

# CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO CARPET CLEANING

BY FRED MCNEAL

PRO-TECH CLEANING &  
RESTORATION SPECIALISTS  
Specialists in Carpet Cleaning

Read this guide and you'll discover

- How to avoid four carpet cleaning rip-offs.
- 6 costly misconceptions about carpet cleaning
- Crawlins' critters and crud: a guide to the slime, grime and livestock that's seeping, creeping and galloping through your carpet
- Which method cleans best?
- 8 mistakes to avoid when choosing a carpet cleaner
- The importance of value and price
- Do you want a clean, healthy carpet?
- 100% no-risk guarantee
- 4 steps to a fresh, clean healthy carpet

Provided as an educational service by

**PRO-TECH CLEANING &  
RESTORATION SPECIALISTS**

**Specialists in Carpet Cleaning  
Fred McNeal, Owner  
Boerne (830)816-3202  
San Antonio (210)680-3355  
Outside (800)786-2422  
[www.pro-techrestore.com](http://www.pro-techrestore.com)**

Dear Homeowner,

Choosing a carpet cleaner isn't easy.

Why? Because you're bombarded with misleading advertising, confusing claims and simply bad information.

From super-low prices and high pressure sales-to unqualified technicians and near-worthless methods-how do you ever find a qualified, competent, professional carpet cleaner?

You start by reading this Consumer's Guide. In this fact-filled booklet, you'll discover how to avoid four carpet cleaning rip-offs, eight mistakes to avoid when choosing a carpet cleaner, and four steps to a fresh, clean healthy carpet.

We wrote this guide to help you better understand carpet cleaning. Now, with this information, you can make an informed, intelligent decision.

And if you have any questions about carpet or upholstery cleaning, you're invited to call us at 816-3202. We've dedicated our business to educating consumers. We'll be happy to help you in every way.

Cordially,

Fred McNeal

Pro-Tech Cleaning & Restoration Specialists  
Specialists in Carpet Cleaning

Fred McNeal is the owner of Pro-Tech Cleaning & Restoration Specialists. He has been in the Cleaning & Restoration Industry since 1989.

Our company is certified by the Institute of Inspection Cleaning and Restoration Certification. We are members of the Association of Specialists on Cleaning and Restoration and have been awarded the Seal of Approval by the Carpet and Rug Institute in recognition of our demonstrated commitment to customer satisfaction. Additionally, we are members of the Professional Cleaners Association, an association dedicated to the Standards of Excellency in the Cleaning and Restoration Business.

I have dedicated this business to helping homeowners get the highest return from their carpet and hard surface floor covering investment. I welcome your inquiries and will gladly answer your questions over the telephone.

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## **HOW TO AVOID FOUR CARPET CLEANING RIP-OFFS**

**RIP-OFF #1: UNBELIEVABLY LOW PRICE.** To some degree, all of us are attracted by low price because we want to work within a budget. But some carpet cleaners use price as the bait for their false and misleading advertising. They offer a cheap price—usually between \$3.95 and \$9.95 per room—and then, once they’re in your home, they pressure you into buying those “add-ons.” It’s as if you were buying a car and found that the dealer was charging you extra for the tires and steering wheel. Carpet cleaning is not as cheap as some unethical carpet cleaners would like you to believe.

**RIP-OFF #2: BAIT AND SWITCH.** Dual process carpet cleaning describes the process of shampooing or heavy preconditioning, followed with hot water extraction cleaning. Unfortunately, unethical carpet cleaners often use dual process as a bait-and-switch technique. Here’s how it’s done: First, they “bait” you with a basic cleaning (single process) at an unbelievably low price. Then, when you call, they try to “switch” you to more expensive dual-process cleaning. If you don’t fall for their switch and choose basic service, you’ll likely receive poor workmanship using little or no chemical and they will not guarantee their work.

