FIBER-SEAL® FABRIC CARE SYSTEM

# THE THREAD

Unraveling the Mysteries of Fibers, Fabrics and Floor Coverings

# REAPPEARING SPOTS…

## The Spot Was Gone, But Now It's Back

*Though the terms "spot" and "stain" are often used interchangeably, here we will use "spot" to mean any offending substance that can be fully or partially removed via normal cleaning procedures. A "stain" is a spot that is permanent or removable only by bleaching or other extreme measures.*

Reappearing spots can and do occur on upholstery fabrics, but they are much more common on floor coverings. The following information focuses on spot removal for floor coverings only.

### OOPS!

Floor coverings are really "fabrics on the floor." These horizontal fabrics are constantly exposed to general soiling and other types of traffic spots like oil and grease which can be forced down into the fibers.

Equally challenging are the occasional mishaps where liquid spills like soft drinks fall from heights and the impact pushes them through the fibers and into the backing. Let's take a look at some of the challenges involved in cleaning these types of stains.

### Wicking

If the spilled substance has made its way to the backing – and especially if a large quantity was spilled – there is a tendency for the offending substance to crawl back up to the top of the yarns as it is drying. This action is called "wicking" and it is a major reason for reappearing spots.

If the spot you have cleaned reappears, simply re-cleaning the area may remove the spot for good. Sometimes this must be done more than once to finally solve the problem.

### Sticky Spills

The ingredients in the substance that is spilled are often the cause of reappearing spots. Many common household products contain sugars and while the color of the spilled substance may be removed, the invisible sugars can remain. These sugars act like magnets for dirt and the area can quickly attract soil, making it look like the spot has reappeared.

Rinsing with cool or warm water followed by blotting or extraction is the best way to remove soils and sugars.

### Soil-Attracting Residues

It is very common to find spot cleaning instructions that recommend the use of dishwashing liquid as a primary cleaning agent. The problem is that these liquids and other similar "off the shelf" products can leave sticky residues if not properly rinsed with water. It is no surprise then that the gradual soiling of the cleaned area makes it appear that the spot keeps coming back and in some cases, looks even larger.

It is very important to be sure that spot removers do not dry tacky or greasy. Put a teaspoon of the spot remover in a small dish and leave it to

dry overnight. If the residue is not dry to the touch in the morning, don't use that product on carpets or rugs.

## Spot Removal 101

When a spill happens, it is important to do the RIGHT things.

ACT QUICKLY! The longer the delay, the higher the probability that a spill will become a permanent stain. Remember, staining is influenced by many factors and no carpet is completely stain proof.

Blot liquids with a dry, white, absorbent cloth or white (no printing) paper towels.
Do not scrub the area! Scrubbing can cause pile distortion that can look worse than the spot. Continue to blot with a dry cloth or paper towels until the area is completely dry. For spills with some semi-solids in them, gently scrape up with a rounded spoon.

Pretest any spot removal agent in an inconspicuous area to make certain the solution will not damage the fiber or change the color.

Once you have pre-tested the cleaning agent, apply a small amount of the selected cleaning solution to a white cloth and gently blot the area of the spill.

Work from the edges of the spill to the center to prevent the spill from spreading. Do not scrub! Blot, absorbing as much liquid as possible, and repeat if necessary.

Continue using the cleaning solution as long as there is a transfer of the spill to the cloth. Be patient! Complete removal of the spill may require repeating the same step several times.

## Confused About Spot Removal And Wishing There Was An Easier Way?

Your local Fiber-Seal Service Center is ready to help and just a click away.

**Click Here For Locations**

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