

# **Interface Flooring Systems Maintenance Specification Guide**

**Exclusive to all Interface Flooring Systems Products**

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# Introduction

Why is maintenance important? By implementing a routine carpet maintenance program, you preserve and maintain your floor covering and extend the life of your carpet investment. Routine care can prolong the need for restorative cleaning. Restorative cleaning is needed when carpet has been neglected and its appearance has degenerated to a point when cleaning is an absolute necessity. Excessive soils and stains may require different methods or a combination of methods to be utilized. However, even restorative cleaning typically will not achieve the desired original beauty and appearance of the floor covering if the carpet has been neglected. Routine care means a longer lasting product. What is important is to implement a maintenance program from the beginning. An effective maintenance program is carefully planned and executed on schedule. There are many factors that can affect the appearance of carpet including color, pattern, yarn fiber, and of course maintenance.

## Comprehensive Maintenance Plan

An effective maintenance program consists of five key elements:

- **Preventative Maintenance** – containing the soil entering the building using walk-off mats at entrances. This includes outside matting and inside matting and mats at certain other high traffic interior areas.
- **Vacuuming** - regular vacuuming is the single most important part of a maintenance program. Vacuuming is designed to remove dry soil matter.
- **Spot and Spill Removal** – quick response to spills is the key. The faster spills are dealt with the less chance that it will leave a stain.
- **Interim Cleaning** – several different methods can be utilized. If used regularly, interim cleaning can prolong the need for restorative cleaning.
- **Restorative Cleaning** – deep cleaning designed to remove trapped soils. Hot water extraction is the most effective method and the **only** restorative method recommended by Interface.

## Identifying Your Specific Maintenance Needs

Just as various areas of your office or building are subject to different uses, each area demands a different level of maintenance and care. Heavily trafficked areas such as entrances and corridors require more frequent vacuuming and cleaning. Areas around vending machines and desks need daily attention to spills and stains. Also certain areas may require different types of equipment to be used. A comprehensive maintenance program should have a chart or diagram of the building's floor space outlining proper cleaning frequency rates, methods and equipment. This well designed maintenance plan will add years of useful life to your carpet investment.

## Commercial Carpet Cleaning Frequency Chart

Traffic Soil Rating	Carpet Owner/ Maintainer		Professional Carpet Cleaner/ Restorer	
	Vacuuming	Spot Cleaning	Interim Maintenance (Between Restorative Cleanings)	Restorative Cleaning
<b>Light</b> <500 foot traffics per day	1 to 2x per week	Daily or as soon as spots are noticed	1 to 3x annually	1 to 2x annually
<b>Medium (moderate)</b> 500-1000 foot traffics per day	Daily in traffic areas. Overall 3 to 4x per week	Daily or as soon as spots are noticed	3 to 6x annually	2 to 4x annually
<b>Heavy</b> 500-1000 foot traffics per day	Daily in traffic areas. Overall 4 to 7x per week	Daily or as soon as spots are noticed	6 to 12x annually	3 to 6x annually
<b>Very Heavy</b> >2500 foot traffics per day	1 to 2x daily in traffic areas. Overall 7x per week	Daily or as soon as spots are noticed	12 to 52x annually	6 to 24x annually

**\*Recommended frequency guide per IICRC S100  
(Institute of Inspection Cleaning and Restoration)**

# Maintenance Techniques

The maintenance program is designed to prevent soil from reaching the carpet and to remove soil before it causes damage. To keep your carpet clean and looking like new, this soil management program uses a combination of methods. These methods are tailored to your facility's needs. Cleaning frequencies are based on the specific needs of trafficked areas in your facility.

## Preventative Maintenance

Maintaining your carpet's appearance means more than choosing the right cleaning method. Choosing the right products up front contributes greatly to the overall performance of your floor covering. The use of walk-off mats helps keep soil from entering the building. Outside mats are designed to scrape dirt and debris off shoes while interior mats are designed to remove smaller soil particles as well as help absorb moisture. Interior walk-off mats should extend a minimum of six feet inside the entrance. At 15 feet, the mats can effectively remove 80% of soil and moisture before it reaches the carpet. Mats can also be effective in other interior areas including elevators, around water coolers and food station areas, and at stair thresholds.

