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## **Planned Preventive Maintenance**

New carpet is the type of monetary investment that pays back many dividends when it is properly cared for. Not only will it continue to add to aesthetics of the home and work place, it will continue to provide a sense of comfort, healthiness and euphoria. In other words, a properly cared for carpet will provide consumers with carpet that remains visually attractive over many years of use. A commonly used term to describe this carpet characteristic is appearance retention. And while proper installation, care and maintenance play a vital role here, so too does proper carpet specification.

Proper carpet specification includes carpet color and construction. Carpet construction includes pile height, weight and density, texture, pattern and backing, as well as the performance characteristics of the various pile yarn types. These carpet features, along with knowing what type carpet to use where, have much to do with the useful life cycle of a carpet. As an example, Berber and cut-pile carpets in general, and light colors in particular should be limited to areas that receive minimal traffic. Loop-pile carpets and darker colors tend to be a more practical choice for areas that receive high traffic. The performance characteristics of nylon might make it a better choice if high traffic is expected. Olefin's stain resistance features might make it the better choice in areas subjected to spills. Polyester might be the best bet when both stain resistance and wearability must be considered.

Because soiling is an everyday and cumulative process, and because commonly encountered abrasive soils can damage and dull carpet fibers, preventive maintenance should begin long before any soiling becomes apparent. This is particularly true since today's carpet fibers are designed using cross-section configurations that are intended to hide soil. This starts with vacuuming. The most efficient vacuums are those that provide high lift (the air flow needed to effectively remove soils and contaminants from the carpet), efficient filtration, and adjustable brush agitation. How often a carpet needs to be vacuumed depends on where it is installed. In many cases, homeowners who own and correctly operate a high performance vacuum only need to vacuum most areas in their home twice a week. However, high traffic areas may require more frequent vacuuming. Suffice it to say, you simply can't over-vacuum a carpet! Regular effective vacuuming is unquestionably the key-most consideration when it comes to carpet care.

Studies show that the vast majority of the soil carpet is exposed to is tracked-on from the outdoor environment. Because of this, walk-off mats both inside and outside the home should be considered. The use of walk-off mats will help significantly to trap the majority of soils and oils that would otherwise be tracked off on a carpet. The more a walk-off mat extends from the entrance of a home the more soil it will collect. As much as 80% of soil (and moisture) can be trapped by walk-off mats over the course of the first five to six steps after entering a home. However, since walk-off mats help capture significant amounts of soil they too must be frequently vacuumed, cleaned and/or replaced when needed.

Spots and spills are another key consideration. Because many spots and spills can contain harsh substances, prompt attention is often necessary in order to prevent them from becoming more insidious stains. Just one small stain can adversely affect the appearance of a carpet many times

more than ordinary foot traffic will. Because of this, carpet manufacturers provide proven stain removal guidelines that address a wide-range of spots and spills. We recommend that consumers familiarize themselves with the recommended products that are used for spot cleaning and keep these products readily available to spot clean their carpet when needed. Commercial spot cleaners should carry the Carpet and Rug Institute's (CRI) Green Label Seal of Approval (SOA) program. These products, which include our own Hollytex Spot Cleaner wipes, have been tested and shown to be effective in the removal of some very stubborn staining agents.

Restorative cleaning refers to systematic deep cleaning to remove embedded soils such as concrete dust, organic and inorganic gritty contaminants, volatilized cooking oils, sticky substance, and airborne particles such as dusts and furnace soot that are trapped in a carpet by the filter-like trapping characteristics of a carpet's pile yarns. Countless studies have demonstrated that hot-water extraction cleaning is the most effective cleaning method available to maintain carpet.

Most all carpet manufacturers require their carpets be cleaned using the hot water extraction method at least once every twelve to twenty four months in order for the consumer to maintain their warranty rights. Based on the rate of carpet soiling, more frequent deep cleanings may be required. Most carpet manufacturers agree that both the equipment and the in-tank cleaning solution used to clean carpet must have been tested and certified by the CRI's SOA program. These products have shown to provide a high level of cleaning performance, they are not excessively alkaline, and have also demonstrated not to attract soils at an accelerated rate (a common problem encountered with many detergents, and with many detergents that are not properly used).

Beaulieu's standard commitment to our customers is excellence. This commitment helps us to better serve our customers with reliable care and maintenance recommendations and requirements in order for them to enjoy many years of trouble-free use with their Beaulieu carpet.

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