

# Maintenance Guide

## Carpet Tiles



Mohawk Group



## Exceptional flooring for demanding spaces

Regardless of the space, the demand for maximum flooring performance remains crucial. Mohawk Group Commercial prides itself in making high performance Carpet Tiles with the longest possible life cycle. Meeting the strictest European standards, EN 1307. All our products bear a wear classification 33 or 32. The use of our own highly sustainable, solution-dyed nylon fibers ColorStrand and Duracolor ensure the optimal retention of colour and appearance.

With this guide, we want to help you maximize your Carpet Tiles investment by showing you some recommendations on how to implement an effective Carpet Tiles maintenance program right from the start. A comprehensive maintenance program will extend your Carpet Tiles's performance, appearance and life. The longer your Carpet Tiles lasts, the less it costs, and the more sustainable it will be.

## The five keys to effective maintenance

### 1. Preventive measures

Keeping dirt off the Carpet Tiles is easier and less expensive than removing it

### 2. Vacuuming

Regular vacuuming is the most important part of a successful maintenance program.

### 3. Spill and spot cleaning

Spots are inevitable, but they don't have to be permanent. Remove a spill quickly and there is less chance it will become a stain.

### 4. Periodic cleaning

Scheduled periodic cleaning helps the Carpet Tiles retain appearance, and improves performance. Limited and/or ineffective periodic cleaning will inevitably lead to key 5 (deep cleaning).

### 5. Deep cleaning

Deep cleaning, using hot water extraction is most effective at removing any embedded abrasive soiling.



## 1. Preventive measures

### Keep the dirt out

An often overlooked, but vitally important part of a maintenance program is preventive maintenance, which prevents soiling from being deposited into the Carpet Tiles.

Proper walk-off matting is able to scrape and hold large amounts of dry soiling as well as absorb water or oil-based moisture. Adequate walk-off matting should capture five or six footsteps (roughly 3 to 5 meters). This amount has been shown to trap 80% of the soil and moisture that would have migrated into your facility.

Mohawk Group recommends the use of Mohawk Group Step Up barrier mats. For walk-off material to be effective, we recommend daily vacuuming, just as with your other surfaces. Actually, walk-off material requires more frequent cleaning because it is your first line of defence and accumulates soiling much quicker. If this accumulated soiling is not removed, the walk-off material will become saturated and lose its ability to prevent the soiling from entering your facility.

### Choose the right product for the right area

Colour and structure can be used to create an atmosphere or to make a statement, but it can also serve a more practical purpose; it has an important role in hiding the soiling. Mid to dark colours will give better results compared to light, bright or very dark colours. Avoid the latter in high traffic areas near the entrance of a commercial building.

Along with choosing the right material at all entrances to your facility, you should also look at other sources of soiling, such as break rooms, water fountains and coolers, to prevent soiling from being deposited into the Carpet Tiles.

Thorough preventive measures includes:

- Keeping foot paths and parking areas clean
- Using chair pads to prevent casters from grinding soil into the Carpet Tiles
- Placing rubbish bins in easily accessible areas

Preventive maintenance facts:

- A 5m walk-off tile area effectively removes about 80% of soil and moisture before it reaches the Carpet Tiles.
- Removing a 1kg of dirt once it is inside a building is estimated to cost more than €1000.
- It is estimated that up to 1kg of dirt can be tracked in by 100 people entering a building over a 20 day work period.

## 2. Vacuuming

### The most important maintenance task

Frequent and thorough vacuuming is the single most important component of a Carpet Tiles maintenance program. Studies of the soil composition in a facility show that roughly 80% is dry, insoluble soil, or what most of us refer to as dirt. The most efficient way to remove this dry, insoluble soil is with frequent and thorough vacuuming.

Dirt accumulation is inevitable if vacuuming isn't planned at routine intervals. The best way to plan your vacuuming is to identify high-, medium- and low-traffic areas. Continually monitor these areas for changes in Carpet Tiles appearance and make adjustments to the maintenance schedule as required.

It is important to note that Carpet Tiles are three-dimensional products. Unlike hard, two-dimensional flooring, Carpet Tiles have depth and the ability to absorb soiling. A major advantage that Carpet Tiles have over other flooring types is that it can trap and hold up dirt before it appears dirty. Even though it may not appear dirty, Carpet Tiles require routine maintenance, particularly vacuuming, to remove soiling and keep it looking beautiful for years.

### Vacuuming tips

- Vacuum with slow, deliberate passes in length and width for maximum effectiveness.
- Heavy traffic areas require multiple passes to sufficiently extract embedded soil.
- A vacuum with a brush roller will provide agitation to help with soil removal.
- Slow movement allows time for air to circulate through the face yarn and extract soil.