## Chair Pads

Chair pads are **NOT** required with any Interface Flooring Systems carpet.

## Vacuum Cleaning

A good vacuuming program is essential to the success of your carpet maintenance efforts. Effective daily vacuuming reduces the frequency of periodic maintenance procedures required to maintain clean carpet. In addition to removing soil, vacuum cleaning also helps to lift and restore pile particularly for cut pile carpet. Proper equipment and technique are critical to the success of a vacuuming program.

Machines with cylinder brushes should be used and set so that brushes are in contact with pile surfaces. Twin motor machines with independent motors for suction and brushing are preferred for this task. Upright vacuum sweepers are advised; canister and back pack type machines are generally **not** recommended. Vacuums with top loading soil bags and HEPA filters are highly recommended as are those that are Green Label certified by The Carpet and Rug Institute. For a list of these certified vacuum cleaners see the CRI website at [www.carpet-rug.com](http://www.carpet-rug.com).

The frequency of vacuuming is determined by visual inspection, but should be done daily. Heavy traffic areas such as lobbies, entryways and barrier mats, particularly those exposed to various weather conditions, may require more frequent vacuuming. Vacuuming these areas more than once a day will help prevent soil from being tracked into other areas. For thorough cleaning, be sure your movements are slow and methodical when vacuuming.

**NOTE: FOR FLOR S AND SUPER FLOR A SUCTION ONLY VACUUM IS RECOMMENDED.**

### **Spot Cleaning (NYLON CARPETS ONLY)**

Daily removal of spots and spills helps maintain the carpet's appearance between scheduled cleanings. Immediate action against spots and spills also reduces the probability of a permanent stain. It is important to use solutions that are appropriate for the specific type of spot or spill – liquid water based, liquid oil based, or solids including gum. Use spotting solutions sparingly and always try to remove the spot with water only before using a spotting solution. If available using a portable extractor will significantly improve ability to remove spots.

#### **Treating Water-Based Spots**

For liquid spills, blot up as much of the liquid as possible with a clean white cloth. If the spill is semi-solid or has hardened, scrape it with a spoon or spatula and then blot the spot with a damp sponge. Always work from the edge of the spot towards the center. Never rub across a wet spill in a manner that causes the stain or contamination to be spread from the original area.

If spot remains after using water, refer to our spotting guide and choose the appropriate solution. Apply a minimal amount of solution and using a hand brush, gently agitate the solution. Rinse with water and allow the area to dry about 1 hour and then vacuum. Repeat the application if necessary. Protect the freshly cleaned area until the carpet is completely dry. Do not brush aggressively on the spot.

#### **Treating Oil-Based Spots**

When removing oily stains such as paint, grease, tar, asphalt, always check for color fastness by applying your cleaning solution to an inconspicuous area of the carpet. Spray the solvent onto a white cloth and press it onto the carpet. Check the cloth for any evidence of dye transfer to the cloth. If color transfer is evident, do not use the solution. If color fastness is not a problem, apply your solution sparingly to a clean white cloth and press the cloth onto the spot.

Again, do not rub across the stain, but wipe gently from the outer edge toward the center of the spot. Repeat the procedure until the spot has been removed. Rinse with water and allow the area to dry about 1 hour and then vacuum. Protect the freshly cleaned area until the carpet is completely dry.

**NOTE: HAVING A SMALL EXTRACTOR MACHINE HANDY ALWAYS MAKES IT EASIER TO FLUSH OUT ANY SPILL. IF STAIN CANNOT BE REMOVED PLEASE CONTACT INTERFACE CONSULTANT.**

## **Interim Cleaning**

### **Dry Extraction**

The low moisture dry extraction method is a safe, easy, and effective method for handling maintenance on a regular basis. The procedure does not leave the carpet wet and allows for immediate access and traffic once procedure is complete.

