

Carpet Myths and Facts

There are a number of myths about carpet that many believe to be true when in fact they are not. The myths uncovered here are from Werner Braun, President of the Carpet and Rug Institute, from his presentation at the annual CRI Meeting held on November 13, 2007 and my subsequent interview of Werner. I've added my own commentary to these categories based on 37 years of experience. The carpet industry is one of the most responsible industry's there is regarding addressing issues that are erroneous and putting forth information that benefits the consuming public.

Myth: Carpet Can't be Cleaned and Maintained

In industry conducted interviews 82% of the time cleaning and maintenance is sighted as either the first or second reason for not selecting carpet across all demographics and segments of the market. CRI has put together a list of cleaning products that work through the Seal of Approval program. Cleaning and maintenance products have been tested to



Vacuum Cleaning Testing

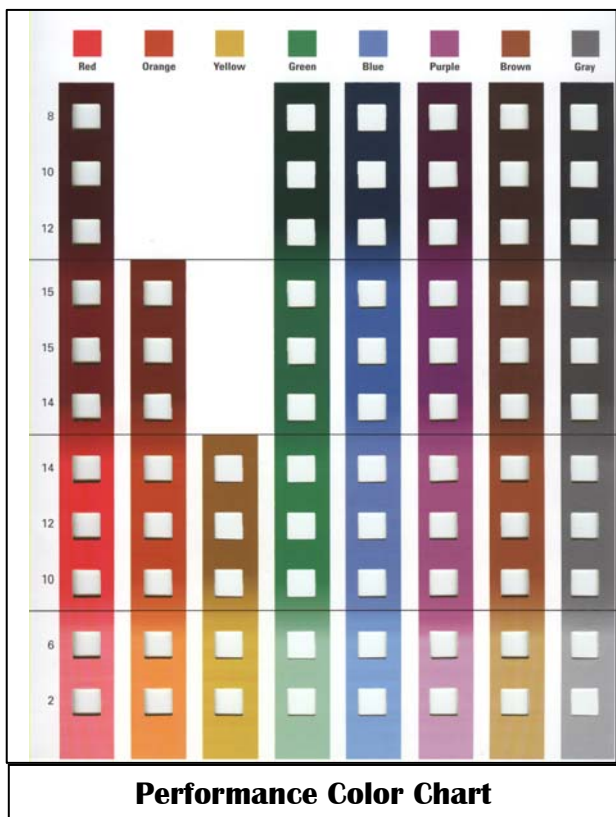
determine how effectively they clean and whether or not they contribute to resoiling of carpet. Only those products that pass the Seal of Approval tests are approved for use on carpet. The days are gone when the industry allows just any product to be used on carpet. For the industry not to do this would be like an auto manufacturer saying to a consumer, "we'll warrant your car even if you don't take care of it." We all know that isn't reality, in fact, auto manufacturers dictate how and when their products have to be maintained to keep warranty coverage. There's no reason any product manufacturer shouldn't tell the consumer what they have to do to optimize their products performance and how to maintain it. By testing products and systems the industry knows what works to clean and maintain carpet.



In the first tests conducted on a multitude of cleaning products represented in the market place for taking care of carpet only five of the products cleaned as well as water, the rest failed. This was eye opening because it shed light on the question of why you can't clean carpet because the very products being sold to maintain it didn't work. The industry has tested all types of cleaning chemicals, systems, machines and vacuum cleaners so the manufacturers know what works best to clean and and maintain their products. Carpet can be cleaned and the methods and systems tested have determined how best to do that. In the commercial market it is imperative to maintain and properly clean carpet so it will last as long as the end user expects

it to and will look good while in service.

Choosing the right color is also important. Lighter colors show soil faster, dark colors show more lint and medium colors generally work best. Consider also the pattern of the carpet; the busier the pattern in the right colors the less likely soil is to show. If your clothes can be cleaned so can carpet which is also a textile product. It's important to know what to use and how to use it. Finally, carpet has to be maintained. You can't expect to resurrect it from filthy dirt and then complain about the fact that you think it can't be cleaned. The last part of dispelling this myth is to make sure you have the right service provider, a firm that actually knows what they're doing with a track record of performance. Common sense must prevail.