**RIP-OFF #3: UNSUPPORTED CLAIMS.** “THIS CLEANING METHOD IS THE BEST.” You’ll read this in almost every ad. You’ll hear this from virtually every carpet cleaner. Remember this: The method that’s best for you is the method that achieves your goal. If you want a method that dries quickly, then a method that takes a long time to dry isn’t the best for you. So before you choose a carpet cleaner, identify your objectives. Then select the method that best reaches those objectives.

**RIP-OFF #4: OUTDATED BELIEFS.** “HOT WATER DAMAGES YOUR CARPET.” Years ago many people believed this was true because their carpets were damaged by “technicians” who didn’t know how to properly clean using hot water. But today, we know it’s false. By washing and then rinsing your carpet with hot water, your carpet is thoroughly cleaned—in the same way that the person who showers and then rinses off the dirt and soap will be much cleaner than the person who takes only a sponge bath. Obviously, each carpet cleaner will be biased toward his own method. And each method does have advantages. So I suggest you look at what carpet manufacturers say. Shaw Industries, the largest carpet manufacturer in the world, recommends only hot water extraction cleaning with a truck mounted unit used by firms that are IICRC Certified.

## **6 COSTLY MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT CARPET CLEANING**

**MISCONCEPTION #1:** You should wait as long as possible before cleaning your carpet.

No. Dirt is an abrasive-like sandpaper. Every time you step on your carpet, you grind dirt into the carpet fibers. This cuts your carpet, just as if you had used a knife. This cutting causes your carpet to wear out faster. A dirty carpet will not last as long as a clean carpet. And while vacuuming helps-by itself, it's simply not enough. The longer you wait to have your carpet cleaned, the more damage you do to your carpet and the faster it wears out.

**MISCONCEPTION #2:** The only reason to clean carpets is to remove the dirt.

No. As you probably know, outdoor air contains pollens, fungus, bacteria, air pollution, cigarette smoke, car exhaust-and hundreds of other chemicals. When you come into your home, you carry those pollens, bacteria and chemicals in your hair and on your skin, clothing and shoes. Not surprisingly, all those chemicals and toxins wind up in your carpet.

If you have allergies, asthma, emphysema, or other breathing problems-one major source of your problem could be the pollens, fungus, smoke and chemicals in your carpet.

**MISCONCEPTION #3:** One method of carpet cleaning is as good as another.

No. The dry cleaning methods-which are dry foam, dry chemicals, and dry compound-do not rinse your carpet in any way. Instead, they leave a dirty residue. You might say they clean your carpet only halfway. The most effective cleaning method is hot water extraction.

Hot water extraction means a hot water cleaning solution, under high pressure, is forced into your carpet and then sucked out of your carpet. Shaw Industries, the world's largest carpet manufacturer, recommends hot water extraction as the primary method of cleaning carpets, along with an IICRC approved firm.

Carpet cleaners use one of two types of hot water extraction. If they use a large unit that operates from a van or truck outside your facility, it's called truck-mount extraction. If they use a small unit that can be brought inside, it's called portable extraction. Shaw's first choice is the truck-mounted unit-and it recommends the small, portable unit only in areas where the truck-mounted unit won't reach.

The truck-mount extraction cleans much better because it heats up the water to a higher temperature-which breaks up the dirt, bacteria, chemicals and pollens in the carpet. Then the machine uses high suction to draw the dirt and chemicals out of your carpet. This is the method my company uses.

**MISCONCEPTION #4:** Having the right equipment is all a company needs to clean your carpets properly.

Not true. Many companies own hot-water cleaners but very few companies teach their employees how to use them properly. This is why it's important that you choose your carpet cleaner carefully. The best cleaning companies are those that have been certified by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification, known as the IICRC. Before you choose a carpet cleaner, ask to see written proof of the company's IICRC certification and also the certification of the technician who is going to do the job! If they don't have them-don't use them!

