

The Commercial FLOORING REPORT

WHEN IS **CARPET** WALL COVERING AND NOT COVE BASE?

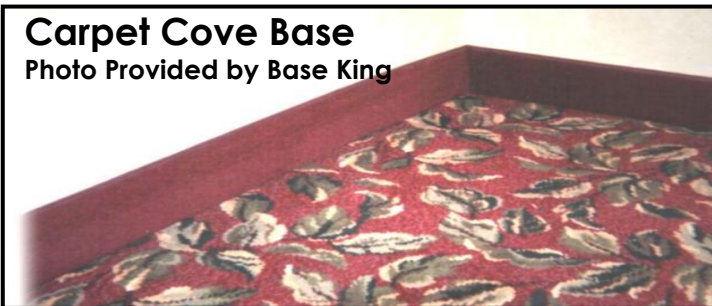
When does the use of carpet on walls constitute wall covering or cove base? Why should it matter and what's the difference in the two and how is it determined? These questions were asked of us by one of the industry's largest commercial carpet manufacturers. If they don't know the answers it was certain none of our readers did either. The questions actually were, "How far can carpet come up a wall before it is considered wall carpet and not cove base which would put it in a different flammability category? Does the Carpet and Rug Institute have a position on this or is there a standard?"

CRI's position is that "carpet designed for floorcovering end-use should not be installed on walls due to a strict vertical flammability standard. However, carpet is often installed as a cove base material and wall base protection, not to exceed 18 inches high from the floor surface. At 18 inches carpet is no longer cove base but wall covering. It is absolutely necessary to obtain approval of the local Fire Marshall before installing carpet higher than the normal cove base height. Since there is no National Standard establishing the height that carpet may be installed up the wall, the local Fire Marshall sets the standard. In the past, some Fire Marshalls have not approved carpet being installed beyond the normal cove base height". But what's normal and at what height should the carpet be tested as wall covering? And why would you want to install carpet on the wall

what's the purpose? Lots of questions with not so easy answers but answers you shall have.

Fire Marshalls know that if he considers the carpet installation up the wall as a wall covering installation, the carpet must meet the vertical flammability standard. At this point it's not really carpet anymore in the eyes of the Fire Marshall but a textile wall covering material subject to entirely different criteria for flammability and smoke. To answer one of the questions; why would you want to install carpet on a wall? Carpet offers a buffer in places like senior living facilities, extended care facilities and the like as it will soften the blow of wheel chairs, medical equipment and rolling beds being banged into it. It won't rip, tear, gouge, scuff or get ugly like paint or wall paper but it will offer a challenge if you want to use it on a wall. There are manufacturers who make specific carpet type products for walls that will meet more stringent fire

Carpet Cove Base
Photo Provided by Base King



codes. If carpet is going to be used for wall covering it is best to try and select one of the products intended for this use, otherwise forget about using carpet on the walls. Fire Marshalls make it hard enough to use carpet on the floors in some cities like Boston, New York or Los Angeles so why would anyone want to think of using it on a wall?

What's the normal height of cove base? Four inches is the norm, with some six inch cove base for special applications, but by far four inches is the standard height. This is hardly enough height to challenge even the most stringent fire codes. Once you get above six inches in height you're tempting the limits of the Fire Marshall and why would you want to do that?

PRE- INSTALLATION

CHECKLIST - The following check list was prepared by Dave Stafford of Dave Stafford and Associates as a guide for commercial flooring installation and we've reprinted it with Dave's permission. I've also added a couple of things to the list at the beginning because often problems with flooring products are the result of not knowing what they are and how to install them. Real commercial flooring contractors typically know this. Unfortunately today there are far too many "non-commercial" flooring dealers bidding for jobs

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Lew Migliore - President and Owner

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they have no business being on.

Commercial Pre-Installation Checklist

___ Do you know what flooring products are to be installed and where?

___ Are you familiar with the flooring products and how to install them?

___ Job site location/address and specific area same as work order?

___ Materials on hand/delivered to job site same as on work order?

___ Has a walk-through of areas to receive flooring been done?

___ Is size of physical area consistent with floor plans and work order?

___ Is the installation work to be performed noted on the work order?

___ Is there extra work *that will have to be done* (not covered under your present work order) prior to installation of new products?

If so, **please explain** (removal/disposal/furniture fixture removal, floor prep, etc):

If there is extra work *for which you expect to be paid*, please prepare a Change Order work form – ***must be approved*** or signed by a responsible party prior to any work performance.

___ Have you been presented with a MVER (*moisture vapor emissions rate*) report for all areas where products are to be installed?

___ Has moisture testing been done?

___ If so, is MVER within the rate permitted by the product manufacturer (if not, installation should not begin)?

___ Have you discussed the details of the type of installation that is required with the client's representative?

___ Have you discussed the *project schedule* and estimated completion time with the client's representative?

___ Are there any questions about the project, product installation, method(s) of installation, extra work/change orders, hours of work, or completion time by or from the client? If so, please call in or detail below:

These are just some of the questions you need to have answered before starting a job and everyone, including the Architect, General Contractor and End User have to be on board so there won't be a compromise of the flooring material and installation.

