

Maintenance Guide



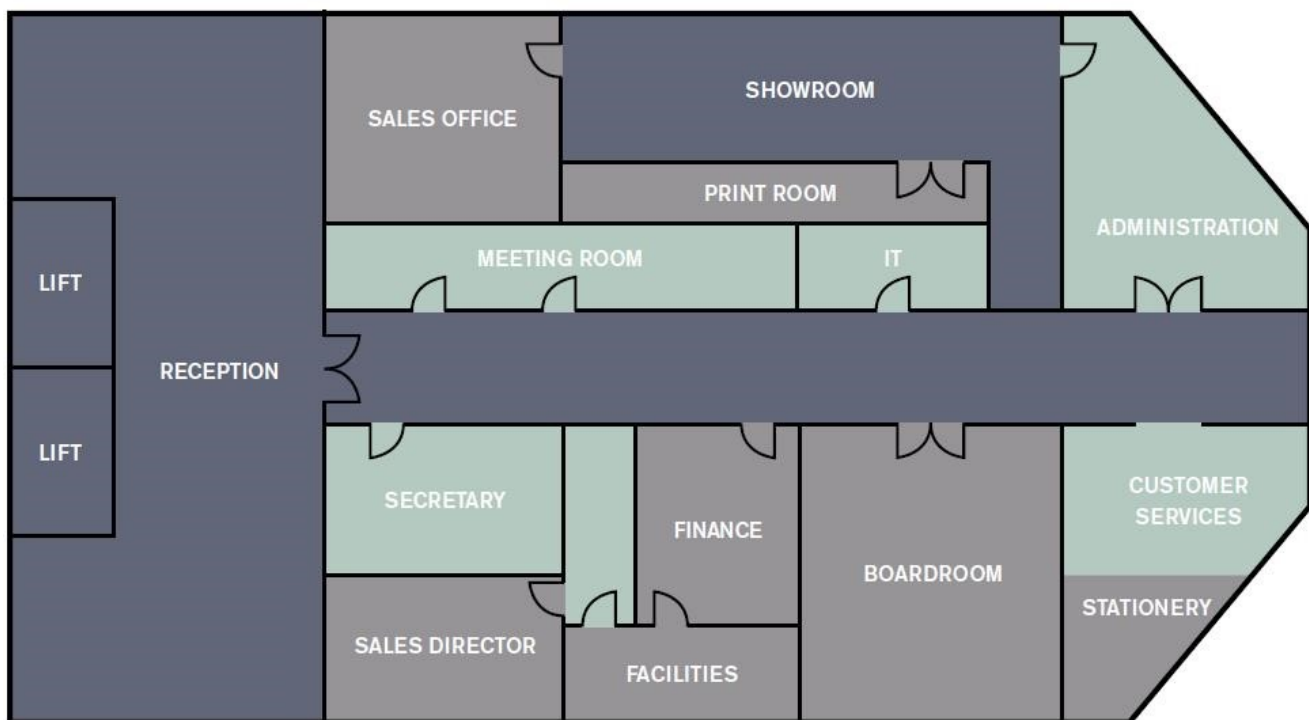
Carrying out a proper maintenance programme on your carpet will not only extend the life of your carpet investment, but will have a positive effect on the appearance and performance of your flooring. Poorly maintained carpet can adversely affect the interior look, reduce performance and increase the need for carpet replacement, which not only has a financial cost, but an environmental impact.

Selecting the right products is as important as maintaining them. Choosing the correct carpet construction, design and colour, aids the long term performance and appearance of the interior scheme.

The Floor Hub recommends 5 areas to focus on:

1. Preventative Maintenance

Example of maintenance programme



Daily Maintenance

- Areas to be vacuumed daily
- Daily spot and stain removal

Programmed Cleaning

- Three monthly clean of heavy traffic areas
- Six monthly clean of medium traffic areas
- Twelve monthly clean of light traffic areas

Barrier Matting

Barrier mats are an important part of any maintenance programme as they are designed to capture inbound soil. This soil can be removed by vacuum cleaning, so that it does not spread to other areas. Barrier mats should be cleaned daily and even replaced regularly to prevent the build up of soil, so they remain effective. A minimum of 3-5 metres of barrier matting should be placed at each entrance depending on traffic volume and flow. The entrance area should be a combination of both primary and secondary barrier systems.

2. Routine Maintenance

The frequency of cleaning must be based on how much traffic goes through different areas within the building and its specific needs.

A typical routine maintenance plan would include the following:-

Vacuum Cleaning

Effective vacuuming is an important part of any carpet cleaning programme. Dirt, if not vacuumed, can become embedded in the fibres, damaging them as well as changing the colour and design of the carpet. Vacuuming also helps to lift and restore the pile. The right vacuum cleaner is essential. We recommend heavy duty upright vacuum cleaners with twin motors (in which one motor creates suction and the other drives a bristle type brush) will give the best results on most carpet constructions. For needlepunch, high cut pile, polyester and woollen loop pile carpets, we recommend you use a suction only vacuum cleaner.

The carpet should be visually inspected to work out whether the carpet needs vacuuming, but ideally this should be on a daily basis. Heavy traffic areas such as entrances/exits, lobbies, hallways and barrier matting should be vacuumed more frequently.

Spot Cleaning

It is essential that localised stains are treated as quickly as possible in order to reduce the chance of permanent damage. It is important to understand what the stain is in order to treat it correctly.

Water Based Stains - Remove any solid matter by scraping with a blunt object (e.g. back of a knife). Blot any liquid with a clean white cloth, working from the outside in to the centre to prevent spreading. For dried-in stains use a clean white cloth with lukewarm water. After blotting remove the remaining stain with a small amount of dry compound. Using a hand brush, gently work the dry compound into the area. Allow to dry and gently brush the area again, then vacuum. Avoid aggressive brushing as this will damage the pile.