**MISCONCEPTION #5:** They company that offers the lowest price is the company you should hire.

No. I've seen so many problems arise from the lowest-bid companies that I suggest you NEVER hire the company that quotes the cheapest price. The two most common problems are:

1. The price may not be for the services you want performed. The company may be equipped to remove only the dirt from your carpet. But you may want the bacteria, fungus, pollens, dust mites and tobacco residues removed as well.
2. The price you see advertised may not be the price you pay. Many homeowners have learned that the low price they saw advertised lasted only until the carpet cleaner got into their home. Then they were pressured into paying a lot more for a variety of add-ons. (Some carpet cleaners even break the law by using illegal bait and switch tactics.)

**MISCONCEPTION #6:** Any honest carpet cleaning company should be able to give you an exact price quote over the telephone.

I wish this were true, but it isn't.

Honest, reputable carpet cleaning companies almost never price carpet cleaning by the room. Instead, carpet cleaning is usually priced by the square foot. So if you'd like me to tell you the exact cost of cleaning your carpet, I need to know the exact number of square feet that you want cleaned. To get an exact measurement, I use a measuring wheel to calculate the exact size of the carpet area.

### **CRAWLIN' CRITTERS AND CRUD: A GUIDE TO THE SLIME, GRIME AND LIVESTOCK THAT'S SLEEPING, CREEPING AND GALLOPING THROUGH YOUR CARPET.**

Asphalt. Bacteria. Car exhaust. Chemicals. Dirt. Dust. Dust mites. Earth. Food particles. Fungus. Germs. Gravel. Grease. Grime. Grit. Hair. Industrial waste. Lint. Mud. Pet stains. Pollens. Pollutants. Rock. Sand. Scum. Smoke. Soil. Soot. Tar. Tobacco smoke.

Urine. Vomit.

Plus, don't forget living creatures, such as dust mites, fleas and critters that live, hide and breed in your carpet.

(Will you help us? We're trying to find at least one thing that's in your carpet for every letter of the alphabet. And we don't have anything for these letters: J, N, O, Q, W, X, Y, Z. If you can think of something that could be in your carpet that begins with these letters—or any other letters—please call or write to us and we'll consider including them in our next consumer's guide.)

### **WHICH METHOD CLEANS BEST?**

**Dry foam:** The carpet cleaner applies shampoo to your carpet, allows it to dry, and then without rinsing, sucks the dried shampoo into a vacuum. Can you imagine applying shampoo to your hair, allowing it to dry and then removing the shampoo from your head with a vacuum? This method leaves dirty residue in your carpet, which is one reason dry foam is not too effective.

**Absorbent pad (bonnet cleaning):** This method is similar to dry foam, except that the company sets a large cotton bonnet on your carpet and with a floor polishing buffer machine on top “buffs” the carpet. The rotating motion causes the bonnet to absorb the dirt from your carpet. This method is also called bonnet cleaning. Bonnet cleaning is like trying to use a large cotton towel or mop to rub the dirt out of your carpet. It's not very effective.

**Hot water extraction:** This is a fancy way of saying that a hot water cleaning solution under high pressure is forced into your carpet and then sucked out of your carpet.

In a recent Technical Bulletin, Shaw Industries, the world's largest carpet manufacturer, “recommends the hot water extraction system, which research indicates provides the best capability for cleaning.”

You can choose from two different types: Truck-mount extraction, which is done with a large machine mounted in a truck or van. Or portable extraction, which is done with a small, hand held unit.

On which type to choose, Shaw's Technical Bulletin states: “[cleaning] can be done from a truck-mounted unit outside the facility with only the hose and wand brought inside, or where a truck mounted unit cannot reach, by a portable, self-contained system brought into the facility.”

As you can see, Shaw recommends the truck mounted unit first. And this isn't surprising. You see, the truck-mounted unit cleans much better because it heats the water to a higher temperature and shoots the cleaning solution into the carpet at higher pressures. This breaks up the dirt, bacteria, chemicals and pollens in the carpet. Then the machine produces huge vacuum volume to draw the dirt and chemicals out of your carpet. This is the method my company uses.

