

Hi! This is Jeremy Overturf. On behalf of my wife Stefanie and myself, I'm grateful for the opportunity to provide you with this information about how carpet cleaning promotes health in your home and help you choose a carpet cleaning company.

We're the owners of Overturf's Cleaning in the Bradenton area of Florida. I've been in the carpet cleaning business for over 12 years. And in that time, I've learned that carpet cleaning can be confusing. In fact, people have so many misconceptions about carpet cleaning that I decided to offer this educational information so when you select a carpet cleaning company, you can make an informed decision.

In just a moment, I'll share with you why carpet cleaning isn't just about getting spots out, but much more, including your health is also involved. Plus I'll offer specific recommendations on choosing a carpet cleaner, and even give you questions you should ask before you invite a cleaner into your home.

## **Should you just be concerned about the dirt you see?**

**Fact:** John Roberts, an environmental engineer, found that samples of carpet dust from typical homes can contain alarmingly high levels of pollutants. These include lead, cadmium, mercury, pesticides, and the carcinogenic polychlorinated biphenols (PCBs) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

How do these pollutants get in your carpet? Outdoor air contains pollens, fungus, bacteria, air pollution, cigarette smoke, car exhaust -- and hundreds of other chemicals.

When you and your family members come into your home, you carry these contaminants on your clothes, skin, shoes and pets' paws. This can increase the bacteria and pesticide content of carpet dust hundreds of times.

Young children often play on the floor and then put their fingers in their mouth. So they are especially vulnerable to these pollutants.

Your carpet acts as a filter, capturing these pollutants from the air.

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

In addition, as you may know, tobacco smoke contains over 4000 different chemical compounds, 43 of which cause cancer. And even if you don't smoke, those chemicals get on your shoes, you track them in to your home and you leave them in your carpet.

If you're sensitive to cigarette smoke, you might find that you'll breathe easier after you hire a company to get those harmful chemicals out of your carpet.

So in addition to getting rid of dirt, another important reason to clean your carpet is to get rid of pollens, fungus, bacteria, chemicals and the tars and residue from tobacco smoke.

**Myth:** Since carpet traps all these pollutants, wood, tile, or other hard surface floors are better for the air we breathe.

**Fact:** These same pollutants are coming into your home no matter what kind of floor you have. In fact, if the carpet isn't trapping them, guess where they remain? In the air you breathe. Regularly scheduled professional carpet cleanings are the best way to keep these pollutants out of your home.

## **2 Main Methods of Carpet Cleaning**

**Myth:** One method of carpet cleaning is as good as another.

No. There are basically two primary methods: Dry cleaning (low moisture cleaning) or hot water extraction. The method you choose can affect how good your results are.

First, I'll explain dry cleaning. This is not like dry cleaning your clothes. All carpet cleaning methods use water in some form.

### **1. Dry cleaning carpet (low moisture cleaning), consists of 3 different methods:**

- **Dry foam** – With this method, shampoo is applied to your carpet, allowed it to dry, and the dried shampoo is sucked into a vacuum.

Would you apply shampoo to your hair, let it dry and then suck it out of your hair with a vacuum? This method can leave a residue in your carpet.

- **Dry-chem method** - Similar to dry foam. The major difference is that when dry-chem is used, the company sets a large cotton bonnet on your carpet. Using a machine, the bonnet spins from side to side, absorbing the dirt that's in the carpet. After the bonnet is saturated with dirt, another cotton bonnet is applied. Bonnet cleaning is like trying to use a large towel to rub the dirt out of your carpet.

- **Dry-compound method** – First the carpet cleaner spreads an absorbent mixture that looks like wet sawdust all over your carpeting. Then the machine brushes the mixture into the carpet, which in theory causes dirt to absorb into the mixture. When the mixture has dried, a vacuum cleaner sucks the material out of the carpeting. The missing part of the equation here is that the carpet is not rinsed in any way, so how effective is it?

### **2. Hot water extraction – manufacturer preferred cleaning method**

This is the method we use and find most effective. After vacuuming, we apply a pre-spray, kind of like shampooing your hair. This sits for a few minutes then we come back with very hot water under high pressure which is forced into the carpet and then sucked out of the carpet. Sort of like agitating then rinsing your hair clean. This method is also referred to as steam cleaning.

Shaw Industries, the world's largest carpet manufacturer, along with most other carpet manufacturers, recommend hot water extraction and some even require it every 12-18 months to maintain your carpet warranty. To get an ever more powerful clean, we use truck mount extraction which means the large cleaning machine is mounted in a truck or van.

Not surprisingly, the truck mount extraction cleans much better because it heats the water to a higher temperature than is possible with a small do-it-yourself machine -- and it's able to shoot the hot water into your carpet at a much higher pressure – which breaks up the dirt, bacteria and pollens. Then the machine uses powerful suction to draw the dirt out of the carpet.

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

Methods that use cold and even warm water remove dirt -- but are not as effective as the hot water truck mount method.

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.

