



# Rug Owner's Inside Guide To Safe Rug Care & Cleaning

## Read This Guide and You'll Discover:

- How to Avoid Five Dangerous Rug Cleaning Rip-offs.
- 6 Costly Misconceptions about Rug Cleaning.
- Crawl' Critters and Crud: a Guide to the Slime, Grime and Livestock That's Seeping, Creeping and Galloping Through Your Rugs.
- Which Method Cleans Best.
- Rug Care Tips You Can Safely Use.
- Disastrous Mistakes to Avoid When Choosing a Rug Cleaner.
- Why You Want Fresh, Clean, Healthy Rugs.
- 100% No-Risk Guarantee.
- 4 Steps to Fresh, Clean, Healthy Rugs.

Provided as an Educational Service by:

**Specialty Rug Cleaning**  
**"Rhode Island's Rug Care Specialists"**  
**401-946-9292**  
**[www.specialtyrugcleaning.com](http://www.specialtyrugcleaning.com)**

Dear Rug Owners,

### **Choosing A Rug Cleaner Isn't Easy.**

Chances are, at some time in your life you have had a rug ruined (or a friend has had one ruined) by someone who claimed to know how to properly clean an oriental or area rug.

Many people own rugs that they “love,” either because the rug has been in their family for generations and has great sentimental value ... or because they spent a great deal of time finding the perfect piece to showcase in their home.

A handmade rug is a piece that a weaver spent months, or even years, to weave. Crafting their design one small hand tied knot at a time. And now that piece of art is in your home, and you want to take care of it. The problem is ... you aren't sure exactly how to take care of it so that it stays clean, looks great, and lasts for many, many years to come.

Many companies from rug galleries to dry cleaners to wall-to-wall carpet cleaners claim to be oriental and area rug cleaning “experts.” The fact of the matter is there are only a handful of companies in the nation who specialize exclusively in the safe and proper care of rugs. This Rug Care Guide has been written to help you identify those true “rug specialists” and to take the fear out of having your rugs cleaned.

In this fact-filled Guide, you'll discover how to avoid four common rug cleaning rip-offs, eight mistakes to avoid when choosing a rug cleaner, and four steps to fresh,

clean, healthy rugs. You'll also learn rug care tips for you to use safely on your rugs.

Nightmare stories about rugs being ruined by ill-equipped, uninsured, and untrained cleaners are a fear shared by most rug owners. We wrote this Guide to help you better understand rug cleaning and what you need to do in order to properly care for your rugs, and how to find the right professional rug cleaner when you need one.

If after reading this Guide you have any questions about rug cleaning and care, you're invited to call us at **401-946-9292**. We've dedicated our business to educating rug owners. We'll be happy to help you in any way that we can.

Sincerely,

Robert Hauser  
*Specialty Rug Cleaning*

**Specialty Rug Cleaning** is located in Rhode Island and was founded by Cleaning Specialist Robert Hauser. Robert received his rug training from K. Blatchford's Oriental Rug Cleaning, Repair & Restoration located in San Diego, California (a company recognized within the rug cleaning industry as one of the premier providers of specialized hand cleaning and hand repairing of oriental rugs, American Indian weavings and tapestries in the nation).

Specialty Rug Cleaning is a member of the **New England Institute for Restoration and Cleaning** (NEIRC), the region's most prestigious association for professionals in the specialized cleaning and restoration industries.

Robert has more than 15 years hands-on experience in the cleaning craft and is a certified cleaner by the **Institute of Inspection, Restoration, and Cleaning Certification** (IICRC). He is founding owner of *Keep It Clean Services* and is well known throughout the region as the professional expert in carpet cleaning solutions for residential and commercial clients. His additional company, *Specialty Rug Cleaning*, specializes in the proper care of oriental and specialty rugs.

Robert shares knowledge about rug care with rug owners in his region. If you have any questions regarding rug care, you can call **401-946-9292** or visit Robert's company at **[www.specialtyrugcleaning.com](http://www.specialtyrugcleaning.com)**.

## **How to Avoid FIVE Dangerous Rug Cleaning RIP-OFFS.**

### **RIP-OFF #1: “Rug Cleaning Expert” Claim.**

When you are in search of someone to clean your rugs, you are in search of an “expert.” Though there are usually more than 1,000 wall-to-wall carpet cleaners in any good size city ... the number of rug specialists in any good size city can be counted on one hand (or maybe only 1 or 2 fingers). Yet, many of these hundreds of wall-to-wall cleaners stick “oriental rug cleaning expert” in their ads. If you are randomly choosing a cleaner from the phone book for your rugs, you **must** follow up to make certain that this particular company actually is trained in cleaning oriental and area rugs. Just because wall-to-wall carpet is “fuzzy,” and so is a rug, does **not** mean that they are the same and can be cleaned the same way.

Rug cleaning is a dying craft, and less than 1% of the wall-to-wall carpet cleaning industry has had any formal hands-on training on how to properly clean oriental and area rugs. Just because they have “RUG EXPERT” in their ad ... does **not** mean that they are ... and does **not** mean that they will not ruin your rug trying to guess how to clean it correctly. Don't let YOUR rug become their “learning experience!”