### Recommended equipment

To adequately remove dry soil with routine vacuuming, you will need to ensure that you use the proper equipment. Mohawk Group recommends:

- A vacuum cleaner with a powered brush roller and high-efficiency filtration for the bulk of your vacuuming needs. As a basic vacuum cleaner for everyday use we recommend the SEBO Dart 2 or equivalent models.
- A wide-area vacuum for large corridors and other wideopen areas.
- A backpack or canister vacuum for stairs.

Caution, using horizontal rotating brushes to clean your Carpet Tiles might affect the appearance of the pile of the Carpet Tiles.

### Equipment maintenance

Just as you maintain the floor, you need to perform routine maintenance on your vacuums. The crucial parts to pay special attention to are the bags, belts and brush rollers.

### Vacuuming frequencies

See table later in the document, which is provided as a general reference for how often different types of traffic areas should be vacuumed during normal situations.





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### 3. Spill and spot cleaning

#### Spot cleaning is essential

Dry soil often hides within the Carpet Tiles pile, but spills and spots can stand out, depending upon the Carpet Tiles colour and pattern. Therefore, to keep your flooring looking as good as possible it's essential that spot cleaning becomes an important part of your maintenance program. Your chances for success with spot cleaning are greatly improved if you act quickly and use the proper products, tools and techniques.

**Note:** When cleaning a spot always work from the edge toward the centre of the spot. Always blot, never scrub, as it may spread the spot or distort the fibres.

#### Take immediate action

Don't delay cleaning spills and spots until your regularly scheduled cleaning. The best time to treat a spill or spot is when you first see it, and a simple way to extract it is by blotting it with a plain, white absorbent towel. If your cleaning staff has towels at their disposal, they can quickly blot up as much of a fresh spill as possible.

If the spot has dried, blot it with a towel that has been dampened with plain water or a general-purpose spotter. This is a great first step to get as much of the contaminant out of the Carpet Tiles as possible, and it can remove many common waterborne spots.

If a residue remains, a spot extractor can be used at a more appropriate time and the spot will disappear with much less effort. A simple but effective option for spot cleaning is through encapsulation, or also called the crystal dry cleaning method. In this method an encapsulation liquid solution is sprayed onto the surface.

The liquid, made up out of polymers, will attach to the dirt and soil in Carpet Tiles and will then crystallize to become a substance which is easy to vacuum. The advantages of this method include no odours, dry process, ongoing access to the area that is being treated and a reduced cleaning time. To achieve the best result it is very important to use a proper vacuum cleaner and the proper type of crystals.

**Please note** to always use products that are pH neutral and avoid products with chlorine or chemically aggressive oxidants. If in doubt, we recommend pre-testing a discreet area for colour fastness and material durability.

#### Proper tools for spill and spot cleaning

We recommend you have a "spot kit" on hand to deal with your most common spots and spills. You will need the following list of materials:

- Absorbent towels
- Water
- General purpose spotter and/or encapsulation liquid
- Bone spatula or soft bristle brush
- Small extractor or vacuum cleaner with a powered brush roller

#### Most common spots and their categories

Asphalt*.....	<b>B</b>	Copier Toner.....	<b>Vacuum</b>
Ball Point Pen.....	<b>A</b>	Cosmetics.....	<b>B</b>
Beer.....	<b>A</b>	Glue, Latex.....	<b>B</b>
Bleach.....	<b>A</b>	Grass.....	<b>A</b>
Blood.....	<b>D</b>	Grease*.....	<b>B</b>
Brass Stain.....	<b>A</b>	Ink, Copying.....	<b>B</b>
Betadine*.....	<b>B</b>	Ink, Permanent.....	<b>B</b>
Butter.....	<b>B</b>	Lodine*.....	<b>B</b>
Calcium Chloride.....	<b>A</b>	Oil*.....	<b>B</b>
Candle.....	<b>B</b>	Paint, Latex.....	<b>A</b>
Candy.....	<b>A</b>	Paint, Oil.....	<b>B</b>
Carbolic Acid.....	<b>A</b>	Peanut Butter.....	<b>A</b>
Carbon.....	<b>B</b>	Perfume.....	<b>A</b>
Catsup.....	<b>A</b>	Salad Dressing.....	<b>B</b>
Cement, building.....	<b>A</b>	Shoe Polish.....	<b>B</b>
Cement, contact.....	<b>B</b>	Soy Sauce.....	<b>B</b>
Chewing gum.....	<b>A</b>	Tea*.....	<b>C</b>
Chocolate.....	<b>A</b>	Tomato Juice.....	<b>A</b>
Cigarette burn.....	<b>A</b>	Tomato Paste.....	<b>A</b>
Clay.....	<b>A</b>	Urine.....	<b>D</b>
Coke.....	<b>A</b>	Vomit.....	<b>D</b>
Coffee*.....	<b>C</b>	Wine.....	<b>A</b>



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### Types of spots: some hints & tricks for easier removal

#### Category "A" spots

Water based spots such as ketchup, fruit juice, etc.

