

# Carpets and Covid-19.

Basic cleaning principles should apply when conducting cleaning in non-healthcare environments to create a healthy, clean and safe environment for employees. This includes ensuring that cleaners have the right tools to perform their cleaning tasks, as well as being trained in the appropriate methodologies. Through applying the correct cleaning techniques one can greatly reduce the risk of cross contamination and cross infection.

Cleaning of visibly dirty surfaces followed by disinfection is a best practice measure for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses.

Disinfecting procedure can be applied during the deep cleaning process by a qualified cleaning team. As carpeting traps dirt/soil it also absorbs fluid. The initial clean removes deep seated soils/dirt which ensure that the disinfectant can penetrate effectively. Any topical spray is not effective as penetration of the fibre due to its absorbency is required.

## Cleaning vs Disinfecting

- Cleaning refers to the removal of dirt /soil, including germs, from surfaces. Cleaning alone does not kill germs. But by removing the germs, it decreases their number and therefore any risk of spreading infection.
- Disinfecting works by using approved chemicals, to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs. But killing germs remaining on a surface after cleaning further reduces any risk of spreading infection.

## In Door Air Quality

Managing indoor air quality (IAQ) is essential. Carpet surfaces act as giant indoor air filters by collecting and trapping volatile organic compounds (VOCs). VOCs are the food source for mildew, fungi & bacteria and if carpets are not cleaned regularly and thoroughly, they will be recycled throughout the indoor air environment, adding health risks to your facility.

No additional disinfection procedures are required – only in the event of contamination with body fluids or as an additional precaution in a suspected case of COVID-19. Soft floor surfaces such as carpeting, should be cleaned and vacuumed as per the professional maintenance cleaning schedule that is in place.

Avoid going from an area that has not been cleaned to an area that has been cleaned. This will ensure that you are not contaminating clean areas.

An environmental cleaning and disinfection policy should specify when normal cleaning procedures should be applied and when disinfection procedures should apply.

## Carpet Maintenance

The correct care of the carpet will significantly improve the longevity and appearance retention of the fitted soft flooring.

Focused professional cleaning methods will be required to ensure good appearance of the fibre as well as to ensure that the pile/yarn is lifted back into position especially in main circulation areas.

## Barrier (Walk Off) Matting:

These need to be strategically placed at entrances leading from the outside into the building. The

purpose of the walk off mats is to ensure that most of the dry soil is caught/trapped at the entrance where movement of feet occurs.

The walk-off mat should be as long as possible, this can pose some challenges and is all dependent on the layout of the area/s in question. These walk off mats must be cleaned regularly by means of vacuumation or the appointed professional cleaning company might be able to offer a laundered service which will also be of great use as whilst the soiled walk-off mat is cleaned a replacement is put down to keep on trapping the dry soil.

## Vacuuation

Effective and routine vacuuming is essential for good carpet performance and extended carpet life. Even though soils may not be visible, dry soils become deep seated at the base of the pile and, with foot traffic, abrade and cut carpet fibres, causing premature wear or settling of the carpet fibre. Maintenance of the vacuum cleaner itself is just as important, the filter/bag must be cleaned regularly to ensure the effectiveness of the vacuum cleaner.

## Recommended Frequencies on Vacuumation:

- Very high traffic areas: twice per day
- High traffic areas: once per day
- Medium traffic areas: two to three times a week
- Low traffic areas: once per week

The commercial vacuum cleaner should ideally be an upright, must have a beater brush, & the brush preferably be driven by a separate motor. This action serves as an almost satisfactory substitute for a pile-lifting machine – it will open the pile to remove deep seated soils/dirt from the base of the tufts/fibres. The use of a spin bonnet system (Circular Brush Method) to clean the soft flooring is not advisable as this could cause damage to the yarn and in cases where cut pile carpeting have been used same will be de twisted and cause premature wear.

## Spot, Spill and Stain Removal

Inspection for, and removal of spots and stains should be scheduled daily by the appointed professional cleaning team.

Liquid spills should be blotted up immediately and left to dry. Use absorbent paper or cloths. Use a clean white towel/cotton cloth, apply the spotting agent to the cloth and gently blot the spot, moving to a clean part of the cloth after each blot until spot is removed. (Do not soak the spot with the spotting agent).

Always work from the perimeter of the spot inwards. This is in aid to minimise the spreading of the soil.

## Stain Removal Procedures

Prompt action is important to prevent a spillage from penetrating the fibres and becoming permanent. It is advisable to have spot and stain removal products and equipment on hand for immediate use.

If the nature of the spills is unknown, start with clean warm water or a mild crystalizing carpet cleaning shampoo. If the stain persists, a specialized/approved spot cleaning product should be used. Cleaning products should be checked for colourfastness on a hidden area of the carpet. It is also important to ensure that when applying a cleaning agent on the carpeting, same must be removed and not left as it can leave a residue behind which will cause rapid re-soiling.

Should more information be required, please contact one of the following Belgotex offices near you:

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