### **RIP-OFF #2: Uninsured Cleaners.**

Most Cleaning Companies do NOT have **care, custody, and control insurance** coverage. This is known also as “workmanship” coverage, as it covers any damage that occurs **during the work** being performed. And considering that most of these companies are surviving from invoice to invoice, you will be out not only your

favorite rug, but also will have to struggle trying to collect any money to replace it ... if it's even possible to replace it.

It is absolutely vital that you ask a Cleaning Company if they carry this type of coverage if you have a rug that has any significant value to it. If the company owner is not sure, then move to the next company – because an owner always knows when they have that additional coverage above and beyond their typical commercial liability coverage. Request a Certificate of Proof of Coverage if you are nervous about the situation (this should be faxed to you from the Insurance Company within a few days).

### **RIP-OFF #3: Bait and Switch “Hand Wash.”**

Many Cleaning Companies and Rug Galleries advertise that they “hand wash” rugs ... even though they don't hand wash a single piece. In fact, many rugs that come in for a full-immersion hand wet wash (the recommended method) to these establishments actually end up being steam cleaned using wall-to-wall carpet cleaning equipment and chemicals. Why? For two reasons: 1) they do not know how to properly wet wash rugs, and 2) they can steam clean a rug much quicker and much cheaper ... so they make more money when they charge you the “hand wash” price.

If you are having a wall-to-wall carpet cleaner wash your rugs, then odds are it may be steam cleaned aggressively unless they have a separate division with specialists trained in caring for natural fiber rugs. If a rug gallery does **not** have a cleaning facility on-site, then they are subcontracting their work to someone else ... so just make sure it's a rug specialist doing the work. And if they claim that their own mother will wash your large living room with her own hands, ask to see the facility where this will take place.

The point is, just because they tell you it will be hand washed does not mean that they will instead aggressively steam clean it and pocket the big difference in labor costs while potentially returning your rug chemically damaged.

**RIP-OFF #4: Wash Price Based on “Appraised” Value.**

This is the biggest rip-off in our industry, and is luckily only employed by a few unethical rug gallery owners in various cities. A rug specialist who has the proper training and experience, has NO REASON AT ALL to charge anything beyond a set square foot charge for his or her work. But some rug gallery owners charge a PERCENTAGE of the value of a rug to clean it. The scam is that they build up the value of the piece to you first, by saying it's a wonderful piece and worth tens of thousands of dollars, and that it will only be 10% of the value of the rug to clean it through them. Then they subcontract the cleaning to someone who charges a set square foot fee (many times a wall-to-wall carpet cleaner) and pocket the difference.

If a rug is worth a thousand, ten thousand, or a hundred thousand dollars, it will essentially go through the same proper cleaning process by a rug specialist, and the only cost variance should be because of size differences or additional services and NOT value differences. When you are asked to pay a percentage, you need to ask why that's necessary ... and then take your work someplace else. This type of scam gives the rug selling business a bad reputation which can hurt some of the really good, ethical rug gallery owners that do exist in every city. *(If you live in the Rhode Island region, you can email or call and I'll let you know who the “good guys” in rug sales are that you can trust. - RH)*

## **RIP-OFF #5: Rugs Gone “Missing.”**

People who own rugs that have been passed down in their families do not always know what they have, or what value they may have in the rug market. Though not all antique rugs are collectibles that would command top bid at auctions ... some are, and the owners may not know that. And when an unknowledgeable rug owner interacts with a knowledgeable rug trader offering cleaning services ... the situation can end up taking advantage of this lack of rug education.

When a rug cleaner tells you that a rug is not worth investing in cleaning, and then offers to give you some money to “take it off your hands” ... be wary. If he is very knowledgeable about current rug market values, and he is interested in buying your rug, chances are he will not be up front about the true value of your piece. In the worse case scenarios, I have heard stories of rugs worth tens of thousands that have been purchased for a few hundred dollars – because the purchaser convinced the current rug owner that it was not a valuable piece.

Even if you decide to not sell your rug, and to just have the person who made the offer to you clean it, be safe and take a picture of the rug before you release it. Stories of rugs that have been stolen or have gone “missing” are not uncommon, and so you want documentation of what you truly owned. And also verify that they have insurance.

## **6 Costly Misconceptions about Rug Cleaning.**

**MISCONCEPTION #1:** You should wait as long as possible before cleaning your rugs.

No. Dirt is abrasive like sandpaper. And every time you step and grind dirt into the wool (or silk) fibers of your rugs, you are causing damage. I have had clients who wait 4 years or longer to clean their rugs, and then wonder why their areas of foot traffic are much more worn than other areas. It's not the shoes that are causing the damage – it's the dirt the shoes are pushing into the fibers that is causing the damage.

Overseas, cleaning rugs is a springtime event. In areas with rivers, some families go and clean their rugs and lay them out to dry in the sun. For some reason, a myth has emerged in the US that “cleaning rugs is bad for them,” and this simply is not true. Removing the abrasive dirt from rugs is one of the best ways to ensure your rug has a long life.

*Cleaning is not bad for your rugs. Bad Cleaners* are what's bad for your rugs.

**MISCONCEPTION #2:** The only reason to clean your rugs is to remove the dirt.

No. As you probably know, outdoor air contains pollens, fungus, bacteria, air pollution, cigarette smoke, car exhaust – and hundreds of other chemicals. When you come into your home, you carry those contaminants in your hair and on your skin, clothing, and shoes. Not surprisingly, all of those chemicals and toxins wind up in your carpeting, upholstery, and your rugs.

