

Report

Avoid These 7 Mistakes when Hiring Services to Clean Your Commercial Carpets

Plus - Easy Comparison Chart of Commercial Carpet Cleaning Methods

Plus - Insider Cost Information

Plus - Negotiating Tips

Commercial Carpet Cleaning - The Good Bad and Ugly

When you are ready to have your commercial carpets cleaned, you should have a basic understanding of **'what not to do'**. This will put you miles ahead in saving yourself from a lot of hassle, disappointment and costly mistakes. This report reveals common sense information that should be helpful to anyone who has commercial carpets to be cleaned.

Getting this report is not meant to give you information from an 'inside view' from our company who is well experienced in the commercial carpet cleaning industry and knows the carpet cleaning industry overall does not have the most polished reputation. Because of this, we want you to have an advantage when you are ready to hire your next commercial carpet cleaning service provider.

The Carpet Cleaning Industry

It is reported that more than 33,000 carpet cleaning professionals operate in the United States. If you add all the 'non-professionals it at least doubles that number in my opinion'. The Carpet Cleaning industry had never had a stellar reputation, namely because there are too many 'non-professionals running around' doing shady business, and too many others that simply may mean well, but just don't have the know how to quality deliver results and provide a professional level of customer service.

I have realized that even today, there is mass confusion and illiteracy regarding carpet cleaning in general and even more for cleaning commercial carpets. But mostly it can all be a moot point if you just know how to navigate the finding and hiring or the right commercial carpet cleaning service.

Commercial Carpet Cleaning is a newer classification for carpet cleaners. Most carpet cleaners do not distinguish the the difference between cleaning commercial carpets or residential carpets, namely because they use the same method to clean both. But there is a significant different on many points that should be important to you if you are a business owner, property manager, or facilities manager that has commercial carpets. Simply put, **you can do better if you know better.**

Mistake #1. Not Choosing Services that Specialize in Commercial Carpet Cleaning.

Find a service that specializes in cleaning commercial carpets. You will find they can deliver a better result and better prices, especially the larger your building or facilities. Most carpet cleaning companies specialize in 'residential type carpet cleaning', so it's harder to find 'dedicated commercial carpet cleaners. Commercial carpet cleaners however better understand how to clean commercial carpets better (with fewer problems), faster and often at lower cost.

Mistake #2. Blindly letting your Janitorial or Service Clean Your Carpets.

If you're janitorial service says they can clean your commercial carpets - inquire and verify their carpet cleaning method and other clients. I personally have witnessed carpet cleaning being done by one janitorial service with hired labor, towels and spray bottles. Use the chart supplied here-in to decide what method you prefer. Ask if they 'sub-contract the work' and who you will be dealing with if things wrong. Are they insured or listed as an additional insured, what method of cleaning will be used, etc. There are exceptions to this point however - some Janitorial services do employ or

contract with quality professional commercial carpet cleaners - you just need to know before you sign on the dotted line.

Mistake #3. Not Requiring and Verifying Liability Insurance

Never hire a commercial carpet cleaning service that is does not have adequate liability insurance to cover replacement of your carpets or other damages. Always verify the providers Certificate of Insured - by calling their insurance carrier directly and requesting a copy be sent directly to you. I know of a school in Georgia that was forced to spend \$80,000 to replace commercial carpet less than 1 year old, when a local hot water extraction company (not insured) left the carpet too wet during the summer months causing mold growth led to removing the carpet. Another example was when a carpet cleaning van accidentally rolled down the hill into the building. Stuff happens, make sure your service has liability insurance that will cover damages on your property or for carpet replacement.

Mistake #4. Not Getting an Onsite Demonstration and Quote

Not having the service provider provide an 'onsite demonstration and quote' before you choose. Forget those by phone quotes - you are asking for troubles you don't want. It may seem like a hassle, but it will save you bigger hassles if you don't. This is so recommended because you will see first hand who you are dealing with, what method and equipment they use, and their demonstration should be on 'your dirt', preferably on one of you toughest dirtiest areas. It might be you entrance area, or another area with heavy dirt and stains. If the company is not willing to clean at least an 8x8 sqft area with their equipment/process - don't waste your time with them.

