



"We Make It Look NEW AGAIN."

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It's time to have your carpets cleaned – but **who can you trust?** With so many choices and cleaning methods, it can be a daunting process. *"People don't always realize the value of a sound, knowledgeable carpet cleaning professional,"* says Kathryn O. Sellers, Director of Public Relations for Carpet and Rug Institute. *"It's very important to ask the right questions and do the research to save yourself from future headaches."*

Perhaps the best way to select a carpet cleaning professional is by referrals from friends and family. A glowing recommendation can provide great peace of mind. If you don't know anyone with referrals, these seven questions will help you make an educated decision:

- 1. DO YOU OFFER A GUARANTEE?**
 - 2. ARE YOU FULLY LICENSED AND INSURED, INCLUDING WORKERS' COMPENSATION?**
 - 3. DO YOU USE ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE CLEANING SOLUTIONS?**
 - 4. HOW IS YOUR COMPANY'S REPUTATION?**
 - 5. DO YOU CHARGE BY THE SQUARE FOOT OR BY THE ROOM?**
 - 6. IS YOUR COMPANY CERTIFIED?**
 - 7. WHAT IS THE BEST CLEANING METHOD FOR MY FLOORING?**
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1. DO YOU OFFER A GUARANTEE?

A professional and reputable company will *always* have a guarantee, which will vary by company. Guarantees may include points, such as "If the spot comes back, so will we." Ultimately, you should be completely satisfied with the work completed. Make sure your carpet cleaner accommodates this circumstance.

2. ARE YOU FULLY LICENSED AND INSURED, INCLUDING WORKERS' COMPENSATION?

It is absolutely important to hire a company that provides workers' compensation benefits to their employees. Most states require companies with more than two employees to provide the benefit. However, some unscrupulous companies will avoid paying the benefit to keep costs low. This could leave you vulnerable to a lawsuit if an employee is injured on your property. Hiring a licensed and insured company with workers' compensation rids the consumer of liability if a work-related injury befalls the employee.

3. DO YOU USE ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE CLEANING SOLUTIONS?

Does the company clean responsibly, using cleaning agents that are safe for people, pets and the environment? Also, it is *very important* to know how the company disposes of waste material.

4. HOW IS YOUR COMPANY'S REPUTATION?

There are thousands of service companies out there and you have the power to find the *right* one for you. To find the answer to this critical question, you may want to reference consumer guides such as the Better Business Bureau, Washington Consumers' Checkbook Magazine, and Angie's List. Consumer reviews speak for themselves. Asking your prospective cleaning company this question is also a great way to compare their attitude to the consumers' attitude.

5. DO YOU CHARGE BY THE SQUARE FOOT OR BY THE ROOM?

Bait-and-switch operators are prevalent in many industries, and the carpet cleaning industry is no exception. The professional carpet cleaning industry has cited these scam activities as a major industry concern, and is taking action to help eliminate unprofessional workmanship and unethical tactics. To help educate consumers, the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification has released a list of guidelines to consider when selecting a carpet cleaner.

To distinguish between the dishonest and the reputable companies, beware of companies advertising a low price by room or a whole house special – this tactic is classic bait-and-switch. The dishonest companies use the cheap price as BAIT to get in the door only to SWITCH the price. Most of these companies pay their employee solely by commission, forcing them to use high pressure sales of additional services. Most reputable companies charge by the square foot.

6. IS YOUR COMPANY CERTIFIED?

What's the importance of the IICRC? The International Institute of Cleaning and Restoration Certification is a non-profit certification organization that helps ensure consumers have access to trusted and trained cleaning professionals by establishing and monitoring certification programs and standards for these industries.

To qualify for IICRC Certification, businesses must demonstrate proof of insurance, maintain a written customer complaint policy with documented follow-up and provide ongoing education and training leading to certification for all technicians. IICRC Certified Firms are also required to abide by the IICRC Code of Ethics. Services provided by IICRC-Certified professionals range from flooring inspection and cleaning, mold remediation, to water and fire damage restoration.

For carpet cleaning companies, you can also look for the Carpet & Rug Institute's Seal of Approval.

7. WHAT IS THE BEST CLEANING METHOD FOR MY FLOORING?

There is no "one way" to clean carpet, rugs and hardwood. Cleaning methods should be as unique as the material itself. To determine the best cleaning method and to prevent damage, ***always consult a certified company.***

Adjustments to the cleaning method should address: composition of the material to be cleaned, the degree of soiling, and your demands. In addition to cleaning, ask the company if they offer additional services such as sanitizer treatment, moth treatment and protectant.