If you have allergies, asthma, emphysema, or other breathing problems – one major source of your problems could be the pollens, mold spores, smoke, household aerosol cleansers, and chemicals in your carpeting, upholstery, and rugs. Frequent and consistent cleaning of your flooring and furniture does improve your indoor air quality (and helps the carpeting, fabrics, and rugs look good and last much longer).

**MISCONCEPTION #3:** Rugs should be dry cleaned.

No. The dry cleaning methods – which are dry foam, dry chemicals, and dry compounds – do not rinse your rugs in any way. Instead, they leave a dirty residue. If you've ever used no-rinse shampoo, you know the feeling. It looks better, but it feels oily and sticky ... and you just don't believe that your hair is really "clean."

In a proper wet wash cleaning, the shampoo (and the dirt and pollutants it has "trapped") is rinsed thoroughly from the rug's fibers, so that you have a truly clean rug when the work is done. You have a rug that you can safely sit on, or have your kids roll around on, and not worry about any chemical irritants or dirt that may "stick" on you when you do.

**MISCONCEPTION #4:** Cleaning rugs in your home does not harm them.

Not true. In fact, in extreme cases this will ruin your rugs. Methods of cleaning rugs in the home by wall-to-wall carpet cleaning companies are considered "surface cleaning" of the rugs. They can't get the rugs too wet because the foundation will not dry within 48 hours, and it will begin to mildew, and the dyes may bleed. They also can't get the rugs too wet because they are concerned about the floors underneath the rugs (this is also why they

can't clean rug fringes at all). This means that they can NOT rinse out a lot of the cleaning chemicals that are being put into your rugs. These in-home methods leave residue behind that not only attracts more soil (because it's sticky), but also if the pH levels are not correct for wool they can cause irreversible color changes and chemical fading.

**MISCONCEPTION #5:** The company that offers the lowest price is the company you should hire.

No. Not unless you want to pay for a rug that isn't "clean" when you get it back. This is a labor-based industry, and if a company is advertising a very low price, then you have to ask yourself what corners are you willing to have cut. If they are a company that spends a few minutes to make it look better, but just beneath the surface are pounds of unremoved dirt ... is that what you want to pay for?

We have a rug market now that is a "buyer's" market, with an enormous amount of low-cost rugs being sold everywhere, from countries that have incredibly low labor weaver costs. If you bought a 5x7 rug from IKEA or Home Depot for a few hundred dollars, and turn it over to see all of the thousands of knots that someone tied to create that piece at that price, you will realize what volume based deal they negotiated to make you a happy customer. That same rug 5 or 10 years ago would have been many times that price in this market. But from a sanitary standpoint, rugs that are walked on all year long by dirty feet need to be cleaned. If you can easily replace the rug for cheap, then you should replace it every 2 years. If you plan on keeping the rug, then you need to ask if it is important to you to get all the contaminants out of the piece and have it properly cleaned. If your answer is yes, then you cannot use a low price cleaner.

With your rugs that have high appraised or sentimental value, you of course need to find the best rug cleaner that you can to handle the cleaning ... and these aren't the companies that are advertising lowest price in town. In this business you absolutely get what you pay for, and you want experienced and well-trained rug cleaners handling your rugs.

**MISCONCEPTION #6:** The company you give your rug to is always the one that will actually be doing the work.

Not true. Most companies that advertise rug cleaning do **not** do the work themselves ... and so you need to find out who is being honest with you. One way to cut to the chase is ask for references and word of mouth in the community. If they do not do the work themselves, then you need to find out where your rugs will be going to and if this subcontractor is going to clean your rugs properly.

## **Crawlin' Critters and Crud:**

### **Guide to the Slime, Grime and Livestock That's Seeping, Creeping and Galloping Through Your Rugs.**

*Asphalt. Aerosol sprays. Bacteria. Car exhaust. Chemicals. Dirt. Dust. Earth. Food particles. Fungus. Germs. Gravel. Grease. Grime. Grit. Hair. Industrial waste. Juice spills. Kitty catastrophes. Lint. Mold spores. Mud. Odors. Pet stains. Pollens. Pollutants. Rock. Sand. Scum. Smoke. Soot. Tar. Urine. Vomit. Viruses. Yard soil.*

Plus, don't forget living creatures, such as dust mites, fleas, moth larvae, carpet beetles and critters that live, hide, feed and breed in your carpeting and rugs.

(Will you help us? We're trying to find at least one thing that's in your carpet for every letter of the alphabet. And we don't have anything at all for these letters: N, Q, W, X and Z. If you can think of something that could be in your carpet that begins with these letters – or any other letters – please call or write us and we'll consider including them in our next Rug Owner's guide.)

The rugs on your floors, the carpeting installed in your home, your drapes, and your upholstered furniture ALL act as filters for your indoor air. The fibers "grab" particles and pollutants from the feet and paws that track them inside, and from the air that blows through your home. And as with any filter, when it gets full it cannot grab anything else from your air. So anytime you swat the pillow from your sofa, or lift a corner of your rug and swat it from the back side, you will see a big "puff" of the dust and contaminants released into the air. This means it's time to vacuum these items at the very least, and to give them a bath to completely clean them.

