

### Re-stretching Techniques

The most common cause of wrinkles and buckles in carpeting is due to the installer's failure to obtain the proper amount (percentage) of stretch during the initial installation. In most cases, improper stretch results from the installer not using, or not properly using a power stretcher.

The industry installation standard requirement for carpet stretch, which is published in The Carpet and Rug Institute's Standard for Installation for Commercial Carpet (CRI 104), and Residential Carpet (CRI 105), is 1 to 1 ½ percent of the carpet's length and width. Properly power stretching wrinkled and buckled carpet will eliminate the presence of wrinkles and buckles, and will also enable it to continue to be used for its normal duration of time, provided the carpet was not damaged (delaminated) as a result of being improperly stretched initially.

To properly re-stretch a carpet, certain procedures must be followed. First and foremost, re-stretching requires the installer to treat the carpet as if it is a new installation. The installer must strictly comply with the CRI's installation guidelines, including the 8-step stretch procedures outlined in their Stretch Diagram for Tufted Carpet to assure for even stretch (see below). All furniture must be completely removed from each room to be re-stretched. Simply shifting furniture from one side of a room to the other side will not work since the weight of the furniture will still prevent the installer from obtaining an even, and the required amount of stretch. Re-stretching requires the carpet to be completely removed from the tack strip along all walls. The tack strip must be inspected to assure it is still firmly anchored to the substrate, and to be certain there is no presence of bent pins. Tack strip with bent pins must be replaced. Padding should also be checked for damage. Because improperly stretched carpet is subject to movement, carpet pad is prone to be damaged by this movement. Any damaged areas of pad should be replaced. Doorway seams should be re-opened, and old seam tape removed. Installers might find that it's a good practice to lightly sand polypropylene secondary backing with a 100 grit sanding block before re-forming seams. This procedure helps assure that the necessary thermoplastic adhesion of the seam tape to the carpet's backing is obtained when the seam is re-constructed. Although the required percentage of carpet re-stretch need can be determined in part by the severity of wrinkles and buckles present, it will still range between 1 to 1 ½ percent of the carpet's length and width. Slightly less amount of stretch can be placed in the carpet's width, especially if seam peaking starts to develop.

As previously pointed out, the use of a pole stretcher/power stretcher is mandatory. Excluding stairs and closets, there is no exception to this rule! The use of a knee kicker must be limited to positioning the carpet only. Consideration must be given to already existing floor cut outs, such as for HVAC system vent locations. When the proper amount of re-stretch has been achieved, already existing floor cut-outs will move. Carpet "fill" pieces may be needed to patch these areas as a result. Carpet along all walls will require re-trimming so the carpet edges can be properly tucked into gully areas. Doorway seams should be reconstructed only after the carpet has been re-stretched. All edges to be seamed must be seam sealed, as well as edges that will be tucked under metal strips, or abutted to a hard surface.

To obtain more information as to the various causes of wrinkles and buckles in carpet, please refer to Beaulieu's Technical Newsletter "Cause & Affect of Dimensional Stability Complaints".