Follow this process for dry extraction: Thoroughly vacuum the carpet. Spread extraction compound on the carpet and then agitate using a low moisture applicator to gently brush the solution into the fiber, dislodging and dispersing accumulated soil. Allow 30 minutes for drying before vacuuming particulate and soil from the carpet.

**NOTE: FOR FLOR S AND SUPER FLOR PRODUCTS, HOT WATER EXTRACTION IS THE ONLY RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE.**

### **Crystallizing Application (Dry Foam)**

The crystallizing method of maintenance is a low moisture procedure similar in some respects to the dry extraction method. Benefits include immediate access to the area without the necessity of extended drying time.

Again, preparation should always include vacuuming. The cleaning solution can be applied using an electric sprayer or a simple pump-up garden type sprayer. The carpet pile is then agitated, using a low moisture applicator to gently brush the solution into the fiber, dislodging and dispersing accumulated soil. Allow time for the solution to dry and to form the encapsulating crystalline formations around the fiber, effectively trapping soils and contaminants. Drying time will vary accordingly to several factors including humidity, air flow and air temperature but can normally be expected to be 30 - 60 minutes. Finish with vacuuming.

## **Bonnet Cleaning**

**NOTE: BONNET CLEANING IS NOT RECOMMENDED AND MAY VOID ALL WARRANTIES.**

## Hot Water Extraction

As with all other maintenance methods, always prepare the carpet by vacuuming.

Hot water extraction is an effective method for removing heavy soil and residue from carpeting. Start by applying a detergent pre-spray appropriate for carpet using an electric or pump type sprayer. Agitate the pre-spray with a low moisture applicator. Using only clean water in the extractor, thoroughly rinse the carpet. The hot water extraction method injects water into the carpet. The injected water suspends the soil and contaminants in the solution for easy removal by the built-in vacuum system.

The recommended technique: Operate the floor wand or self-contained extractor by engaging the solution valve or button and pulling or pushing the equipment for approximately three to five feet (or at a comfortable distance). Release the solution valve before reaching the end of your pass to assure that you vacuum up all of the solution. Cover the same area two or three times with the solution valve off to remove as much moisture from the carpet as possible.

Overlap approximately two inches on the area already cleaned and proceed as described above. In extremely soiled areas, it may be necessary to make two or three additional passes with the solution valve on. Make several additional passes with the solution valve off to remove as much moisture from the area as possible, always being careful not to over wet the carpet.

**CAUTION: WATER TEMPERATURES SHOULD NEVER EXCEED 120° F.**

Make sure HVAC system is on and use drying fans (air movers) on wet areas during and after cleaning to allow the carpet to dry completely. Complete the procedure with a thorough vacuuming.

**NOTE: DRYING TIMES WILL VARY BASED ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS. DO NOT ALLOW FOOT TRAFFIC ON THE CARPET UNTIL IT IS DRY. FOOT TRAFFIC CAN CAUSE FIBER DAMAGE AND RAPID RE-SOILING.**

# Cleaning Solutions

**Some commercial carpet cleaning solutions are very harsh and can damage the carpet fiber. It is important to select solutions that meet the basic standards outlined here and to evaluate each product before using it.**

Interface brand carpet may be maintained using a number of widely recognized and readily available carpet cleaning agents that have the CRI Seal of Approval. For a list of these certified cleaning solutions see the CRI website at [www.carpet-rug.com](http://www.carpet-rug.com). Avoid products with pH levels over 9.5 and products that contain toxic or flammable solvents. Products designed for use in hot water extraction equipment should not contain oil based defoamers, and no product should include optical brighteners. Oil based defoamers have the potential to leave oily residues causing rapid re-soiling, and optical brighteners can adversely affect the coloration of carpet.