Studies conducted by the IICRC (the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, and Restoration Certification) have shown that wall-to-wall carpeting can hold up to one full pound of soil per square foot before it begins to look “soiled.” That is why the first step to any IICRC certified cleaner’s process is to thoroughly vacuum every room.

Rugs can carry comparable amounts of dirt before they look “dirty,” depending on how thin or thick the rug is, and how tightly woven it is. A tightly woven 1920s Sarouk (Persian) entryway rug that has not been wet washed for 3 years can be expected to have pounds of dirt hidden and crushed into its foundation. This is why you **cannot** have this rug cleaned in your home, because if the rug is **not** vacuumed to remove the dry soil out of its foundation then an in-home cleaner will just make SOAPY MUD when he gets it wet with his machinery. And once this happens, you have a rug that has a combination of detergents and dirt embedded in its foundation which leads to problems down the road from quicker resoiling to color changes (especially if it’s in an area that gets any sun exposure) to – in extreme cases – foundation mildew damage and dry rot.

## Which Method Cleans Best.

**Dry foam:** The carpet cleaner applies shampoo to your rug, allows it to dry, and then, without rinsing, sucks the dried shampoo into a vacuum. Can you imagine applying shampoo to your hair, allowing it to dry and then removing the shampoo from your head with a vacuum? This method leaves dirty chemical residue in your rug, which not only contributes to faster resoiling of the rug, but also sticks on to any kids, pets, or feet that come across it.

**Absorbent pad (bonnet cleaning):** This method is similar to dry foam, except that the company sets a large cotton bonnet on your rug and with a floor polishing buffer machine on top “buffs” the rug. The rotating motion causes the bonnet to absorb dirt from your rug. This method is also called bonnet cleaning. Bonnet cleaning is like trying to use a large cotton towel or mop to rub the dirt out of your rug. It’s not very effective as a “deep cleaning” method.

**Dry, absorbent powder:** The dry-compound method spreads a moist, absorbent powder through the carpet. The powder is allowed to dry and then sucked into a vacuum. This method leaves dry sponge particles at the base of the rug fibers. And because the rug is not rinsed, this method is not very effective.

**Hot water extraction (aka “steam cleaning”):** This is a fancy way of saying that a hot water cleaning solution under high pressure is forced into your rug and then sucked out of the fibers. Most wall-to-wall carpet manufacturers recommend this method as the best to clean wall-to-wall carpeting ... but this is **not** a safe method to clean oriental rugs. Natural fiber rugs (wool, cotton or silk) should **NEVER** be cleaned with hot water,

and should **NEVER** be cleaned with chemicals developed for use on synthetic wall-to-wall carpeting. The heat will cause non-colorfast dyes in a rug to bleed (or to be stripped out of the rug) and can cause shrinking. The high alkalinity of certain wall-to-wall cleaning solutions will cause some rugs to change color, bleed, or fade.

Think about your wool or cotton sweater, or your silk blouse ... you would **never** throw this into a washing machine with hot water and aggressive detergents – they'd fade and shrink. Instead, you would hand wash them in cold water, and would use vinegar to “set” the dyes and prevent fading. It's the same with your wool, cotton, or silk rugs.

**Full immersion wet wash:** This is the method recommended by rug retailers, rug conservators, and rug collectors ... and is the method that has been used by rug weavers for thousands of years. The process incorporates five key steps:

- 1) **Dusting:** vacuuming or shaking out the pounds of dirt in the rug's foundation.
- 2) **Dye Setting:** using a dye stabilizing agent (like vinegar) to set the dyes during the wash.
- 3) **Shampoo:** using products safe for cleaning rug fibers.
- 4) **Rinsing:** thoroughly rinsing the fibers clean.
- 5) **Drying:** removing the excess water and laying it out flat to dry so that it does not become stretched or misshapen (just like you do for wool sweaters!).

There is a big difference between someone who jumps in a tub and scrubs and rinses off the dirt and soap, and someone who takes only a sponge bath. The **full immersion wet wash** method is the most thorough way of

cleaning rugs, and is also the safest method because it does not incorporate harsh chemicals or high heat, and it thoroughly rinses the fibers clean. Furthermore, because the other methods are done in your home, they eliminate the two most important steps in the cleaning – the *dusting* and the *rinsing*. This means you not only have a rug that has mud in its foundation, but also chemical residue all throughout its fibers.

## **Rug Care Tips You Can Safely Use.**

Here are some rug care tips and guidelines to help you keep your rugs looking great, staying cleaner, and lasting longer.

### **DUSTING and CLEANING**

Vacuuming your rugs is the BEST thing that you can do to keep your rugs in great shape in between cleanings. Think of all the dust that daily settles on to your hard floors ... that same dust settles on your rugs and needs to be removed also, otherwise it works its way into the fibers and causes damage you cannot correct. However, you do not want to overly “brush” these fibers, so the best tool to use is a canister vacuum cleaner, or the upholstery attachment on your upright HEPA-filter vacuum cleaner, and just run it over the top of the rug fibers. *Vacuum WITH, not against, the nap of the rug’s “fuzzy” side.* (The rug’s fibers are similar to your pet’s fur – you know when you are petting *with* the nap, and when you are not. Going “with” it causes less friction.)