For persistent stains, use a stain remover after spot cleaning. Follow the instructions carefully and apply to the relevant carpet construction type.

Oil Based Stains - Carpet spotters should be used and tested initially on a small inconspicuous area to check for colourfastness. Spray the carpet spotter onto a clean white cloth and press in to the carpet. Check for dye transfer to the cloth. If dye has transferred to the cloth, do not use. Otherwise, press the cloth into the stained area, wiping gently from the outer edge inwards towards the centre of the stain. Repeat until removed. Any chemical stains should be treated with water to remove excess. Leave the stain to dry. Treat with a small amount of dry compound as explained in the Water Based Stains section.

Chewing Gum - Chewing gum spray remover is recommended. Spray the gum and allow the spray to freeze the gum. Use a blunt object to remove the gum. Any remaining particles can be removed by gently brushing or vacuum cleaning.

3. Interim Maintenance

Interim maintenance takes place if the routine maintenance no longer gives the desired aesthetics and performance. It should ideally be carried out by a specialist, either once or twice a year, depending on the specific needs of the building and the different areas within it. Vacuuming should always be carried out before the following methods are undertaken.

Dry Extraction (aka Dry Compound Cleaning)

This cleaning method is easy to undertake and is relatively non-disruptive, as areas can be used almost immediately after cleaning. It also doesn't leave any sticky detergent residue that can cause re-soiling.

Firstly, the carpet should be thoroughly vacuumed and pre-sprayed with a suitable traffic lane cleaner which is left to dry. Then the dry compound is spread on to the carpet and gently brushed. It is then left to dry for 30 minutes before vacuuming. Extra care needs to be paid to the full removal of any residue (powder and soil) as it is not colourless.

This method should not be used on needlepunched and high cut pile products.

Encapsulation (aka Crystal Dry Cleaning)

Encapsulation cleaning is a low moisture, quick and easy method, with reduced impact on the workforce.

Firstly, a solution of encapsulating crystals is sprayed on to the floor and brushed in to the carpet. After a drying time of 1 hour the crystals are vacuumed thoroughly. The crystals effectively encapsulate any soil which is then removed by vacuuming. The main benefits of this method include ongoing access to the area that is being treated, a reduced treatment time and colourless residue.

This method should not be used on needlepunched products.

Bonnet Cleaning

Firstly, the carpet should be thoroughly vacuumed and sprayed with a bonnet cleaner. Before drying begins, the area should be agitated on a low speed (175 rpm max) with a specialist rotary floor machine to which a cotton bonnet has been attached. The carpet should be agitated in several directions to loosen attached soil. As the area is agitated, soil will accumulate in the bonnet and should be regularly checked for soil. After approximately 15m² the bonnet should be turned over and the area cleaned again if necessary. The bonnet should be rinsed with specific solutions or replaced before proceeding. After the area has dried completely, the area should be vacuumed thoroughly.

Care should be taken when undertaking this cleaning method on cut pile carpets, as improper treatment can damage the fibres.

4. Periodic Maintenance

Even with routine maintenance, over time carpets become dull due to an accumulation of dirt and stains that regular cleaning cannot remove. Wet cleaning then becomes necessary.

Hot Water Extraction Cleaning

The hot water extraction cleaning method is effective as it deep cleans the area reaching to the bottom of the fibres to fully extract the soil, without leaving any compounds in the pile. It works by injecting water and cleaning agents into the carpet and suspending the dirt in the solution which is then removed by a built-in vacuum system.

Firstly, the carpet should be thoroughly vacuumed and spot cleaning undertaken on stubborn stains. The method uses a hot water extraction machine filled with extraction liquid diluted with water. The machine injects the cleaning solution deep in to the carpet and extracts the mix of dirt and solution at the same time, whilst rinsing the carpet surface.

This combination is the most effective method. It allows more time for the chemical to react and neutralising the cleaning chemical in the rinse. It is important not to over wet the carpet, therefore it is recommended that a specialist cleaner undertakes this method. The floor should be given 24 - 48 hours to dry to avoid re-soiling.

In areas where humidity levels are important, such as computer rooms, this method should not be used.

Special care should be taken when cleaning carpet tiles laid on raised access floors to avoid damage to the modules.

This method is recommended for Needlepunched products.

5. General Maintenance

Proper routine maintenance on a daily/weekly basis, supported by periodic maintenance, keeps the aesthetics and the performance of the carpets at an optimum level for a long period of time. The better the maintenance plan is set up and maintained the longer this time period will be.

Cleaning Solutions

It is important to select the correct cleaning solution for the type of carpet and stain to be removed. The following guidelines are recommended:

- Avoid using cleaning solutions with pH levels over 9.5 max in dilution or which contain toxic, odorous or flammable solvents.
- Products designed for use in hot extraction equipment. Should not contain oil-based de-foamers.
- Should not contain optical brighteners.

Always test the cleaning solutions on a less visible area of carpet.

Carpet Tile Replacement

Carpet tiles that have become badly stained or damaged can be replaced with spare/attic stock. These tiles may have a newer appearance than the ones being replaced. If this is the case, take a tile from a less visible area and replace the damaged/soiled tile with this one. Place the attic/spare tile in the less visible area. See The Floor Hub's Installation Guide for the correct installation method and lay direction to be followed.

A tile can be removed by slipping a knife edge under one corner of the tile and peeling it from the subfloor.

Access Floors

The relevant access floor manufacturer should be contacted for recommendations for carpet cleaning in relation to methods and techniques recommended here. Low moisture methods and techniques are generally preferred.

Please refer to **The Floor Hub's Installation Guide** for best practices when installing carpet tiles. Or visit www.thefloorhub.co.uk for further information.