Myth: Carpet Gets Dirtier Faster After it's Been Cleaned

I'm throwing this one in myself because for all the years I've been in the industry I've heard about salespeople telling consumers not to clean the carpet because it will get dirtier faster.



This is only true when the wrong cleaning agent, one that leaves a soil attractive residue, is used that will make the carpet get dirtier faster. Again the CRI Seal of Approval program is an ongoing testing process that evaluates cleaning chemicals to determine if they are resoiling agents. Since water cleans as well as many cleaning products it could be used in locations where the carpet is cleaned with high frequency. To dispel the myth, carpet only gets dirtier faster after cleaning if a soil attractive cleaning agent is used by people who don't really know what they're doing. By the way, this can be reversed by purging the soil attractive cleaning agent from the carpet with a plain water flushing process. One other fact is wet cleaning a carpet that is exposed to



constant traffic, such as casinos in Las Vegas or hotels in Times Square. If foot traffic is allowed on the carpet, particularly foot traffic coming from

outside and the carpet doesn't get a chance to dry the damp carpet will clean off the bottoms of shoe soles and cause the carpet to get dirtier faster. So keeping traffic off wet carpet after cleaning is an important aspect of dispelling the myth. Or use a system that doesn't use water so this factor is eliminated.

Myth: Carpet Aggravates Asthma and Allergies

There is a belief that allergens are in the carpet and that if someone is exposed to them it will make their conditions worse. In the mid 70's the Swedes determined that there was link between carpet, asthma and allergies. They got rid of carpet over the next 10 to 15 years in Sweden because of their belief that it was somehow unhealthy. However what happened over that same time period mirroring the decline of carpet was the exponential increase in the incidence of asthma. If carpet was the supposed cause of asthma it should have gone down as its use decreased – this didn't happen. Studies were conducted by the industry that actually seeded carpet and hard surface flooring with dust particles and then people walked on both surfaces. What actually happened was that the dust particles became airborne from the surface of hard flooring and stayed put in carpet. The carpet actually traps the particles acting like a filter that doesn't allow them to become airborne. There were several independent studies done of patients in carpeted hospital rooms compared with those in non-carpeted rooms. To the surprise of the people doing the studies the patients in the carpeted rooms did better – a testament to the fact that carpet does not contribute to aggravating asthma and allergies. These studies have also been conducted in residential environments, schools and other facilities with the same results. A study was also conducted at the University of Georgia to determine dermal transfer of dust or materials from hard service and carpet. 90 to 95% of what was on the

hard surface flooring transferred onto skin and only 3 to 5% of what was on the carpet transferred. Study after study concludes the same; carpet does not aggravate asthma and allergies and facts prove this. Also there is nothing in the make up or construction of carpet that causes asthma or allergies if that was the case people here in Dalton working in the mills, in our offices and lab would be suffering worse than anyone and that is not the case. Provided on page 7 of this newsletter is a chart developed by CRI and Professional Testing entitled "Micron Size Range of Pollutants".

Myth: Carpet is a Perfect Growth Medium for Mold

This myth does not jive with reality. A study done by Dr. Mike Berry at the University of North Carolina where he took carpet, ceiling tiles, drywall, wall studs and all of building materials found in construction and put them in a high humidity chamber with elevated temperatures, both necessary for mold to grow including a food source, and after three days everything in the chamber was covered in mold except for one thing; the carpet – there was no mold on the carpet. Why? Because carpet is a synthetic polymer which mold cannot use as a food source. If mold is found on a carpet there's a problem; out of control moisture in the building the building and carpet is dirty. Getting rid of the carpet accomplishes one thing– getting rid of the carpet, you have not solved the mold problem. Carpet that is



The Commercial FLOORING REPORT

Lew Migliore
President and Owner

LGM Enterprises, LLC
519 Oxford Street
Dalton, GA 30720

P-(706) 370-5888
F-(706) 270-0482

Email:
lgmtcs@optilink.us
or visit our website
lgmandassociates.com

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Don't Miss Upcoming Seminar Information Located on Page Eight and Nine.

kept clean and dry will absolutely not grow mold. If the carpet has mold on it you'd better start looking elsewhere to find the source of the big problem you have. Another myth dispelled by proven scientific fact. Remember the evidence never lies, it will always tell you what the problem is if you know how to interpret what its saying. The evidence will also always take you to the truth.