If a lot of dirt seems to be collecting on the rug – like on your entryway rugs – then turn these rugs fuzzy side down and run an upright beater bar vacuum along the back side (stay away from the fringe tassels or you’ll suck them up!). This “shakes” the dirt out of the base of the rug’s foundation, and then you can flip the rug over and vacuum away all of the dust, dirt, allergens, mold spores, bacteria, and other “unmentionables” that have been brought into your home by lots of shoes and feet.

Entry rugs with high traffic should be “dusted” twice a week (or more) with your canister or upholstery attachment. Rugs with moderate traffic should be dusted

weekly. Even rugs in areas with no traffic will still have dust settling on them daily, so attend to them bi-weekly. A consistent dusting routine will help keep your rugs cleaner and healthier longer. It will also (especially when using a HEPA-filter vacuum) help keep your indoor air cleaner.

#### DUST & WASH GUIDELINES

**Entry Rugs (High Traffic): Vacuum 2+ times per week / Wet wash every 1-2 years\***

**Moderate Use Rugs (Medium Traffic): Vacuum weekly / Wet wash every 2-3 years\***

**Low Use Rugs (Low or no Traffic): Vacuum bi-weekly / Wet wash every 3-4 years\***

(\* = if you are diligent with your vacuum routine you can be on the higher end of the timelines.)

**Rugs in rooms with Children and/or Pet Activity  
Vacuum (# of kids + pets) times per week / Wet wash every year**

Rugs collect allergens, bacteria, and chemicals in their fibers, so if you have kids or pets low to the ground, it's healthier for them if you keep these areas as irritant-free as possible. (This is also the guideline for rooms frequented by people with strong dust mite allergies. Having your rugs, carpeting, and bed linens treated with an all-natural Anti-Allergen Treatment is also recommended.)

*(Don't forget to include cleaning your wall-to-wall carpeting, upholstery, draperies, and hard floors in your "dusting and cleaning" routine. If you live in Rhode Island, you can contact us for these services. If you are outside of Rhode Island email me at [specialtyrugcleaning@hotmail.com](mailto:specialtyrugcleaning@hotmail.com) and I will find you a certified cleaner to use. - Robert.)*

## **SPOTS and SPILLS**

There will come a time when you will spill something on your rug, and the question will come to mind – “*what should I do?*” Rug fibers, especially wool, are very resilient to spills ... but they are also very reactive to harsh chemicals ... so you want to keep your spill system quick, simple, and safe.

**Rug First-Aid Kit = Club Soda + Cotton Towels**  
**Rug First-Aid Kit Instructions = BLOT, RINSE, BLOT**

- 1) LIQUID spill: immediately BLOT with cotton towel (do not scrub the fibers or you'll distort and potentially damage them).  
NON-liquid spill: immediately scrap up material with spoon, and BLOT with cotton towel.
- 2) Look at the towel for two things:
  - *Is the spill absorbing into the towel?*
  - *Are any of the rug's dyes absorbing into the towel?*
- 3) If the rug's dyes are absorbing into the towel, blot a bit more and then **STOP**. No more work can be done to this area without causing this area's dyes to bleed together. This type of damage can devalue your rug, so you want to stop before you make it worse.
- 4) If the rug's dyes are not absorbing into the towel (only the spill is seen), then place a folded towel underneath the affected area. Take a bowl of CLUB SODA and then use a sponge to get the location of the spill wet again – *not soaking wet, just enough so the fibers are damp.*
- 5) Take a new towel. Blot the top of the rug to continue pulling out the spill from the fibers (club soda helps to keep the spill “suspended” so you can grab it with the cotton towel when you BLOT).

- 6) When no more spill material is visible in the towel, create a “sandwich” with a folded towel under the spill and one on top, and either stand on this area or put a heavy book on it for about 10 minutes.
- 7) Remove the towels and elevate the damp area so that it can dry completely. Most rugs have a cotton foundation which is very absorbent, so you have to be absolutely certain this “skeleton” of your rug is 100% dry so mildew will not grow. Use a hair dryer (on cool or warm setting) on the front AND back of the rug to help quicken the process, or keep it propped up to “air dry” for at least 24 hours for a small spill, and longer for larger ones (or if your rug is thick).

### **Puppy Puddles. Kitty Catastrophes.**

#### **Add to Rug First-Aid Kit: Household White Vinegar**

Of all the possible spills to happen to your rugs, pet urine and pet vomit are the worst. Because they go on hot and acidic, they actually re-dye the fibers, and “set” them at the same time – so if you are not quick these will become permanent stains that will devalue your rug. You need to follow the spill steps in the previous section (blot, rinse, blot). *Except you want to SUBSTITUTE a 50/50 Vinegar and water mixture for the Club Soda AND get the area only slightly damp – NOT wet.* (For pet feces or vomit, you must pick up as much as you can before you begin the vinegar process.)

As far as the **odors** associated with all of these pet “emergencies,” using vinegar right away on this acid staining element helps to remove these odor-causing elements when you blot it away. When needed, you can also use an enzyme product like Nature’s Miracle® (sold in

pet stores) or Pure Ayre® ([www.pureayre.com](http://www.pureayre.com)) on the areas to help remove some of the odor-causing bacteria ***except be wary of dye bleeding caused by these products, you must only mist it on.*** With pet urine, if it is a substantial amount then it has (because it's hot and acidic) penetrated the wool or silk fibers and has been absorbed into the rug's cotton foundation. In this case, the only way you will be able to remove the odor will be to have the rug get a bath and be soaked completely in an enzyme solution. You need to find a rug specialist to do this.