##### Step 1:

Blot or extract to remove substance. Rinse thoroughly with clear water. Apply a mild Carpet Tiles spotter cleaning solution sparingly and gently agitate the discoloured area. Blot or extract to remove substance. Rinse thoroughly with clear water to remove residue. Blot or extract to remove remaining excess moisture.

##### Step 2:

Repeat if necessary.

##### Step 3:

If the above method does not have the satisfactory effect, spray the stain with an encapsulation product and brush away with an appropriate tool and vacuum with a vacuum cleaner with a powered brush roller.

#### Category "B" spots

Petroleum based spots such as grease, oil, shoe polish, etc.

##### Step 1:

Try implementing cleaning procedure for Category "A" spots using a mild Carpet Tiles spotter.

##### Step 2:

Take out the Carpet Tiles tile and bring to a safe, well ventilated space. Wear the proper personal protection equipment and apply a specific POG (Paint, Oil and Grease) Dry Solvent Cleaner sparingly to a clean white towel or paper towel and apply to the discoloured area. Gently agitate.

Blot or extract to remove substance. Leave the Carpet Tiles tile in the well ventilated area until the potential harmful and uncomfortable odours have gone away. Vacuum with a vacuum cleaner with a powered brush roller. Rinse thoroughly with clear water. Blot or extract to remove remaining excess moisture

#### Category "C" spots

Coffee and tea based spots.

##### Step 1:

Blot to remove/extract substance. Rinse thoroughly with clear water. Apply coffee stain remover according to manufacturer's recommendations. Rinse thoroughly with clear water to remove residue. Blot to remove/extract remaining excess moisture. This method is peroxide based. It is rather bleaching the stain than removing it.

##### Step 2:

Repeat the next day if necessary.

#### Category "D" spots

Biological spots such as blood, urine, vomit, etc.

##### Step 1:

If solids are present, first remove these with a Bone Spatula.

##### Step 2:

Blot to remove substance. As soon the cloth is saturated, repeat the procedure until all liquid is included.

##### Step 3:

Spray the infected area with an encapsulation product and brush away with an appropriate tool. Allow to dry for 30 minutes before vacuuming with a powered brush roller.



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### 4. Periodic cleaning

Caution, Mohawk Group does not recommend the use of a spin bonnet, as it can damage the fibers in your Carpet Tiles. Periodic cleaning is a cost effective way to keep your Carpet Tiles attractive and odour free in the period between two deep cleanings. Mohawk Group recognizes that there are different methods on the market, which whoever all follow the same working principle: all methods use various chemicals to dissolve and absorb water and oil based soils, holding them until they are removed by vacuuming (dry extraction).

#### Periodic cleaning process

This cleaning method uses an absorbent or encapsulating compound. The compound absorbs the soil and spots as they are brushed into the Carpet Tiles and then removed by vacuuming.

##### Step 1:

Vacuum thoroughly to remove as much dry soil as possible. (Pile lifter will help remove embedded soil)

##### Step 2:

Apply the absorbent cleaning compound to the Carpet Tiles. This may include the use of a pre-spray, depending on the type and severity of soiling.

##### Step 3:

Agitate with a counter-rotating brush machine, working the absorbent compound throughout the Carpet Tiles to suspend and absorb the soil.

##### Step 4:

Vacuum thoroughly to remove the soil and dirty compound.

**NOTE:** There is equipment on the market which can combine step 2 and 3.



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### Periodic cleaning tips

- Operate equipment with slow, deliberate passes in length and width for maximum effectiveness.
- Heavy traffic areas may require multiple passes back and forth to sufficiently extract embedded soil.

### Recommended equipment

- For periodic cleaning Mohawk Group recognizes that there are many absorbent compound and low moisture cleaning brands available in the marketplace. We suggest that you analyse several brands for effectiveness and cost, to determine which best suits the needs of your facility.
- Closely follow all the manufacturer's user instructions for the cleaning method you choose. Any cleaning method improperly carried out can lead to poorly maintained and damaged Carpet Tiles.

### Periodic cleaning frequencies

See table later in the document, which is provided as a general reference for how often different types of traffic areas should be Periodic cleaned during normal situations..

