

# Consumer's Guide to Carpet Cleaning

BY CHARLES OKWECHIME

## ***CLEAN PLAN SERVICES LTD***

Specialists in Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning

[www.clean-plan.co.uk](http://www.clean-plan.co.uk)



Read this guide and you'll discover

- How to avoid four carpet cleaning rip-offs!
- 6 costly misconceptions about carpet cleaning
- Crawling' critters: 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*

**CLEAN PLAN SERVICES LTD**

**Call Now On 0800 695 695 6**



We wouldn't expect you to just trust anyone to clean your valuable carpets ... that's why *Clean Plan* is proud to be recognised of these leading trade bodies!



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 To Carpet Cleaning”**.

In this fact-filled e-book, 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.

I wrote this e-book after our experience of being in the cleaning industry for 16 years. Our aim is 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 on **0800 695 695 6**.

We've dedicated our business to educating consumers.

We'll be happy to help you in every way.

Charles Okwechime.

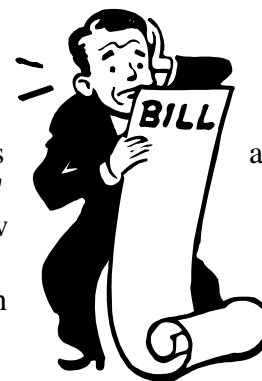


PS. You can be sure our company works to the highest standards – we are certified by the Institute of Inspection Cleaning and Restoration Certification – the only international body to set standards for the cleaning industry.

# **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 cleaners use price as the bait for their false and misleading advertising. They offer cheap price usually between £ 5.00 and £ 15.00 per room- and then, once they're in your home, they pressure you into buying "add-ons" It's as if you were buying a car and found that the dealer was charging extra for the tyres 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 cleaning describes the process of shampooing or heavy preconditioning, followed with hot water extraction cleaning. Unfortunately unethical carpet cleaners often use dual process as 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 their 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 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 a person who showers and then rinses off the dirt and soap will be much cleaner than the person who takes only a sponge bath is. Obviously, each carpet cleaner will be biased toward his own method. And each method does have advantages. So I suggest you look to what carpet manufactures say.

## Six Costly Misconceptions About Carpet Cleaning

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

No. Dirt is abrasive- like sandpaper. Every time you step on your carpet, you grind dirt into the fibres. 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 a carpet is to remove dirt.*

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

If you have allergies or breathing problems the source could be in your carpets.

**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 dirty residue. You may say they clean the carpet half way. The most effective method is hot water extraction. Hot water extraction means 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 two types of hot water extraction. If they use an extraction unit mounted in a van outside it is known as a truck mount. If they use a machine they can bring into the home, it is known as a portable machine.

**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 is important that you choose your carpet cleaner very carefully. The best cleaning companies are those that have been certified by the Institute of Inspection Cleaning and Restoration, 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:** *The company that offers the lowest price is the company you should hire.*

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

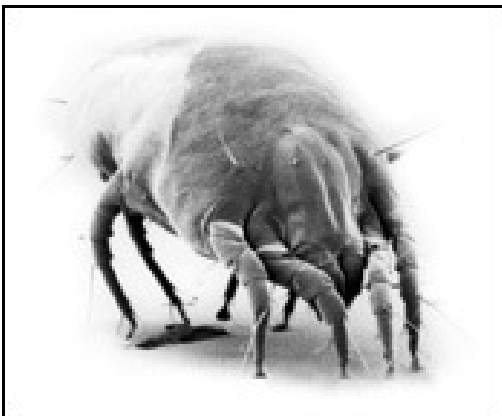
I wish this were true but it isn't. Honest, reputable carpet cleaning companies almost never price carpet cleaning by the room. Instead, carpet cleaning is usually priced by the square foot. So if you'd like me to tell you the exact cost of cleaning your carpet, I need to know the exact number of square feet that you want cleaned. To get an accurate measurement, I use a digital estimator to measure the size of the carpet area. First, the type of carpet. Certain types of carpet are harder to clean than others. Second, the amount of soiling. Carpet that hasn't been cleaned for ten years will take longer than a carpet that we cleaned within the last year. Third, the amount of furniture we have to move. If you move your furniture, you'll save money.

## **CRAWLING CREATURES 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. Hair. Industrial waste. Lint. Mud. Pet stains. Pollens. Pollutants. Smoke. Soot. Tar. Tobacco smoke. Urine. Vomit.