A different set of problems arises with "old" pet urine stains. When a pet urine stain is "fresh" it is a strong **acid** stain. After it has dried completely, and has sat in the fibers for several days, it becomes a strong **alkaline** stain. The problem with high alkalinity and wool is that it yellows the wool, and it also counteracts the mordant process that holds the dyes on to the wool fibers. It essentially makes the dyes "dissolve." Even a rug with colorfast dyes will bleed and fade in areas that have old pet urine stains. So, the key in handling all pet stains is getting to the area as soon as you can (and use the spill steps so that you can minimize the damage).

Protector Chemicals will not protect your rugs from pet stains, and actually, some may cause problems with the dyes on wool rugs, so be sure you are using something designated "Wool Safe" if used. Products which work very well on synthetic nylon wall-to-wall carpeting, may do the opposite on wool, so be sure you know what is being put on your rug so that you are not creating damage instead of "protection."

## RUG PADS

The right type of pad underneath your rug provides many benefits from keeping it from slipping on the floor or buckling, to acting as a “shock absorber” for foot traffic to lessen the wear on the rug’s fibers. These are the best pads for your rugs (and for your floors too).

### **PAD RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RUBBER ANCHOR (“Gripper”) PAD** (rugs on smooth, hard floors): Linoleum, Tile, Pergo, and *some Hardwood*.\* [Thickness of pad = 3/32 inch.]

**DURAHOLD PAD** (rugs on uneven and some smooth hard floors): Mexican and Ceramic Tile, Concrete, BRobert, Marble, and *all Hardwood*.\* This also works rather well over installed sisal and seagrass flooring. Has a 10 year performance warranty by manufacturer. [Thickness of pad = 1/4 inch.]

(\* The National Hardwood Association recommends Durahold Pad as the best pad to allow wood floors to “breathe” and keep a more consistent color tone in all areas.)

**NO-MUV PAD** (larger rugs on soft floors): All carpeting. Has a 10 year performance warranty by manufacturer. [Thickness of pad is 3/8 inch.] Rugs are meant to be placed on HARD surfaces, so pads are important to prevent damage to rugs from heavy furniture poking through them.

**STICKY PAD** (small rugs on soft floors with NO furniture): All carpeting. These pads are sold in most home improvement stores. It is sticky on both sides and “holds” the rug flat on the carpeting. It does not protect from wear, but it does keep you from tripping on the rug. It also provides a barrier in case you worry your rug will discolor the carpeting underneath.

The biggest dangers for rugs placed in storage are BUGS, FLOODS, and THUGS. Insect damage, flood or mildew damage, and theft are the most common problems we hear from clients who have placed rugs in a local storage unit or placed in a far corner of a closet or garage. Many times rugs with high appraised or sentimental value are placed in storage to save them for family members, or to save them from a remodel mess, or to protect them from the summer sunlight. You want to make sure you are not actually causing damage by incorporating the wrong storage procedures.

#### SAFE STORAGE TIPS

- **DO** clean and moth-repel rugs before wrapping for storage.

*You must clean your rugs of food and liquid material because though moths are normally the storage “bad guys” – ANY insect will eat sugars and other food materials, and they will eat the wool fibers that are holding this meal for them too. An insect repellent will make your rug unappetizing to moths.*

- **DO** roll your rugs starting at the bottom end to the top end, fuzzy side **inside**.

*To find the bottom end of your rug, you want to “pet” your rug to determine when you are going WITH the nap, and AGAINST the nap. When you run your hand WITH the grain, it will take you to the tassels of the bottom of the rug (where the weaver began weaving your rug). Roll from this end. Folding rugs causes cracking over time, so do **not** fold rugs being put in storage.*

- **DO** roll your SILK rugs with the fuzzy side **outside**.

*Wool and cotton rugs have more “give” to them than silk rugs, so when placing silk rugs into storage, roll them with their fuzzy silk side outside.*

- **DO** wrap your rugs in TYVEK or brown acid-free PAPER.

*Wool has a moisture content even when it is dry, so changes in heat will cause it to "sweat." Because of this you can **NEVER** wrap wool rugs in plastic or you will create a mildew problem. Tyvek Paper is best (tear and water resistant).*

- **DO** elevate your rug packages off of the ground.

*Many storage facilities are built in lowlands that have a tendency to flood during bad weather, so whether in your home or their location you always want to keep rugs at least six inches off the ground in case flooding occurs.*

- **DO** make certain nothing heavy is stacked on top of your rugs.

*Heavy items can cause damage to the rug's foundation.*

- **DO** acquire insurance to protect your rugs when placed in a storage facility.