CARPET PROTECTION

One of the most costly claims for commercial carpeting is caused by the use of plastic traffic lane protector that incorporates a pressure sensitive adhesive. This material, often put in place by the General Contractor immediately after carpet is installed will wreak havoc with carpet. On the box for these products the instructions normally say that the material should not be installed for longer than a few days. However, it is often left on the carpet for weeks and in many instances it is pulled up and new material put down for another extended period of time. The Carpet and Rug Institute Installation Guidelines warn of the use of this plastic covering and advise against using it as do carpet manufacturers but it continues to be used. If the carpet is glued directly to the substrate the protective plastic product will trap moisture escaping from curing adhesive and can cause color to run or be compromised in the carpet even if the carpet is solution dyed. The same is true for double stick installations. The pressure sensitive adhesive from

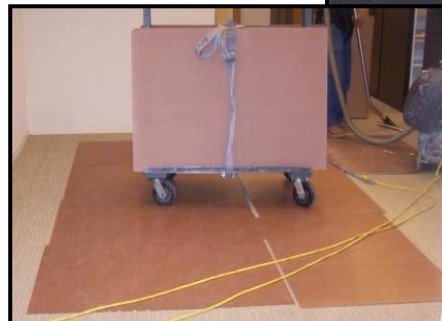
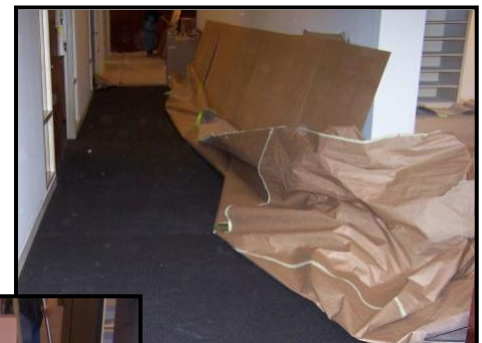
the plastic will also leave a residue on the carpet that will attract soil once the plastic is removed. We've had clients that were left with rings from plastic buckets sitting on the plastic, cleat marks from lathers stilts and long dark bands from panels of systems furniture being stacked on edge. All of this damage is caused by the



adhesive being pressed into the carpet and leaving a soil attracting residue. Further, the adhesive will stick carpet fibers together causing the carpet surface to have a mottled appearance. All the damage from this product is often blamed on the carpet manufacturer when nothing could be further from the truth. This is why manufacturer's warn against the use of this product.



The adhesive residue from these plastic coverings cannot be cleaned off. Solvent would remove a small spot but it cannot be used to clean the whole carpet. The odor of the solvent would drive out occupants of the building and anyone trying to clean a large area of carpet would surely succumb to the solvent fumes. There are no carpet cleaning chemicals that do an effective job of removing the adhesive residue and once the damage is done to the carpet it is irreversible. Even plastic covering with no pressure sensitive adhesive should be avoided. In addition the plastic will trap any moisture vapor emission migrating from the substrate which can damage



the carpet.

This issue, which costs the industry millions of dollars in claims each year, begged a solution for

an alternative. The carpet industry says to use Kraft paper and Masonite panels but the paper won't stay in place and it rips. Putting the Masonite boards down and taking them up is a pain and the material is costly.

As a result LGM and Velcro USA, Inc. together developed a unique carpet protection product that effectively protects loop pile and cut & loop carpet.



The new Velcro® Brand Carpet Protection product has strips of Velcro® Brand hook fasteners integrated into the sides (length) of a strong laminate consisting of a polypropylene non-woven fabric face and a polypropylene film backing. The



laminate does not trap air, it breathes, it does not damage the carpet, it can be overlapped onto itself as the Velcro® Brand hook tape also engages the non-woven fabric face and the product can be

moved around and reused. This protective product is very durable and it will protect against spills. It can be used in new loop pile carpet installations or if work is being done on existing non-loop carpet the product can be used as a drop cloth. This product is great for marketing and advertising too, as custom printing is an option. Who knows whose carpet is installed on a job or who installed it? No one; because the carpet manufacturer's or flooring contractor's name is not on the product but with Velcro® Brand Carpet Protection the manufacturer, flooring contractor or General Contractor can have their name or logo printed on the product. The same can be done for anyone for that matter. We're also working with Velcro USA Inc. on a protection product for hard surface flooring that utilizes Freelay® technology; so far the initial products tested have worked brilliantly.

Bentley Prince Street is the first manufacturer to market and sell the new Velcro® Brand Carpet Protection, which can be purchased with every order of Bentley Prince Street loop pile or cut and loop qualifying carpet products. This product cannot be used on cut pile carpets as the hook will not engage on cut pile yarn, but 95% of commercial carpet is loop or cut and loop where the product can be used. The carpet manufacturer determines which of their products the Velcro® Brand Carpet Protection works with but it does work with any loop pile commercial carpet.

Using Velcro® Brand Carpet Protection will reduce claims for damage to carpet, protect and preserve the carpets integrity and prevent carpet from having to be replaced before it even gets put into use therefore saving millions of dollars in losses and keeping millions of yards of new carpet out of landfills and eliminating the expense of using energy to recycle carpet. That's a legitimate green aspect you can honestly sell. For more information see the ad accompanying this newsletter.

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- Easy to install
- **NO ADHESIVE RESIDUE**—like the self-adhesive products banned by carpet manufacturers
- Can be repositioned as needed
- Hook tape provided to secure leading and trailing edges
- Overlapping seams self-engage for wider protection (no tape required)
- Can even be customized with your company logo*

To learn more, call **Blair Townsend**, Construction Division Manager, at **(603) 669-4880** or e-mail him at btownsen@velcro.com

Hook engagement is best with commercial grade, nylon level loop carpet, but engagement with textured loops, berbers, tip shears and other loop/cut pile combination is possible. Test hook engagement on sample piece of carpet prior to use. Do not use on wool carpets. Refer to Carpet Manufacturers recommendations for use with specific carpet types.

*Minimum order size and other restrictions apply for custom printing

Velcro USA Inc. ■ 406 Brown Avenue ■ Manchester, NH 03103

www.velcroconstruction.com ■ (603) 669-4880

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