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



### **Did You Know ...**

- House dust mites and their faeces are the biggest cause of asthma and allergic reactions affecting four million people in the UK
- Up to 25% of the weight of the average pillow consists of dead skin, house dust mites and their droppings
- 85% of asthma attacks are triggered by house dust mite allergens
- At best, vacuuming removes only 5-10% of the dust mite populations in your home
- You cannot see them with a naked eye ... but they are there!

( Will you help us? Were trying to find at least one thing that's in your carpet for every letter of the alphabet. And we don't have anything at all for these letters: **J,K,N,O,Q,W,X,Y,Z**. **If you can think of something that could be in your carpet that begins with these 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 a shampoo to your hair, allowing it to dry and then removing the shampoo from your head with a vacuum? This method leaves dirty residues in your carpet, which is one reason why dry foam is not very 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 dirt from your carpet; it is not very effective.

**Dry, absorbent powder:** The dry-compound method spreads a moist, absorbent powder through the carpet. The powder is allowed to dry and then sucked up into a vacuum. This method leaves dry sponge particles at the base of the carpet yarn. And because the carpet is not rinsed, this method also, is 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".

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 a sponge bath will.

## 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 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).

**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 the phone call. But once the cleaner get 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.

To give you an idea of how we estimate the cost of cleaning, here are the three things we consider:



**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 cleaner includes it on his written quotation.

**MISTAKE # 5:** Choosing a carpet cleaner without getting comment 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 for 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. He must earn that certification through study, experience and formal written examinations.

**MISTAKE # 7:** Choosing a carpet cleaner who isn't a member of the National Carpet Cleaners Association (NCCA). NCCA is a trade association of carpet cleaners who are dedicated to:

- (1) honest, ethical business practices,
- (2) staying current on the latest methods for carpet and upholstery care,
- (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 NATIONAL CARPET CLEANERS ASSOCIATION (NCCA).

**MISTAKE # 8:** Choosing a carpet cleaner who doesn't use high-powered 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. They are the Rolls Royce of carpet cleaning machines; they use hot water, high pressure and stronger suction than any other method, so you get a far better job.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF VALUE AND PRICE

Price is what you pay. The 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, recommend high-powered hot water extraction cleaning.

Here's why:

- (1) High-powered hot water extraction units heat the water to higher temperatures. Higher temperatures means better cleaning ability.
- (2) It shoots the cleaning solution into your carpet at high pressures, which breaks up the dirt, bacteria, chemicals and pollens.
- (3) The machine uses strong suction to draw the dirt, chemicals, bacteria, pollens and tobacco residue out of your carpet.

Not surprisingly, having your carpet thoroughly cleaned with high-powered hot water extraction costs more than renting a DIY machine.

If you bought the cheapest carpeting you could find, then renting a small shampooer might be all you need. No question, it will get some of the dirt- but the key word 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 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 once a year, as recommended by many leading carpet mills.

### 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 has advantages and disadvantages. Some methods will only get out the dirt. Other methods will get out the 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 £5.00 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 dust mites that reside in your carpet, then you're invited to call me.

The hot water unit we use is the most effective cleaning system available today. Likewise, it's one of the most expensive units on the market. But we bought this unit for a good reason: More and more families want the good-health benefits that come from having a fresh, clean carpet.



Have you seen how a little boy's trousers get when he plays outdoors? If you have, then you know you can brush off his trousers 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 £10.00 to £15.00 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 and 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 your 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

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

We want you to be really pleased- in fact absolutely delighted- with every carpet & upholstery job we do.

So every job comes with our double ironclad, risk-free, guarantee.



What does this mean?

Simply this:

- (1) If you aren't happy with our work, we'll re-clean the whole area for free.
- (2) If you still aren't pleased, you pay nothing – or refund what you have paid!

Many companies don't guarantee their work- but we feel nothing is more important than your complete satisfaction.

We stand behind every job 100%. If ever you have any questions or concerns about our work, please call us right away:

Call **0800 695 695 6** Thanks.

# 4 STEPS TO A CLEAN, FRESH, HEALTHY CARPET

*If you're thinking of having your carpets cleaned,  
we suggest you 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, or do you want all the bacteria, fungus, chemicals and dust mites removed, which will require a powerful hot water extraction 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 NCCA (National Carpet Cleaning Association)?
7. Are you certified by the IICRC?
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 will be able to help you, or you could do the job yourself.

But if you want your carpet & upholstery 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 to your home and give you a free written quotation- without obligation of any kind. To reach us, call **0800 695 695 6**.

## **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 on **0800 695 695 6**.*

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!

**Charles Okwechime**

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