

## HOW TO HIRE A PRO



**Ask Around** - The best way to select a carpet and upholstery cleaning professional is through recommendations from discerning friends and family. A glowing endorsement can provide great peace of mind! But, if you don't know anyone with recommendations, the next place to look is your local, reputable carpet retailer. Call several retailers and list the companies that they recommend. Look for two or three company names that appear on several of your retailer lists. Also, the local Better Business Bureau can act as a reliable source of information on the cleaning company's history. On-Line

reviews can also be helpful. Look for reviews conducted by independent third parties for the most reliable reviews.

Be cautious of any company contacting you over the phone or advertising cleaning prices by the room. Room sizes vary and charges should be based on the total area cleaned. Also, be wary of upholstery cleaning rates quoted without regard to the specific fabric type. Different fabrics require different levels of care and should be priced accordingly. Some companies advertise the use of brand name machines or products; it should be noted that the quality of service you receive is only partially determined by these factors. See [Company Philosophy](#) for more information.

**The Interview:** Once you have identified one or two companies, we suggest that you conduct an informal telephone interview to make sure you are dealing with a qualified, professional cleaner. When you place a call to the company, are you answered by a live person, or a machine? A live person at the end of the phone is always preferred over an answering machine or voice mail. But don't let this deter you. Many cleaning companies are home based, husband and wife operations. Because of this, they may not be able to be by the phone throughout the entire day. Often, these individuals are well qualified with many years of experience.

### **Here are some questions you should ask:**

- How long has the company been in business in your community? The answer can speak volumes about its reputation and experience.
- Is your company certified by a national organization for continuing education? The IICRC (Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification) is the most recognized. Companies that are certified and follow the [Code of Ethics](#) of the IICRC tend to operate in a very professional manner. Ownership of a nationally known franchise name is no guarantee of quality local service.
- What kind of cleaning method do you use? Is it a truck mounted system, or will you be using my electricity?
- How are your cleaning rates determined?
- What are the basic services offered and what constitutes an additional charge?

- Do you give free written estimates in my area?
- Are you insured?
- What is the guarantee?

**Phone Quotes:** A professional carpet and upholstery cleaning company will not quote prices over the phone! However, if you have worked with a certain company in the past, or feel confident in the recommendations you've received from friends and family, you may decide to forego the written estimate in favor of a 'rough idea' over the phone. Be prepared to provide approximate measurements of the areas to be cleaned, amount of furniture you would like the cleaners to shuffle, length of sofas to be cleaned, etc. The accuracy of a **phone estimate** is dependent on the information you provide. It's helpful if you understand how the company determines charges. An honest individual will be glad to explain these details.

**The Estimate:** Before hiring a carpet and upholstery cleaning professional, have a representative come to your home or office for a written estimate. It's best when the estimator is the person who will be doing the actual work, rather than a salesman. The estimate is also a great time to meet this person face-to-face.

First impressions are important! Was the representative prompt to your appointment? If for some reason they were running late, did they give a courtesy call prior to the scheduled time? Did the vehicle they arrived in look clean and well maintained from an outside view? Was the individual neatly dressed with a uniform and identifying name tag, or neat shirt and pants? Were they knowledgeable about the services that their company provides, and able to answer any questions that you had about those services?

**Beware** of overly assertive sales tactics. The classic '**bait & switch**' used by a few unscrupulous companies in our industry, and sales people whose goal is to sell you more service than you need. Professionals don't use these tactics.

The professional's estimate, in almost all cases, will be a firm and final price for the services listed. Carefully scrutinize the list of services to be performed. And, make sure that you are not charged for any 'extras' such as removal of spots, preconditioning or pre-spotting, deep cleaning, dual processes, pile setting, or putting blocks or tabs under the furniture legs, as these services are usually included as part of normal cleaning.

While there are more than 33,000 reputable, ethical and good carpet and upholstery cleaning professionals in the United States, it is helpful to arm yourself with these tips to ensure a quality job. Although it may be tempting to base your decision on price alone, it is not advisable. Consider all aspects of the company.