Note: This is one of the best tips you should consider. It's much better than all the ideas of checking references, reviews, experience, etc. and really gives you the 'results oriented' information you need.

Mistake #5. Not Being Clear About What You Are Paying For

I learned early in my career as a management consultant that before I could make a client happy with my services, I had to clearly know what they wanted, and if I could deliver same. With commercial carpet cleaning you can be tempted to make a lot of assumptions, and many carpet cleaners will use that to their advantage. Make sure you get up-front clear pricing in writing, agree on things like days, hours they will be working, deadlines if needed, if doors will be open while they work, what they will move to clean under, and what will be left in place and cleaned around, what areas might be off limits, who to contact if problems are discovered, and anything else you want to know. Then again, you both have this agreement in writing with signatures, You will be glad you did and it always results in better service with less hassles.

An important tip here is to include in your contract a 'final walk through' with you before you sign off on the job as acceptable. And, you should consider a '1 week' callback period in case you discover 're-appearing' stains.

Mistake #6. Not Having Reasonable Expectations

Expecting too much for too little equals disappointment. If you have a very difficult situation (say carpet that is trashed with filth from 12 years of wear and tear) then don't expect a miracle on the cheap. It's common sense to know that the dirtier and more difficult the situation, the more time and effort is required to do the job professionally.

On the other side of this however, you may be told that 'that's as clean as it will get' and be advised to buy new carpet to replace those difficult areas. I say so from personal experience many many times to clean carpets that indeed looked like 'goners' and were slated as 'unclean-able', when actually it was cleanable with the proper skill and time. My advice to you is to have them try to clean again - under your watch. You may find that in their 'rush' to get the job done, they may just need to 'work it' with more patience or purpose before it comes clean.

Mistake #7. Not implementing good advice from professional commercial carpet cleaners.

Having carpets cleaned enough does not necessarily mean hiring a commercial carpet cleaner. First and foremost it means using your own carpet cleaners, those vacuums you have! Frequent vacuuming and use of 'walk off mats at entrances' is the best way to keep you carpets clean, and professional carpet cleaners away. Otherwise research proves it's better (and saves you money) if you keep your commercial carpets cleaned, rather than waiting until they have been damage by grit, dirt and wear. Any professional commercial carpet cleaning service provider should be well rehearsed at inspecting your carpets and providing sound advice and solutions to help you manage your carpets with optimum results that support your goals. Even smaller businesses can get excellent tips and service from good commercial carpet cleaners that will save you money and headaches depending on your situation.

Real examples have been to identify where the 'soil' is originating from - and to implement low cost easy ways to better control it from getting on your carpets.

'Commercial' vs 'Residential' Carpet - The Basic Difference

> **Residential Carpets** are generally thick carpets with foam or rubber padding underneath.

> **Commercial Carpets** (at least modern versions) are generally thinner (though there are exceptions) and **very dense** carpets in loop or cut pile designed to be very durable under heavy use. They generally do not have padding like residential carpet and are glued directly to the floor - which is usually concrete.

It's important to understand the fundamental difference between commercial and residential carpet, because this is what I consider to be where most confusion is, and how it affects your decision to choose which 'method' of carpet cleaning is best for your situation.

Plus

Choosing the right method to clean Your carpets.

Getting the right service to clean your commercial carpets is only part of what you need to do right. The second important consideration is to know what method is going to be used to clean your commercial carpets. The carpet industry recognizes five cleaning methods for carpet. These methods include:

..dry absorbent compound,
..dry foam,
..hot water extraction,
..rotary bonnet,
..and rotary shampoo.