Cleaning solutions used for Interim and/or Restorative cleaning should be tested for sticky residues that may cause re-soiling. To test a solution, pour a small amount in a clean glass dish. Allow the solution to air dry completely (24 hours minimum). Break up any hard residue on the surface of the glass dish and examine it. If the residue can be characterized as dry powder, dry flakes or dry crystals, the solution is acceptable. If the residue appears oily, greasy, sticky, or in waxy flakes, the solution is not acceptable since it would likely contribute to rapid re-soiling.

Spotting solutions should be used as needed and should be flushed out with clean water after the spot has been treated.

# Maintenance Equipment

Using the right equipment is as important as using the right cleaning solutions and the best techniques. These guidelines provide the technical specifications you need for key pieces of carpet maintenance equipment.

## Vacuum (For twin motor uprights)

Power	• 8 amp
Filtration	• Down to .3 microns or lower
Vacuum	• 60 " water or better @ 90+ cfm
Brush	• Toothed belt drive preferred • Brush speed 2,500 - 3,500 rpm • Brush diameter 2½" x 3½" • Brush height adjustment essential; self-adjusting design preferred
Working Width	• 16" - 22"
Dust Bag Capacity	• 300 - 400 cubic inches

**NOTE: VACUUM CLEANER SHOULD BE 'GREEN LABEL' CERTIFIED BY THE CARPET AND RUG INSTITUTE (CRI). TOP-LOADING DUST BAG MACHINES WITH HEPA FILTERS ARE STRONGLY RECOMMENDED. BATTERY POWERED VACUUM CLEANERS ARE NOT RECOMMENDED. FOR HEALTHCARE USE, MACHINES WITH A 65 OR LOWER DBR RATING**

## Low Moisture Applicator

Power	• 2-8 amp
Width	• 12 " - 22 "
Brushes (2)	• 10 " - 20 " Counter-rotating
Brush speed	• 400 rpm

## Hot Water Extractor

Power	• 10 - 15 amp
Fluid Delivery	• ½ gallons/minute 50-100 psi
Tanks	• 8-20 gallon solution • 8-20 gallon recovery
Vacuum	• 100 " - 140 " water lift at around 90-100 cfm

Vacuum Shoe  
Wheels

- 11 " - 18 " wide
- Non-marking 4 " - 10 " diameter

**NOTE: TRUCK-MOUNTED UNITS GENERALLY GIVE OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE  
ALTHOUGH SELF-CONTAINED WALK-BEHIND UNITS ARE PERFERRED WHERE USE  
OF A TRUCK-MOUNT IS NOT FEASIBLE. BATTERY OPERATED EQUIPMENT IS NOT  
RECOMMENDED.**

# Miscellaneous Maintenance Issues

## Indoor Air Quality: Antimicrobial Protection

Indoor air quality problems cost North America more than \$100 billion each year in health care, absenteeism, lost production time, and lost revenue. Microorganisms have been identified as a major cause of common indoor air quality issues. Although all Interface Flooring Systems products have the patented antimicrobial treatment Intersept, regular maintenance of your floor covering can assist in the reduction of microorganisms in your floor covering.

## Tile Replacement

i2 products or tiles that become badly stained or damaged can be replaced from shelf stock. Tiles can be removed by slipping a knife edge under one corner and peeling it from the floor. Be sure that the face pile of the surrounding tiles are brushed upright and that the replacement is fitted carefully to prevent pile fibers from becoming trapped between joints.

Carpet tiles taken from shelf stock will likely have a newer appearance than the ones being replaced. If new tiles stand out in sharp contrast to surrounding older tiles, you may want to shuffle them in a “musical chair” fashion. Place the new tile(s) in less visible areas, and place the aged, undamaged tiles in a more visible area.

## Access Floors

Where applicable, contact should be made with the relevant access floor manufacturer for recommendations for carpet cleaning directions in relation to the methods and techniques recommended herein. Low moisture methods and techniques are generally preferred.

