



Disaster

readiness - response - recovery

Water-Damaged Carpets and Rugs

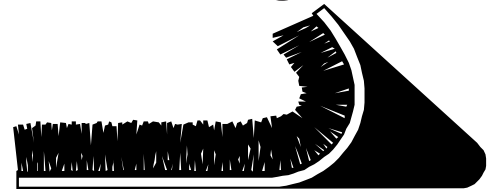
When faced with floor damaged carpets and rugs, recommendations for cleaning or replacement depend on the contamination level of the water and the length of time the carpet or rugs were saturated. Unsanitary water contains organisms that can infect carpets and rugs and cause health and safety problems.

Clean water may include broken water supply lines, tub, or sink overflows with no containments or rainwater. "Gray water" or unsanitary water, may include discharge from dishwashers or washing machines, punctured waterbeds, or broken aquariums. "Black water" contains pathogenic agents and is extremely unsanitary. It includes flooding from seawater, rivers, or streams. "Gray water" that remains untreated for longer than 48 hours may change to the "black water" category as microorganisms multiply.

If water damage is from a clean water source and it was identified within 48 hours, then cleaning the carpet yourself is an option. If water damage is from a gray or black water source, call a professional.

General Guidelines

- Remove and dispose of carpet saturated with "black water". Re-



move and dispose of carpet padding saturated with "gray" or "black water" (no exceptions).

- Carpet padding can be restored if it has been wet from clean water less than 48 hours and only part of the padding in a room is wet.
- Carpet saturated with "gray water" may be cleaned by a professional using a biocide allowing appropriate contact time and using the hot water extraction cleaning method. (Other cleaning methods including absorbent compound, bonnet, dry foam or shampoo are not adequate and can redistribute contamination).
- Valuable area rugs should be cleaned by a professional. Extensive cleaning and a biocide application should be used. Rugs must be restored to a sanitary condition. If this is not possible, then they must be discarded.
- Washable throw rugs usually can be cleaned adequately in a washing machine with hot water and a biocide. For extra large capacity automatic washers, use 1 ½ cups of chlorine bleach per load. For standard (large capacity) automatic

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washers, use 1 cup per wash load. Be aware that this quantity of chlorine bleach may affect the color in the rugs.

- Floodwaters can contaminate a private well. Do not attempt to wash washable throw rugs until you know your water is not contaminated.
- Quickly remove any furniture that may be damaged or cause stains or damage to the carpet.
- Limit traffic over the wet carpet. Moisture can weaken the latex backing and walking on the carpet can cause the backing to separate. When the backing dries, it regains most of its original strength.

Cleaning Rain-Soaked Carpets

Cleaning wet carpeting indoors is not a good idea in summer because it adds even more moisture to an already wet area. If the carpeting is installed with track strips, it can be removed, cleaned, and reinstalled. If a large area of the padding is saturated, it will be impossible to clean and dry it thoroughly, so it should be removed and replaced.

The subfloor should be

checked for moisture as well. If rainwater soaked from the top, it may not have soaked the sub floor. The type of subfloor under the carpet and the length of time it is wet will determine whether it will need to be replaced. If the subfloor is plywood, the wet carpet and padding should be removed and the subfloor allowed to dry completely before reinstalling. If the subfloor is particleboard, it will swell and disintegrate when it gets wet and stays wet for a few days. Thus, it will need to be replaced.

Carpets that are glued to the floor without a pad can be cleaned in place if the damage is from clean water. Use a shop water vacuum, (if there is electricity) and dry blankets and towels to blot up extra moisture. Use oscillating fans and the air-conditioner to dry the carpet. This should be done within 24 hours of getting wet; otherwise mold and fungi can grow to numbers that present a health risk to you and your family. If the wet carpet cannot be treated within the 24 hours, then it is better to have professionals remove and replace it.

If only a small area of carpet got wet from a roof or

pipe leak, pull up and prop the wet carpet to dry. Cut away the wet padding. To discourage mildew and odors, rinse the backing of the carpet with a solution of ¼ cup bleach to 1-gallon of water. Brush lightly with a soft bristle brush so that the solution does not soak through and damage the carpet yarns on the other side. Do not use this solution on wool carpets. Use a solution of ¾ cup bleach to 1-gallon of water to disinfect the subfloor. Do not replace the padding and carpet until the subfloor is completely dry.

Sources

NIDR Guidelines for Fire and Smoke Damage Repair, National Institute of Disaster Restoration, The Association of Specialists in Cleaning and Restoration, 1997
Standard and Reference Guide for Professional Water Damage Restoration IICRC S500g, Vancouver, Washington, Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification, 1999



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