I will simplify this however to 3 categories and provide realistic pro's and con's of each based on our experience, customers feedback experience, and other credible information sources.

1. Dry Process Rotary Methods (dry foam, bonnet, absorbent compounds, etc.)
2. Hot Water Extraction (truck mount units, trailer mount units, portable units, etc.)
3. Encapsulation (Newer method combining improved chemistry with agitation)

Why I bring this up is because clean carpet can be accomplished by any of these methods, but method can influence your costs, and costs are what most business owners and facilities managers are interested in. Also, each method can render different 'clean results' and overall experience and satisfaction to you. So you may be willing to pay more - or less depending on what you learn here.

To compare these 3 methods in detail could require writing a book. I have tried to boil it down to the main things that most business owners and facilities managers would want to know. And just as a pre-cursor to the chart. Our company has employed the use of some of the best hot water 'truck mounted' and portables hot water extraction equipment available on commercial carpets of various types. We have used and worked with professionals who employ the bonnet cleaning methods, and dry compound methods, and interviewed non-clients and new clients who used these methods. We have had no direct experience with dry foam methods however.

This Chart is focused on ‘Commercial Buildings with Commercial Carpet’

Process/Method	Pro's	Con's
<p>Dry/Rotary/Bonnet Methods: Dry Compounds/Foams, Bonnet, Shampooing</p>	<p>Can do good job of cleaning if service providers are skilled. Is an older method of cleaning commercial carpets.</p> <p>Avoids wet carpet issues - thus avoiding problems such as mold, browning and water stains.</p> <p>Can clean commercial carpet in large and multistory buildings with no limits.</p> <p>Requires very little to no water depending on method. Carpet dries quickly.</p> <p>Does not require open doors or windows - avoiding potential sources of security issues and energy loss.</p>	<p>Costs can be more due to slower cleaning method and more labor intensive.</p> <p>Dry compounds can cause air quality issues and dust problems.</p> <p>Some of these processes can put carpets at risk for damage - depending on method and service provider. Training and proper equipment is important.</p> <p>Requires use of your electricity to run equipment (hidden cost).</p>

Process/Method	Pro's	Con's
<p>Hot Water Extraction</p>	<p>Can do good job of cleaning if service providers are skilled - and equipment is capable.</p> <p>Can Provide the 'heavy rinsing' required for deep impacted soil removal. <i>(Note "can", because impacted soil requires moving slow to get the rinse necessary to work - and many service providers may feel they have to charge too much to -go slow).</i></p> <p>Can handle residential type carpet better than other methods from a skilled service provider.</p>	<p>Costs can be unpredictable depending on the service provider.</p> <p>Problems with wet carpets, mold, water puddling, browning and water staining can be more common with hot water extraction, depending on the situation.</p> <p>Truck mounts have limited 'reach' into a building before they must revert to 'portables'.</p> <p>Some service providers can put carpets at risk for damage - depending on method, used and service provider.</p> <p>Uses large quantities of your water creating a (hidden cost), especially amplified in larger buildings.</p> <p>Wetter carpets can be slow to dry and put a burden on your HVAC system (hidden cost) to remove excess moisture.</p> <p>Carpets can 're-soil' faster if detergents are not rinsed adequately.</p> <p>Can be a security issue for buildings due to hoses that must run into the building. This can also cause 'energy loss' (a hidden cost.)</p> <p>Improper chemicals used in hot water extraction can cause carpet problems or damage. Some chemicals can cause Indoor Air Quality Problems or be unsafe for direct contact by kids and pets. Depends of service provider.</p>