# Spot Removal Guide

The chart below is a guideline to spot removal. Follow each step in order, proceeding to the next step only if the previous step failed to remove the stain. The use of a portable extractor with water is highly recommended for a first attempt at spot removal and can be used after each step to flush solution. For unknown spots use water first then try dry cleaning solvent, followed by detergent solution.

If you cannot remove the spot following these guidelines, call Interface maintenance support at 1.800.336.0225, ext. 6268

## Spotting Solutions

1. **Detergent Solution** - Mix 1/4 teaspoon colorless mild detergent in 1 cup water.
2. **Ammonia Solution** - Mix 1 tablespoon clear household ammonia in 1/2 cup water.
3. **Vinegar Solution** - Mix 1/3 cup white household vinegar in 2/3 cup water.
4. **Dry Cleaning Solvent** – Apply isopropyl alcohol (standard rubbing alcohol) to clean cloth and blot. DO NOT apply directly on carpet.

<b>Beer</b>	1	3	
<b>Blood</b>	1	2	
<b>Butter &amp; Margarine</b>	4	1	
<b>Candle Wax</b>	Scrape away as much as possible with a spoon or dull knife.	4	
<b>Catsup/ Tomato Sauce</b>	1	2	
<b>Chewing Gum</b>	Harden gum with ice until brittle enough to scrape away with a spoon or dull knife.	4 or use a commercial chewing gum remover.	
<b>Chocolate</b>	Scrape away as much as possible with a spoon or dull knife.	1	2
<b>Cocktails</b>	1	3	
<b>Coffee</b>	1	3	
<b>Cough Syrup</b>	1	2	
<b>Crayons</b>	Scrape away as much as possible with a spoon or dull knife	4	
<b>Egg (raw)</b>	Blot up as much as possible.	1	2

<b>Food Coloring</b>	1, until color no longer transfers to towel.	2	
<b>Fruit Juice</b>	1	2	
<b>Furniture Stain</b>	4		
<b>Glue</b>	1	4	
<b>Grass</b>	1		
<b>Gravy</b>	1	2	
<b>Greases</b>	Scrape away as much as possible with a spoon or dull knife	4	
<b>Ice Cream</b>	1	2	
<b>Ink (Ballpoint)</b>	4		
<b>Ink (India)</b>	4		
<b>Jam and Jelly</b>	1	2	
<b>Lipstick</b>	Scrape away as much as possible with a spoon or dull knife	2	
<b>Merthiolate &amp; Mercurochrome</b>	1	2	
<b>Mildew</b>	1	2	
<b>Milk</b>	1	2	
<b>Mucilage</b>	1	2	
<b>Mud</b>	Scrape away as much as possible with a spoon or dull knife	1	2
<b>Mustard</b>	1	3	
<b>Nail Polish</b>	4	Apply amyl acetate or nail polish remover to cloth and blot. PRETEST FIRST.	
<b>Oils</b>	4		
<b>Paint (Oil-Based)</b>	4		
<b>Paint (Water-Based)</b>	1	2	
<b>Rubber Cement</b>	Roll the glue off if it has hardened sufficiently.	4	
<b>Rust</b>	Apply rust remover or warm oxalic acid solution for 10-15 minutes	2	
<b>Shoe Polish</b>	4		
<b>Soft Drinks</b>	1	2	
<b>Soot</b>	1	4	

<b>Tar &amp; Asphalt</b>	Scrape away as much as possible with a spoon or dull knife	4	
<b>Toothpaste</b>	1	3	
<b>Urine</b>	Blot up as much as possible if still wet.	1	2
<b>Vomit</b>	Blot up as much as possible if still wet.	1	2
<b>Wine</b>	1	3	

# Consultants

For more information about carpet maintenance, please contact one of the following consultants:

[www.interfaceflooring.com](http://www.interfaceflooring.com)

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## Additional References

Carpet and Rug Institute - [www.carpet-rug.com](http://www.carpet-rug.com)

The Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification -  
[www.iicrc.org](http://www.iicrc.org)