## **How to choose a carpet cleaner.**

From the above information, you've probably guessed that the first criterion is that your carpet cleaner should use the hot water extraction method, preferably a truck mounted machine. So questions #1 and #2 you should ask any carpet cleaner is: **What method of carpet cleaning do you recommend?** and **2. What type of equipment do you use to clean carpet?**

Is having the right equipment is all a company needs to clean your carpets properly?

Absolutely not. You might have the best computer on the market, but if you don't know how to use it, it won't do you any good.

The same is true with carpet cleaning machines. The company may own good equipment, but the employees may not know how to use it correctly. This is why it's important that you choose your carpet cleaner carefully.

The best carpet cleaning companies are those that have been certified by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification, known as the IICRC. A carpet cleaning company cannot buy this certification. The carpet cleaner must earn the certification through study, experience and the successful completion of formal, written examinations. Cleaners who are certified by the IICRC have, in effect, earned a degree in carpet cleaning.

The IICRC provides written credentials to the companies it certifies. So before you choose a carpet cleaner, ask question #3 & 4: **3. What training have you had in cleaning carpets?** and **4. Are you certified by the IICRC and will you show me your certificate?**

Don't worry, I have the full list of questions to ask below.

## **But what if the company is offering extremely low prices?**

As we've been discussing, not all carpet cleaners offer the same level of service.

Or, as John Ruskin said a century ago, "*There is hardly anything in the world that someone cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper. And, the people who consider price alone are this man's lawful prey.*"

**Point #1:** The price you see offered may not be for the services you want performed. It may not be performed by a properly trained technician, the company may not be insured, and the correct cleaning solutions and techniques may not be used.

Before you select a company, decide what you want to accomplish. If you're looking for the cheapest possible price and you're not picky if the cleaner removes only some of the dirt, you can choose from hundreds of companies that use small shampooers or other inferior cleaning methods. Or, you can even rent a machine at the grocery store and do the job yourself.

On the other hand, if you want your carpet thoroughly cleaned – those harmful chemicals and pollutants discussed above -- then you need to hire a company that uses a hot water cleaner mounted in a truck. Make sure the carpet cleaner uses the multiple step process taught by the IICRC, including pre-vacuuming and pre-spray treatment. Using the proper equipment along with the right training is the only way to assure that your carpet remains healthy and free from dirt, disease-causing bacteria, and hurtful chemicals.

So remember that the price you see offered may not be for the services you want performed.

**Point #2:** The price you see advertised may not be the price you pay.

Unfortunately, many homeowners have learned that the low price they saw advertised was not the amount they were charged.

And if you've ever hired a carpet cleaner, you too may have been the victim of false or misleading advertising. You probably learned the hard way that some carpet cleaners offer a cheap price -- usually between \$3.95 and \$9.95 per room -- and then pressure you into paying a lot more once they get inside your home.

Some of them may even break the law by using illegal bait and switch tactics.

As in all businesses and professions, the carpet cleaning industry has its share of bad apples and you should be aware that some are unethical -- and, sadly, a few are dishonest. By their misleading advertising and false promises, they cast a dark shadow on our entire industry.

Then you'll find other carpet cleaners -- professionals like me who work hard to earn your trust and respect.

As a way of improving our profession, I've dedicated my business to educating the public. The only way you can make an intelligent decision is to have all the facts you need. This is why we've put together this message.

So ask questions. The way you learn about a company is to ask specific questions and listen carefully to the answers.

## **Here are the questions I suggest you ask:**

- 1. What method of carpet cleaning do you recommend?**
- 2. What type of equipment do you use to clean carpet?**
- 3. How often should I get my carpets cleaned?**
- 4. What training have you had in cleaning carpets?**
- 5. Are you certified by the IICRC and will you show me your certificate?**
- 6. Will you give me a written quote, stating exactly what I'm getting and how much it's going to cost?**

If you want a quick, cheap carpet cleaning job, many companies in the phone book can help you. Or you can rent a shampooer and do the job yourself.

But if you want your carpeting to be completely and thoroughly cleaned by a certified, experienced, and insured technician -- removing the bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollens, and tobacco products -- then I invite you to call me.

I'll be happy to answer your questions and even provide you a cost estimate over the telephone without obligation of any kind. We service clients in Bradenton, Sarasota, Brandon, and the surrounding areas in Florida.

To reach me, call 941-301-9555.

Or, if you prefer, visit <http://www.cleaningmanatee.com>.

Here's one last point: I do one more thing as well.

I guarantee my work. That's right.

I fully guarantee every carpet cleaning job we do. If you aren't happy with our work, we'll re-clean the area for free. And if you still aren't pleased, you don't pay for that area. Not one cent. What could be more fair?

As a matter of fact, add this question to the list.

Question #7 is **"Do you guarantee your work?"**

Not all companies do -- and it's important that you have this information before you make your decision.

Thank you for taking the time to read this,

Jeremy and Stefanie Overturf

Overturf's Cleaning