Process/Method	Pro's	Con's
<p>Encapsulation</p>	<p>Can do good job of cleaning if service providers are skilled - and proper equipment utilized.</p> <p>Carpets can stay cleaner longer with some advanced encapsulants that leave zero residue on fibers.</p> <p>Can cost less, due to ability to clean commercial carpets faster than other methods. (Depends entirely on the equipment used by the service provider.)</p> <p>Excels at removing difficult spots and stains and even traffic lanes without harsh chemicals.</p> <p>Avoids wet carpet issues - thus avoiding problems such as mold, browning and water stains.</p> <p>Can clean commercial carpet in large and multistory buildings with no limits.</p> <p>Requires very little water - up to 70% less than hot water extraction methods. Carpet dries quickly.</p> <p>Does not require open doors or windows - avoiding potential sources of security issues and energy loss.</p>	<p>Requires use of your electricity to run equipment (hidden cost).</p> <p>Some processes can put carpets at risk for damage - depending on method, equipment and service provider. (Equipment used is important.)</p> <p>Is not effective at removing impacted soil from commercial carpets - which require 'rinsing' method or 'water extraction'.</p> <p>Proper use of encapsulant chemistry is important, inferior chemistry may be inferior and cause re-soiling.</p>

Notice, I believe you can get good results with any method - even a rag and water if the service provider is skilled enough, and so selecting a commercial carpet cleaning service is very important! There are lot's of good ones, and lot's of not so good ones. My point being that even with the very best method, results are ultimately going to depend on who's driving the method.

Plus +

Information to help you understand and negotiate cost to clean commercial carpets.

Including this information should be approached with common sense. From experience I can share that we have a wide berth of rates we charge clients depending on the situation and conditions. There are many reasons any particular carpet cleaner might charge you more or less than another. Whatever you do though the idea is find a good 'win win' relationship with your commercial carpet cleaning service that will make both of you happy. A bad deal is simply bad business for everyone involved.

There are a myriad of considerations a commercial carpet might consider when quoting a job. Distance to job, how hungry the service provider is, day or night work or holiday work, how dirty, how much stuff to move or clean around, type of soil and stains, size of job, multi-stories or not, if cleaning once only, monthly, quarterly or annually, and much more.

The primary factor most commercial carpet cleaners use when pricing a job is the estimated number of work hours to complete the job. This is why 'method to cleaning commercial carpets' can be important to figuring pricing. Cleaning commercial carpets, especially larger areas, can add up to large variation in hours required to clean the carpets - thus dramatically affecting cost. This is one important reason why method and equipment become so important in commercial carpet cleaning larger areas - because the service providers skill and method or process to clean your carpets (along with all the other factors) mean thousands of dollars in cost variation.

With smaller commercial carpet cleaning projects, the pricing may commonly rival residential cost of 28 cents per square ft on average according to the 2010 survey. The larger and very large accounts however can get so competitive on pricing that quotes are given in 1/8th or 1/16th of a cent, such as 8.75 cents per square ft.

Check out these insider comments from commercial carpet cleaners (many also do residential too) about what they charge clients to clean commercial carpets. The main thing you will see is that pricing is all over the place.

Excerpts from various commercial carpet cleaners in various regions about Commercial Carpet Cleaning Pricing.

Anonymous Comment:

Spot Cleaning @ \$45 per hour

Pile lifting/Deep vacuuming @ \$.14 per sq. ft.

Encapsulation cleaning/Traffic Areas @ \$.12 per sq. ft.

Restorative Hot Water extraction @ \$.20 per sq. ft.

Carpet Protector @ \$.10 per sq. ft.

Anonymous Comment:

Type of factors used to determine cost for cleaning commercial carpets (construction and fiber)

- Type of facility (restaurant; high-rise office building, etc.)
- Traffic patterns
- Number of occupants
- Type of weather
- Soil types, outside dirt tracked in, food, drinks
- Manager's expectations
- Budget for cleaning

Anonymous Comment:

A good price for cleaning commercial carpets would be between .12-.17 cents per square foot depending on how dirty the carpets are and who you are paying.

Anonymous Comment:

If you are working by yourself. A range might be between .12-.13 cents per sq. ft. if you perform high quality work and not established. This is my input for commercial carpet cleaning in Atlanta Georgia. It may be different in other cities and states.

