

Emergency Stain and Spill Removal Guide

Treat spots and spills at the first available opportunity. Cleaning up before the spill is worked into the fiber and fabric of the carpet makes the spill much easier to clean and also reduces chances of permanent staining.

Try to immediately remove any excess material from a spill by using a spoon (so you don't damage the carpet fibers) or use a clean towel to blot up a thin liquid. If the spill is large, try to work from the outside edges toward the center to prevent spreading.

Water based Stains and Spills

Spills like milk, soft drinks, syrups, beer, or any other water based liquid can usually be easily cleaned with a couple of drops of clear dishwashing detergent in a cup of water.

1. Apply this cleaning solution to a clean white cloth and dampen the carpet fibers but don't saturate. Turn your cloth frequently.
2. Don't rub too hard or use a brush since this could damage carpet fibers.
3. Use a clean cloth to blot the area.
4. If the stain is still there, repeat the procedure.
5. Gently rinse with clear water to make sure there is no soap residue left on the carpet. Unfortunately, many homeowners leave a residue which holds and attracts dirt and dust as much as the spill would have done.
6. If the stain remains, try an ammonia solution, but **DO NOT USE** ammonia on coffee, tea, or urine stains (ammonia can encourage these stains to set). The ammonia solution is made with 2 tablespoons of non-sudsing ammonia mixed with 1 cup of lukewarm water.
7. Apply ammonia solution using the same method described for the dishwashing detergent solution.
8. After using the ammonia you must neutralize the ammonia by mixing a cup of vinegar with 2 cups of water. Apply vinegar solution and rinse and blot as previously described.

Greasy Stains and Spills

Spills or stains containing oils like butter, cooking oil, cosmetics, crayons, or any stain that has an oily feel is best treated with a citrus solvent cleaner. These are becoming popular (they usually smell like orange peel). If a citrus solvent cleaner is not available, use the same liquid detergent cleaning solution recommended for water based stains. The liquid detergent will usually get the job done but requires greater "flushing" to break down the oil. These types of stains are more stubborn and you may want to use your fingers to work the solution to the base of the stain.

Rinse and blot to remove any residue from cleaning solution.

Coffee, Tea, and Urine

Treat coffee, tea, and urine stains the same as you would treat water based stains and spills, but with one exception: DO NOT use the ammonia solution described because it could encourage the stain to set.

REMEMBER: Be sure and remove all residue from any cleaning solution used.

Have Your Carpets Cleaned

At some point, the dirt and oily residues deposited by day-to-day traffic will attract and hold dirt and debris to the carpet fibers. Your vacuum will be unable to pull them loose and lift them from the carpet. This is when your carpet needs to be cleaned with hot water (steam) extraction.

A family with small children or pets may need to have their carpets cleaned twice a year. Mature families with minimal daily traffic may need only once every two or three years. Look at your carpet and decide.