No question, the most effective way to clean carpeting is with a hot-water unit mounted in a truck. It's the most powerful cleaning machine on the market and the only machine that cleans your carpet of dirt, harmful bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollens, tobacco residue and dust mites.

Some people believe that hot water damages your carpet but this isn't true. By washing and then rinsing your carpet with hot water, we clean your carpet completely—in the same way that the person who showers and then rinses off the dirt and soap will be much cleaner than the person who takes only a sponge bath.

## **8 MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN CHOOSING A CARPET CLEANER**

**MISTAKE #1:** Choosing a carpet cleaner based on equipment alone. No question, your carpet cleaner needs first-rate equipment. But he also needs something else. He needs employees who are skilled at operating that equipment. Many companies own hot-water water extractors, but very few companies teach their employees how to use them properly. The best way to know that the carpet cleaner's employees have been properly trained is to make sure the cleaner has been certified by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC). Before you choose a carpet cleaner, ask to see written proof of the company's and the technician's IICRC certification.

**MISTAKE #2:** Choosing a carpet cleaner based on low price. Low price could be a problem in three ways: (1) Low price can be the bait that attracts your phone call. But once the cleaner gets into your home, he pressures you into a much more expensive job. (2) Low price can be for single-process cleaning. Rarely does the consumer know what this means and, when told, asks for dual-process cleaning instead, which costs much more. (3) Low price means the carpet cleaner has cheap equipment, which will not effectively clean your carpet.

**MISTAKE #3:** Choosing a carpet cleaner based on a single telephone call. Instead, invite the person to your home and ask for a specific written quotation. Then you'll know exactly what the carpet cleaner recommends—and you won't be the victim of high pressure tactics when the technician steps into your living room.

**MISTAKE #4:** Choosing a carpet cleaner who doesn't offer a money-back guarantee. In my view, every carpet cleaning company should be fully accountable for its work. And if you aren't pleased with the job in every way, you shouldn't have to pay for it. Not all carpet cleaners offer a guarantee. Or, if they do, the guarantee may be "limited." Ask the carpet cleaner if he offers a money-back guarantee and then make sure the carpet

cleaner includes his guarantee on his written quotation.

**MISTAKE #5:** Choosing a carpet cleaner without getting comments from his other clients.

Any carpet cleaner can say anything about his past jobs. And, sadly, some of what he says may not be true. Make sure you ask for references or read comments from current customers so you can depend on the carpet cleaner and his work.

**MISTAKE #6:** Choosing a carpet cleaner who isn't certified by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC).

If your carpet cleaner isn't a close friend, you may not know whether he has the knowledge or experience to clean your carpet well. If you want to be sure you're hiring a competent professional, make sure he is IICRC certified. The carpet cleaner must earn that certification through study, experience and successful completion of formal, written examinations. In effect, cleaners who are certified by the IICRC have earned a college degree in carpet cleaning.

**MISTAKE #7:** Choosing a carpet cleaner who isn't a member of the Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI).

CRI is a trade association of carpet cleaners who are dedicated to:

(1) honest, ethical business practices (2) staying current on the methods for carpet and upholstery care, cleaning and restoration, and (3) the highest possible level of customer service. You're making a wise decision when you have your carpets cleaned by a member of the Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI).

**MISTAKE #8:** Choosing a carpet cleaner who doesn't use a truck mounted, hot-water extraction system.

You might expect this from me, since my employees and I use this type of system. But there are several good reasons. Portable hot-water systems are good, but they aren't as good as truck-mount systems. Truck-mount systems are the Rolls Royce's of carpet cleaners. Compared with portable hot-water systems, truck-mount systems use hotter water, higher pressure and stronger suction. So, all the way around, you get a much better job. No two ways about it.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF VALUE AND PRICE**

Price is what you pay. Value is what you get.

When you select a carpet cleaner, you'll choose from a wide variety of cleaning methods and prices.