## 5. Deep cleaning

Caution, Mohawk Group does not recommend the use of a spin bonnet, as it can damage the fibers in your Carpet Tiles. Even with regular vacuum and spot cleaning the Carpet Tiles appearance will in time become dulled due to an accumulation of dirt and stains that regular cleaning cannot remove. It then becomes necessary to deep clean the Carpet Tiles. Deep Cleaning is restoring the Carpet Tiles's appearance by extracting soil and substances that can damage your Carpet Tiles. Mohawk Group recommends hot water extraction or dry extraction as effective methods to give restorative deep cleaning results.

### Hot water extraction cleaning

Hot water extraction uses the high-pressure force of water injected into the Carpet Tiles followed by powerful vacuum suction to remove suspended soil. The process happens almost instantaneously and does not allow cleaning agents to have adequate dwell time.

Therefore, do not add cleaning agent in the machine's tank, but pre-spray the cleaning agent on the Carpet Tiles followed by agitating with a counter rotating brush, without vacuum cleaner. Then rinse with the extractor using plain water.

Only if necessary, one can add a defoamer to cut down the accumulation of foam in the waste water tank.

### Hot water extraction process

- Vacuum thoroughly to remove as much dry soil as possible
- Pre-spray with a pH-neutral cleaning agent
- Agitate with a counter rotating brush or Carpet Tiles rake to work the pre-spray throughout the Carpet Tiles pile and suspend the soil





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- Rinse with plain water

### Hot water extraction tips

- Test the cleaning agent to be sure it dries without stickiness or residue; otherwise it can cause rapid resoiling.
- Use only cleaning agents that have a neutral pH and contain low levels of volatile organic compounds (VOC's).
- We recommend the use of portable or truck-mounted equipment or self-contained extractors. Extractors incorporating a brush between the water jet and vacuum are recommended
- Remove as much moisture as possible with dry passes.
- When performed properly, Carpet Tiles should be dry within 4-6 hours.
- Enhance drying time by using air movers and, if possible, do not permit traffic on the Carpet Tiles until it is completely dry.

### Recommended equipment

- Pre sprays are a vital part of a good hot water extraction.
- Pre sprays are a vital part of a good hot water extraction.
- All equipment and chemicals must be in accordance with local rules and regulations.

### Dry Extraction cleaning

Dry or very low moisture cleaning systems are easy to use and rather non-disruptive. Since areas can be used almost immediately after cleaning. Dry extractions also don't leave any sticky detergent residue behind, which could re-attract soiling.

### Dry Extraction process

- Vacuum thoroughly to remove as much dry soil as possible
- Spread the dry cleaning compound evenly over the Carpet Tiles and agitate with a counter rotating brush, without vacuum

	Vacuum	Periodic Cleaning	Deep Cleaning
Heavy Commercial Traffic	Daily	18 times a year	4 times a year
Medium Commercial Traffic	3 Times a Week	9 times a year	2 times a year
Light Commercial Traffic	Weekly	3 times a year	once a year

cleaned during normal situations.



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### Cleaning frequencies

The table below is provided as a general reference for how often different types of traffic areas should be vacuumed, periodic or deep cleaned during normal situations.

#### Definition for table

##### Heavy commercial traffic:

The classification of heavy commercial traffic refers to public spaces such as main corridors, lobby and entrance areas, vending machine areas, airports, casinos, assisted living and retail facilities.

##### Medium commercial traffic:

Medium commercial traffic areas are those that must withstand high foot traffic such as general office and administrative areas, conference rooms, school corridors and classrooms.

##### Light commercial traffic:

Light commercial traffic areas include cubicles, executive offices and boardrooms. Traffic is minimal, thus reducing the soil in this area.

### Beyond vacuuming and routine spot cleaning

In addition to preventive maintenance, proper vacuuming and spot cleaning, a planned program of both periodic and deep cleaning is the best approach to maintain your Carpet Tiles's appearance by extracting soil and substances that can damage your Carpet Tiles.

When deciding on the right Carpet Tiles for your business, it was necessary to consider many factors unique to your own needs. The same is true when considering the most appropriate cleaning method for your Carpet Tiles. Just as there is no "one-size-fits-all" Carpet Tiles, there is no "one-size-fits-all" maintenance program.

#### WARNING!

Do not use these cleaning products on any Mohawk Group Carpet Tiles:

- Chlorinated cleaning solutions (including bleach)
- Quaternary solutions
- Oil-based de-foamers
- Petroleum distillates
- Toxic or flammable solvent-based cleaners

Cleaning products should have a neutral pH level (+/-7) for nylon Carpet Tiles. Water temperature should never exceed 75°C