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Technical Services Department

Proper Vacuuming of Your Carpet

There are three main objectives of vacuuming:

1. Remove visible litter from the surface
2. Improve the surface appearance of your carpet (grooming)
3. Remove unseen, deeper imbedded soil and other particulate

The reason for number three may not be as obvious but is actually the most important. Abrasive dirt left in your carpet will over time result in damage to the fibers and adversely affect the appearance. Also, carpet has a unique characteristic and performs another important function in your home or office. The carpet fibers have the ability to act as a filter to trap and hold airborne particulate or dust. These will remain in the carpet until removed with proper vacuuming, thus promoting a cleaner environment.

Because vacuuming is so important, it should be done properly using the proper equipment. A sweeper that just picks up litter from the surface does not constitute proper vacuuming. The same is true for robotic type sweepers that only remove surface litter.

Choosing a Proper Vacuum

Shaw recommends vacuums approved under the Carpet and Rug Institutes Green Label Seal of Approval Program. A good vacuum should have adjustments to be able to adjust to the proper height of the carpet being vacuumed. If the vacuum is set too high above the surface it is inefficient and does not remove the dirt. If the adjustment is too low, the beater bar or brushes may damage the surface of the carpet and leave it looking fuzzy. A requirement if you have shag carpet is the ability to not only adjust the height of the vacuum, but also to disengage the beater bar or brushes to allow for **suction only**. The use of beater bars or brushes on shag type carpet will result in voiding your warranty.

Shaw also recommends vacuums that have paper filtration bags that fill from the top. These bags also help trap smaller particles and keep them from being re-introduced into the air. By filling from the top, you are using the force of gravity to fill the bag, thus, allowing the vacuum's airflow to be more effective in removing dirt. In order to insure that your vacuum operates at optimal efficiency you should change your filter bag when it is one half to two thirds full.

Determining the Proper Height Adjustment of Your Vacuum

The beater bar or brush should barely touch the surface of the carpet and should not "dig in". Take a piece of your uninstalled carpet or use an inconspicuous place like a closet. Adjust your vacuum to the proper height and vacuum against the nap, taking care to keep the vacuum in the same area when making each pass. Vacuum this area 100 passes consisting of a forward and backward motion. Look across the vacuumed carpet at eye level first and then at the adjacent un-vacuumed (control) area. Brush the carpet's pile up with your hand and compare the two areas. Discontinue use of this vacuum or change the setting if you see any fraying or damage to the vacuumed area.

TECHNICAL BULLETIN