Anonymous Comment:

Although location will obviously have to be factored in for pricing, here locally our prices for commercial carpet cleaning contracts go a little something like this:

.18c sqft up to 3500sqft to .25c sqft.

Anonymous Comment:

There are several things to consider when establishing a price. One that the carpet is dirty and when was the last time cleaned. Also must take into account the total square feet to be cleaned. I personally do not go below 0.22 per square foot.

Anonymous Comment:

15 to 30 cents per square ft

Anonymous Comment:

The national average for “good sized” commercial accounts is 10 cents a square foot. Slide up from there, or possibly slightly under that amount depending on the size, frequency of cleaning, multiple locations, ease of cleaning, etc.

My Personal Comment:

At least for the southeast region states, I would estimate that most smaller commercial carpet jobs with a typical number of furnishings to work around (say up to 5000sqft), are going to have cost similar to residential carpet cleaners that clean homes and other smaller commercial spaces. I would agree with larger facilities and buildings that pricing from professional commercial carpet cleaning services will be in the 10c a sqft to 15c a sqft, and the larger yet, or multi-story buildings might have pricing 10c or less a sqft. Remember there are many factors that determine what a fair price will be, and don't forget to consider 'hidden' costs that may come with any particular method.

Plus + Negotiating Tips

How to Negotiate to Get what you need from a Commercial Carpet Cleaning Service.

Competitive Quotes are fine, but I suggest you figure out which service provider you really want to hire, and negotiate if you believe it is too high or out of your budget range. Here are a few ideas to consider.

1. Just ask your commercial carpet cleaning service of choice to suggest ways you could get his quote within your budget. They should have a some suggestions including the one's below.
2. Agree to give them more carpet to clean (or more frequent cleaning) in exchange for a better price.
3. When cost is your biggest concern, consider removing some areas from your 'clean it' list priority rather than going with an inferior service that may not be able to provide a good result for you.
4. Consider having your staff remove items from areas the commercial carpet cleaner would otherwise have to move or work around. Or similar, offer to 'place items back to their place' once the service is done, saving them time with handling of furniture and items. This is always a big cost factor for commercial carpet cleaning services, so if you can help, you should see some cost concessions.
5. Ask if you could get a price improvement if you could agree on a different schedule to have your carpets cleaned. Commercial Carpet Cleaning services may reduce your costs if they can choose a better time or day to clean your carpets.
6. Find a 'bartering point' to work with, perhaps an full or partial exchange of your services/products for their carpet cleaning services. For example some restaurants or clubs will exchange '\$ credits' for services, or companies that are in the marketing or advertising business will do similar exchanges.
7. Ask if your service has a formal referral program in place. If they do ask them what they pay for referrals. Of course it should be contingent on you being very happy with the result you get on your commercial carpets. The extra 'referral fees' you gain helps reduce your cost, while helping your service provider to get more clients.

8. In those times that you are not happy with the results, or actions taken by your commercial carpet cleaner - then state your concern quickly and clearly. Your professional commercial carpet cleaner will almost always appreciate your professionalism and do what they can to make it right or to compensate fairly. Many times it's a simple case of 'misunderstanding' or a 'mistake'. If you are having a serious issue - refer back to your signed contract. *If for any reason you never get 'satisfaction' without having to hire a lawyer or complain to state agencies - then contact me, I may be able to help. 864-320-8351 Or send an email to thomas@healthycleanusa.com*

About the Author:

Thomas Hammack is Founder of Healthy Clean, a company in Greenville SC that specializes in commercial carpet cleaning. Healthy Clean offers commercial carpet cleaning to clients in North and South Carolina, Georgia and Florida - We really are that good Guaranteed. We offer extended service to clients throughout the USA via our select network of verified commercial carpet cleaners.

Contact us if you need assistance finding a commercial carpet cleaning service we recommend in your area.

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