*You also want a photograph and appraisal on file in case you need them.*

### **Other Helpful Rug Care Tips**

- **ROTATE your rugs.**

*Rotate rugs to even out any possible sun fading, and to also not allow one specific area to get all the foot traffic wear. Rotate small rugs every 3-6 months; larger rugs every time it goes for a bath put it back down the opposite direction.*

- **INSPECT your rugs.**

*Quarterly you want to inspect your rugs closely for any insect activity. Moths and carpet beetles generally begin feasting in areas that have little light and little air*

*flow – this means they prefer the BACK of the rug, or places under furniture. The larva looks like “sticky lint”, so flip over the corners of the rug to see if you have any activity. American Indian weavings hanging on the wall are particularly vulnerable, so take them down bi-annually to shake and dust them, and look for bugs.*

*You also want to check the ends and sides of your rugs to make sure that they are not in need of repair. When fringe tassels become worn and torn, the wool (or silk) knots of the rug begin to pull away from the rug, and if this is caught early it is a much cheaper repair than reweaving a section of the rug down the road. Look at the BACK of the rug to clearly see if all the knots are tightly and securely in place.*

➔ **PROTECT your rugs.**

*Many newer rugs, especially Chinese rugs, are chemically washed to give them a nice “sheen.” This chemical process makes these rugs sensitive to sunlight and they will fade in a period of just a few short years. If this concerns you, consider treating your windows with a UV-filter coating, or use thicker window coverings to block out the rays during peak hours.*

➔ **NEVER use Carpet Spot Removers or Baking Soda on your rugs.**

*Folex® and Resolve® are aggressive chemical agents and are not safe for wool rugs. These chemicals (and even Woolite®) can be too strong to use on rugs and can either cause a chemical discoloration or it can bleach out the rug dyes completely. Baking Soda also can cause damage by yellowing the fibers. This damage is often permanent, and can devalue your rug, so please stick to CLUB SODA.*

→ **NEVER** put potted live plants, or plastic protectors, on top of your rugs.

*Even careful plant caretakers spill a bit when watering plants. This water seeps into the cotton foundation which leads to mildew growth and dry rot. Plastic protectors also inhibit airflow and can cause mildew growth and dry rot. When dry rot sets in, eventually the rug falls apart in that area of rot. It ruins the rug.*

## **Disastrous Mistakes to Avoid When Choosing a Rug Cleaner.**

**MISTAKE #1:** Choosing to not clean your rugs because you are fearful of doing so.

If you choose the right rug cleaner, you have nothing to worry about. In fact, though you think not cleaning your rug is “protecting” it ... it’s actually causing more damage because the daily dust and grit that is getting ground into the fibers is causing those fibers to break and wear down. Not to mention the fact that years of accumulated dirt, grim, bacteria, dust mites, and other unmentionables brought in by dirty feet and paws is creating an unsanitary situation in your home. You’d **never** consider wearing the same pair of socks through your home for an entire year – they’d be **FILTHY!** How can you wait 2, 3 or more years before cleaning your rugs?

**MISTAKE #2:** Choosing a low price rug cleaner.

Proper rug cleaning is a craft that involves not only a great deal of specialized training, but also a lot of physical labor. Low price cleaners are a HUGE warning sign, because they are a sign of untrained people doing the work, using cheap cleaning chemicals, which means a very high likelihood of your rug being damaged. Even if your rug is a “cheap” one and you do not want to invest in a good cleaning, you are better off replacing the rug with a new “clean” one than having a partially cleaned, chemically-laden rug given back to you by a low price cleaner.

**MISTAKE #3:** Choosing to have your rugs “surface cleaned” in your home.

Having your rugs cleaned in your home is one of the biggest mistakes you can make. The complete absence of both the dusting step and the thorough rinsing step means that you have a lot of soapy dirt and cleaning chemicals left behind in the rug fibers. This many times leads to color fading, color bleeding, yellowing, quicker re-soiling, and a stiffness and stickiness to the rug fibers. The recommended method for cleaning natural fiber rugs is a full-immersion wet wash ... and this cannot be done by an in-home carpet cleaner, or your local dry cleaner.

**MISTAKE #4:** Choosing a rug cleaner without an outstanding reputation in the community.

It’s an unfortunate reality that many businesses “claim” to do things that they really do not. In this case, if someone is not being honest about what service they are providing, or what skills they have, they will probably ruin your rug. So, if you want to play it safe ask questions and make sure they are well known for cleaning Oriental Rugs in your Community.

**MISTAKE #5:** Choosing a rug cleaner that will not provide you with proof of insurance.

If your rug has value to it, you want to make sure that the rug cleaner is insured when cleaning it. Even if your rug is not particularly valuable, but you really like it, you want to be sure that if something wrong happens that the rug cleaner has insurance to buy you a new replacement rug. If a cleaner refuses to provide you proof of his ***care, custody, and control*** insurance, then do not do business with him.

**MISTAKE #6:** Choosing a rug cleaner who doesn't offer a money-back guarantee.

I believe that every business, whether in the cleaning industry or not, should completely stand behind their work with a money-back guarantee. If a customer is not happy with their work for any reason, and attempts at creating a happy customer have not succeeded, then the customer should not have to pay. Period.

**MISTAKE #7:** Choosing a rug cleaner without getting comments from his other clients.

Any rug cleaner can say anything about his past jobs. And, sadly, some of what he says may not be true. Make sure you ask for references or read comments from current customers so you can depend on the rug cleaner and his work.