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Myth: Gases from Carpet Pollute Indoor Air

Not true. Carpet is one of the lowest emitting sources of VOC's used in the construction of a space. A study was conducted in two classrooms in a Dalton middle school. The rooms were across the hall from one another. One room had carpet the other hard surface. When the spaces were tested for VOC's they were the same. To further test the existing carpet was replaced with new carpet. The VOC's went up by a miniscule amount and within 48 hours had dissipated completely back to background of the measurements and they are gone forever. So how is carpet the source of VOC's? To take this further, the school decided to strip and refinish the gymnasium floor when school was out. This area was about 100 yards from the classrooms. The VOC's in the classrooms after the gym floor was refinished went up 30 fold from background. Other VOC's go in and out of an air

air space but it is not from carpet.

Myth: Carpet is Environmentally Unfriendly and Not Sustainable

This is of particular interest today since everybody is talking green, some talking the talk but not walking the walk. Carpet walks the walk. Carpet is made from polymers ultimately from hydrocarbons and therefore is not sustainable, so some would have you think. Actually over the last 10 to 20 years carpets footprint has been reduced. Part of continuing to lessen carpets environmental foot print is the CARE program – Carpet America Recovery. Approximately 5 to 6 billion pounds of hydrocarbons goes into landfills every year in the

form of carpet – that's a lot of hydrocarbon and as an industry and society we don't want that to continue. The commitment has been made to take 40% of that number and direct it to other value recovery opportunities and the industry is well on its way to doing that. In addition the CRI has established a Space Act Agreement with NASA whose technology is being applied to establish new paradigms for the industry. NASA technology is being looked at to be applied to the manufacture of carpet to conserve energy, just as must be done in space craft – getting the most from the least. Actually relative to Sustainability the carpet industry is much further down the road than other industries. This was further proven by the success of the carpet industry at the Green Build show in Chicago recently where the carpet industry showed what they were doing and how they are a leader in this effort.

Myth: Carpet is Very Difficult to Install Properly

Next to the wrong carpet being specified for the wrong application, installation is the industries biggest problem. This is being addressed by establishing an ANSI standard for installation. By having this standard installers can be trained and certified against the standard. The standard would also allow manufacturers warranties to be tied to the standard for installation. Too much carpet gets installed by untrained and unqualified installers. One only need look around to see this, especially in department stores for some reason where it looks like the carpet was just thrown in. This is going to be a long road because the standard has to be written, reviewed and accepted and then the installers have to be trained and certified. It is not that carpet is so difficult to install as there is no real standard for installing it only guidelines. Efforts by CFI to certify installers have been in place for years and the INSTALL programs, without question the best training programs in the industry, does not yet cover all areas of the country and all installers.

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The difficulty is not in the installation but in having installers who know how to work with the ever changing products and technologies of installation.

For more information on these and other issues visit www.carpet-rug.org the official website of the Carpet and Rug Institute where you can get simple fact sheets that allow you to explain all these myths away. And for other help with guidance, questions or problems contact us here at LGM.