Shaw Industries, the world's largest carpet manufacturer, recommends hot-water extraction from truck-mounted units, and using a portable unit only in areas where the truck-mounted unit won't reach.

Here's why: A truck mounted unit cleans much better than a portable unit for three reasons:

1. It heats the water to a higher temperature. For every 18 degree increase in temperature above 118 degrees F, you double the water's cleaning ability. So, if the water temperature is 136 degrees F, it will clean twice as well as water that is 118 degrees F. 154 degree water will clean four times as well as 118 degree water. We heat our water for use at approximately 165 degrees F.
2. It shoots the cleaning solution into your carpet at higher pressures, which breaks up the dirt, bacteria, chemicals and pollens.
3. The machine uses stronger suction to draw the dirt, chemicals, bacteria, pollens and tobacco smoke residue out of your carpet.

Not surprisingly, having your carpet thoroughly cleaned with truck-mounted hot water extraction costs more than renting a shampooer at the corner grocery store.

If you bought the cheapest carpeting you could find, then renting a small shampooer might be all you need. No question, it will get out some of the dirt—but the key word here is “some.” It will not get out many of the pollens, chemicals, bacteria and dust mite residues.

On the other hand—if you want your carpet to look good and give you years of dependable service—then you need to take extra good care of it. This means you need to have it cleaned by a skilled, qualified technician at least every six months to one year, depending on the amount of soiling and foot traffic it receives. And you need to have it cleaned thoroughly and disinfected, as only a truck-mount hot-water extractor can do.

### **DO YOU WANT A CLEAN, HEALTHY CARPET?**

Which is more important to you: a clean carpet—or a clean and healthy carpet? Yes, I assure you, there is a big difference.

Each carpet cleaning method has advantages and disadvantages. Some methods will get out only the dirt. Other methods will get out dirt and grease. Still others will get out virtually everything. And, to be sure, some are more expensive than others.

If all you want is a cheap, rinse-the-dirt-off-the-top cleaning—which you might find for

around \$3.95 per room—then I respectfully ask that you call another company.

But, if you want to protect your health—if you want to protect your investment in carpeting—if you want to protect your family from the countless bacteria, fungus, pollens and fresh, clean carpet.

Have you ever seen how dirty a little boy's pants get when he plays outdoors? If you have, then you know you can brush off his pants and make him think they're clean. Or, if you want the job done right, you can machine wash them in hot water and detergent and you'll KNOW they're clean.

The same is true for your carpet. You can hire someone for \$25 to \$50 who will “brush off” your carpeting and make you think it's clean. Or, if you want the job done right, I'll wash your carpets with hot water detergent using my state-of-the-art cleaning machine and you'll KNOW they're clean.

So, if you want a thoroughly clean carpet—if you're willing to invest in your family's good health—you're invited to call us. You'll receive a written estimate, at no cost or obligation. And if you give us the go-ahead, you're further protected with our...

### **100% NO-RISK GUARANTEE**

We want you to be super-pleased—in fact, absolutely delighted—with every carpet and upholstery job we do. So, every job comes with our iron-clad, risk-free, guarantee. What does this mean? Simply this: if you aren't happy with our work, we'll re-clean the area for free. And if you still aren't pleased, you pay nothing. Not one cent. Many companies don't guarantee their work—but we feel nothing is more important than your complete and total satisfaction. We stand behind every job 100%. If you ever have any questions or concerns about our work, please call us right away: Call (830)816-3202. Thanks.

### **4 STEPS TO A FRESH, CLEAN, HEALTHY CARPET**

If you're thinking about having your carpets cleaned, we encourage you to follow these four steps:

**STEP #1:** Make a commitment to yourself to get your carpets cleaned. The longer they remain dirty, the sooner they'll wear out. Plus, the longer you have to breathe all the pollens, fungus and chemicals that hide in your carpet.