**MISTAKE #8:** Choosing a rug cleaner who is not a member of a nationally recognized trade association, like NEIRC.

NEIRC is a nationally recognized association for cleaners and restorers, and is an organization that provides training and educational resources to cleaners. It is also one of the shareholding entities of the IICRC – which is the national certification body for the cleaning and restoration industry. If you are going to choose a cleaner for your prized rug, or for in your home, it is a dangerous mistake to not choose a professional who is getting the proper training from expert organizations, and a professional who is certified in cleaning. Anyone can say they are a “professional” ... you want someone who OTHER credible organizations actually say they are a professional in their craft. This helps to protect you.

## **Why You Want Fresh, Clean, Healthy Rugs.**

Which is more important to you: a clean rug – or a clean and healthy rug? Yes, I assure you, there is a big difference.

If all you want is a cheap, rinse-the-dirt-off-the-top surface cleaning – then I respectfully ask that you call another company. But if you want to protect your health – if you want to protect your investment in rugs – if you want to protect your family from the countless bacteria, fungus, pollens and dust mites that reside in your rugs, then you're invited to call me. We provide the most thorough, safest cleaning system for rugs available.

Have you ever seen how dirty a little boy's pants get when he plays outdoors? If you have, then you know you can brush off his pants and make him think they're clean. Or, if you want the job done right, you can machine wash them in water and detergent and you'll KNOW they're clean. The same is true for your rugs. You can hire someone to "surface clean" your rugs and will "brush off" your rugs and make you think it's cleaner. Or, if you want the job done right, we'll wet wash your rugs with water and shampoo and you'll KNOW they're clean.

So if you want thoroughly clean rugs – if you're willing to invest in your family's good health – you're invited to call us. You'll receive a written estimate, at no cost or obligation. And if you give us the go-ahead, you're further protected with our...

### **100% No-Risk Guarantee.**

We want you to be super-pleased – in fact, absolutely delighted – with every oriental and area rug

cleaning job we do. So every job comes with our iron-clad, risk-free guarantee. What does this mean? Simply this: if you aren't happy with our work, we'll reclean your rug for free. And if you still aren't pleased, you pay nothing. Not one cent. Many companies don't guarantee their work – but we feel nothing is more important than your complete and total satisfaction. We stand behind every job 100%. If you ever have any questions or concerns about our work, please call us right away.

### **We Love Rugs!**

Every member of our rug company, from the rug cleaning specialists to the rug repairing specialists, shares a common love for the pieces of woven art that come through our doors. Weavers have spent months, and sometimes years, to weave that rug that you have placed in your home ... and we continually hone our skills and knowledge to ensure that we provide the best services to protect these textiles. As educators in our industry, we make it our mission to share valuable rug care information to rug owners throughout our region. If you have any rug care questions, you can give us a call at **401-946-9292** or visit our website at **[www.specialtyrugcleaning.com](http://www.specialtyrugcleaning.com)**

## **4 Steps to Fresh, Clean, Healthy Rugs.**

If you're thinking about having your rugs thoroughly (and professionally) cleaned, we encourage you to follow these four steps:

**STEP #1:** Make a commitment to yourself to get your rugs cleaned properly. The longer they remain dirty, the sooner they'll wear out. Plus, the longer you have to breathe all the pollen, fungus and chemicals that hide in your rugs.

**STEP #2:** Make sure the Company has an outstanding reputation. You need to be certain that you are sending your rug to a company that will not just be surface cleaning them (and leaving dirt and chemicals behind), when you are paying to have it wet washed.

**STEP #3:** Ask questions. The way you learn about a company is to ask specific questions and listen carefully to the answers. Here are 12 questions to ask a rug cleaner before he takes your rugs away to clean them:

1. What method of rug cleaning do you recommend?
2. What are the steps that you will take when cleaning my rugs?
3. How will you set the rug dyes so my rugs will not bleed?
4. Do you use a shampoo or a detergent to clean rugs?
5. Are your cleaning chemicals designated as safe for wool?
6. Do you rinse the rug to remove your cleaning chemicals?
7. How often should my rugs be cleaned?
8. What training have you had in cleaning rugs?
9. Are you a designated Wool Specialist?

10. Are you a member of a professional cleaning trade association and are you a certified cleaner?
11. Are you insured to replace my rug if anything wrong happens?
12. Do you guarantee your work?

**STEP #4:** Once you're satisfied that you're working with an honest, competent professional, show the cleaner your rug and ask for a specific quotation in writing. A written quotation gives you the assurance that you know exactly what your job will cost – no surprises. By following these four steps, you'll gain all the information you need to make an informed, intelligent decision ... and you won't have to worry about whether you've made the right decision for your favorite rugs.

We'll be happy to answer your questions – provide you with a ballpark cost estimate over the telephone (or an exact wash estimate if you have your exact rug dimensions) – without cost or obligation of any kind. Or, if you have any repair or damage questions and cannot bring your rug to us for a free estimate, you can email us a digital picture and we can write you with repair options and costs.

**THANKS AGAIN!**

...for reviewing our new RUG OWNER'S INSIDE GUIDE TO SAFE RUG CARE AND CLEANING. I hope you found this information helpful.

If you have any questions or comments, please give us a call at **401-946-9292**.

We've dedicated our business to consumer education and service. We'll be pleased to help you in every way. We look forward to your call.

Thanks!

Robert Hauser

*Specialty Rug Cleaning*  
*Rhode Island's Rug Care Specialists*  
**[www.specialtyrugcleaning.com](http://www.specialtyrugcleaning.com)**

## **What Our Clients Say About Us ...**