

Texture Retention Ratings (TRR, TARR, ARR, PAR)

Today, more than ever, consumers in the know understand that our industry uses various test methods to replicate our residential carpet's response to actual foot traffic or from mechanical wear simulators in an effort to help determine the appearance retention of these carpets after what has been estimated to be one (1) year of use. However, the protracted struggle has been trying to get everyone to agree and clearly define what past acronyms like ARR (Appearance Retention Rating) and PAR (Performance Assessment Rating) were really all about. And in a recent effort to do this our industry has added Texture Appearance Retention Rating (TARR) to the mix.

In the mind of most consumers, any change in a carpet's appearance relative to use is covered by the manufacturer's wear or texture retention warranty. Chief among the self-discerned warranty coverage is changes in a carpet's appearance due to crushing and matting. However, there is little doubt that many consumers who, after hearing what these warranties covered or, more importantly, didn't cover, may have felt that carpet manufacturers were using these warranties to sell more sizzle than steak. Attempts by the carpet manufacturers to help clarify these warranties have often been dismissed, or totally disregarded. In some instances these warranties may have seemed slack or not easy to comprehend, especially, to the manufacturer's attempts to define what a texture retention warranty is all about.

Perhaps the first thing to clarify here is that because carpet is a vertically oriented textile that is walked on every day, carpet pile yarns are eventually going to bend and compress. By itself, this is a normal and expected condition, and the time required for this to occur, as well as the degree it happens is based on influences such as proper carpet specification, method of installation, and the quality and frequency of care the carpet receives.

Soiling plays a significant role in regard to a carpet's pile yarns ability to maintain their visual integrity. However, because soiling conditions are on-location, variable, and something the manufacturer can't control, when a carpet is tested for its texture retention properties it is done so in the absence of soils. Any claim resulting from a change in a carpet's "texture" due to adverse soiling and/or improper maintenance need not apply here.

What is covered by Texture Retention Warranties is the ability of the carpet's tufts by themselves, to retain their original shape and orientation, and not untwist, burst, bloom or open excessively. Our industry's universal measuring stick used to grade loss of texture is the Carpet and Rug Institute's standardized rating scale TM-101. Using this scale, which relies on a series of photographic references showing carpet based on a scale rating of 5.0 (new carpet) to 1.0 (severe texture change), carpet manufacturers are able to fairly and consistently assess carpets that have experienced various states of texture loss.

Recent brainstorming sessions at the Carpet and Rug Institute in regard to any myopic consumer perceptions still lingering in the world of textile floor coverings in regard to texture retention warranties suggests that a remedy here may require no more than removing (or more strategically locating) the word "appearance" in these warranties so that "texture" appearance is the undisputed focal point here.

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