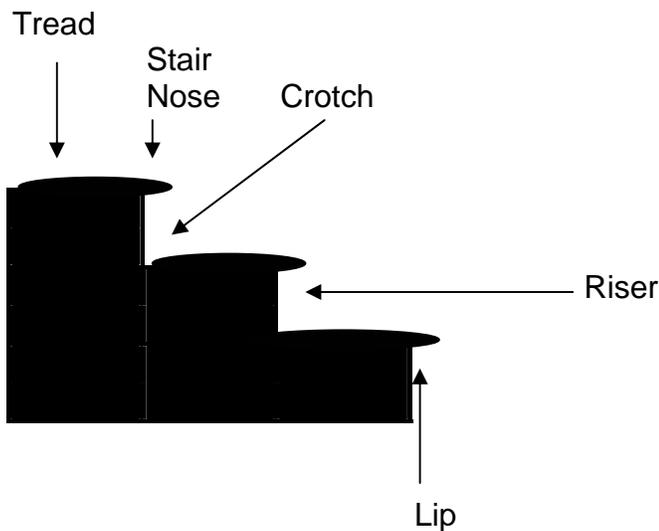
When measuring carpet for stairs, measure the overall length of the stairs in the flight, including both tread and riser. Be certain to add at least two (2) inches to the total measurement for each stair step to account for the additional carpet needed to address pad thickness considerations. If the stairs are equipped with nosing add one (1) additional foot to the total stair flight measurement to account for the carpet curvature requirements in this location. When measuring across the width of the stairs measure across the tread and, if one edge of the stairs is open, up under the nosing on this side of the steps until it meets the riser. Add two (2) inches in the carpet width requirements with each tread measurement when pad is used on an open-ended flight of stairs.

Waterfall carpet installations start by tucking and anchoring the carpet to the tackstrip at the stair crotch location using a stair tool and hammer, and then at the lip (riser/stair nose location) using staples or tacks. Tucking the carpet in each crotch helps to tighten the carpet stretch. Secure the carpet onto the tack strip pins and then “swipe” the carpet along the tackstrip using the side of the stair tool to help compress the pins and put them out of harms way. If the stairs do not have nosing the carpet is secured on each consecutive step by stretching and tucking into the crotch.

Stair installations are one of the very few exceptions to the mandatory use of a power stretcher. Using a knee kicker the carpet should be stretched straight ahead from the center of each tread to the crotch and hooked on the tackstrip at the crotch location. This process should be repeated with evenly spaced knee kicks at each side of the tread in the same manner and on each consecutive tread. Next, smooth out the carpet on the riser and staple it at the stair lip location, placing staples approximately every three (3) inches apart and along the edge of the riser. Some heavier grade carpet constructions, such as Berbers, may be stiffer than other carpets and, as a result, more difficult to place over the nosing and tuck at the lip. In these cases, a series of small wedge cuts underneath the nosing will generally allow the carpet to be properly fit here. The very soft and pliable nature of our LuxuryBac carpet backing system does much to ease the installation of carpet on stairs when compared to other traditional carpet backings.

At this point the installer should stop and examine the first completed step to make certain the carpet has been evenly kicked-in, is smooth, flat and wrinkle free. If the carpet installation is not satisfactory at this point, it will be necessary to unhook the carpet and repeat the installation process.

The carpet on stairs installation guidelines found here is very general in nature and covers only certain fundamental installation procedures for commonly encountered stairs. In addition, most of the procedures listed are used more so with the Waterfall installation methods, while some of these methods apply to both Cap and Band and Waterfall installation methods. Stairs such as those equipped with bullnose step, with a birdcage and spindles, and spiral stairs are beyond the scope of this newsletter and require additional installation procedures beyond what is outlined here.



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