**STEP #2:** List your objectives. Do you want only the dirt removed, something you could do with a rented shampooer. Or, do you want all the bacteria, fungus, chemicals and dust mites removed, which will require a hot-water truck-mount cleaner, as we use. Do you want to work with an honest, reputable company—or are you willing to risk

working with the company that offers you the lowest price—knowing that the company might not be in business tomorrow.

**STEP #3:** Ask questions. The way you learn about a company is to ask specific questions and listen carefully to the answers. Here are eight tough questions to ask a carpet cleaner before he begins to clean your carpet:

1. What method of carpet cleaning do you recommend?
2. What type of equipment do you use to clean carpet?
3. What will your equipment remove from my carpet?
4. How often should I get my carpets cleaned?
5. What training have you had in cleaning carpets?
6. Are you a member of the Carpet and Rug Institute?
7. Are you certified by the IICRC and will you show me certification?
8. Are your cleaning technicians certified by the IICRC and can I see their certifications?

**STEP #4:** Once you're satisfied that you're working with an honest, competent professional, invite him into your home and ask for a specific quotation in writing. A written quotation gives you the assurance that you know exactly what your job will cost—no surprises.

By following these four steps, you'll gain all the information you need to make an informed, intelligent decision. If you want a quick, cheap carpet cleaning job, many companies in the phone book can help you. Or, you can rent a shampooer from the grocery store and do the job yourself.

But, if you want your carpeting to be completely and healthfully cleaned—removing the bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollens and tobacco products—then we invite you to call us. We'll be happy to answer your questions—provide you a cost estimate over the telephone—or come into your home and give you a free written quotation—without cost or obligation of any kind. To reach us call (830)816-3202.

### **THANKS AGAIN!**

...for reviewing our new CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO CARPET CLEANING. I hope you found this information helpful.

If you have any questions or comments—or if you'd like us to give you an exact written quotation to clean your carpet or upholstery—please call us at (830)816-3202.

We've dedicated our business to consumer education and service. We'll be pleased to help you in every way. We look forward to your call.

Thanks!

# 10

## *The Top 10 Reasons to Have PRO-TECH Clean Your Carpet*

10. Carpet is probably the most expensive furnishing in your home. Regularly scheduled cleaning will keep your investment looking great for years to come.
9. Next time your favorite in-laws drop in you can let them believe you replaced your old carpet. (We specialize in making old carpet look and feel new again!)
8. Today's airtight homes leave allergens and air-borne bacteria no place to settle but into your carpeting. You and your family will breathe easier after PRO-TECH extracts all of the contaminants out of your carpet.
7. Every step you take on a soiled carpet causes wear. Carpet can hide a pound of soil per square yard. Don't cut your carpet's life short by waiting until it looks dirty to have it cleaned. (Professional cleaning at least annually is recommended by manufacturers.)
6. Your dog will love the fluffy feel of a carpet cleaned by PRO-TECH (And so will you!)
5. Next time your kids stretch out on the carpet in front of the T.V., they won't be sharing the space with dust mites and other dirty-carpet critters.
4. 100% FREE Satisfaction Guarantee... "We Do The Job Right, Or You Don't Pay!" Our written guarantee takes the risk and worry out of hiring a carpet cleaner.
3. All of your questions will be answered. We take the time to make sure you know exactly what needs to be done to keep your carpet looking like new.
2. You get a no-hassle, no-surprises, written quote on any work you decide to have completed. We treat you like the valued, long-term client we hope you become.

### **The Number One Reason to Have Your Carpet Cleaned by PRO-TECH is...**

1. Because you deserve to remember what your home looked like, smelled like, and felt like when your carpet was new. Restoring that like-new feeling is our specialty.

**You're proud of your home's appearance; let us help you keep it that way.**

### **Call PRO-TECH Today**

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**PRO-TECH CLEANING &  
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**508 JOHNS ROAD  
BOERNE, TEXAS 78006  
Boerne (830)816-3202  
San Antonio (210)680-3355  
Outside (800)786-2422  
[www.pro-techrestore.com](http://www.pro-techrestore.com)**