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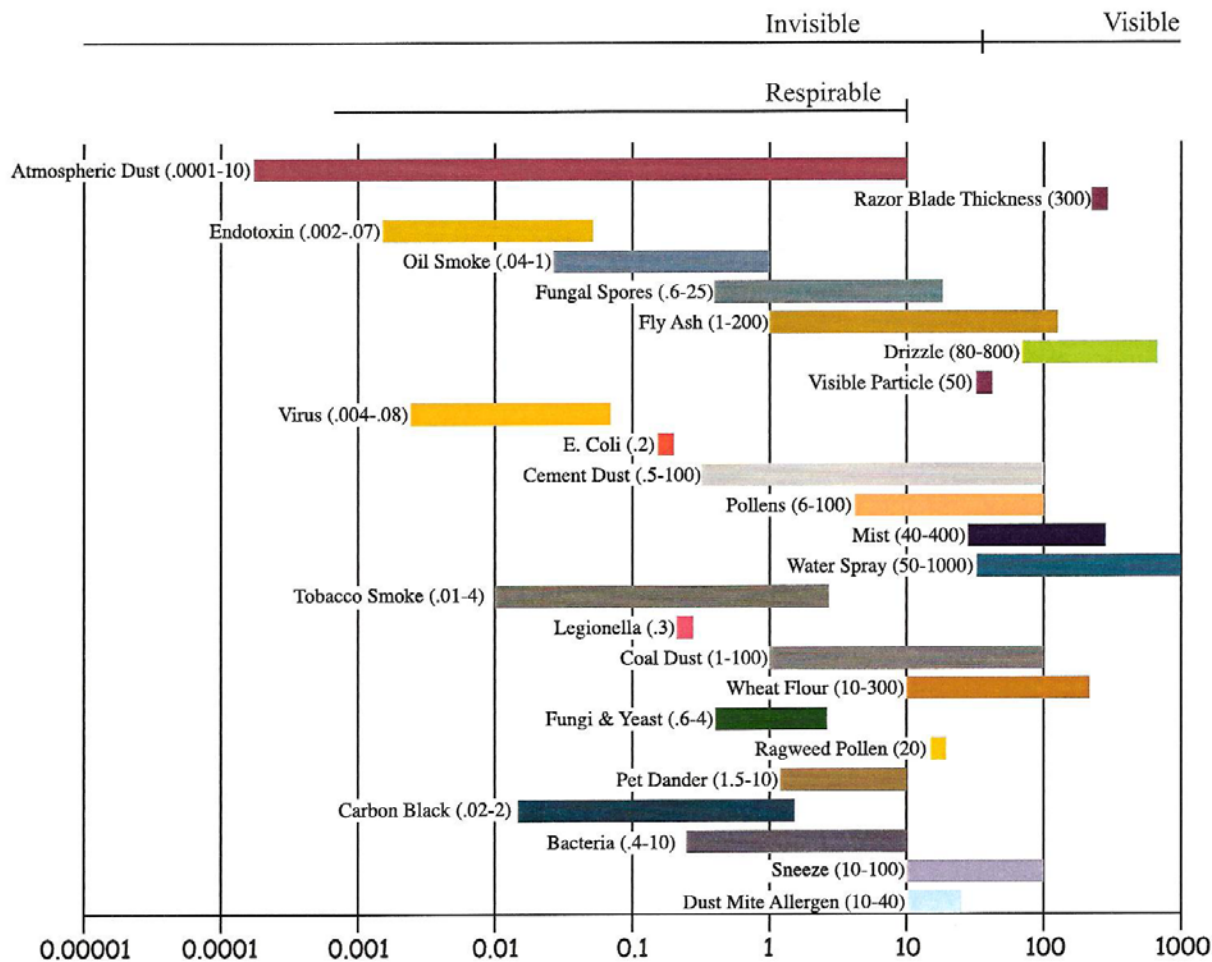
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Dispelling the mentioned myths and informing the consuming public about the product will allow for decisions to be made about what floorcovering to use based on facts not myths floating around today. I've often said that everybody knows everything and nobody knows anything about carpet – that can be said for other flooring products and substrates as well. Being involved in resolving and preventing complaints and failures of carpet and other flooring material failures one has a view of problems from a totally different perspective. In almost every case knowing what will work where, why and how and not just thinking you know would have prevented all but the truly legitimate product failures we've seen over the years saving untold millions of dollars in losses for everyone associated with floor covering. Myths have the same effect. Thinking you know about the product because that is what someone has lead you to believe does not make the information accurate or correct. The initiatives taken and being taken to dispel all the mentioned myths are constantly being addressed. If you take the time to learn you too will see this. I can tell you this; we are involved with technologies on the verge of coming into play that will take the flooring industry so much further than it is today that it will boggle the mind. New initiatives in sustainability and installation will make other industries look like child's play by comparison.

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Micron Size Range of Pollutants



Data compiled by Professional Testing Laboratory and Carpet and Rug Institute



714 Glenwood Place • Dalton, GA 30721 • 706-226-3283 • Fax: 706-226-6787
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