

The truth about carpet spot removers

The March 2009 issue of *Which?* magazine contained a feature article about spot and stain removers available to consumers. The article concluded, amongst other things, that in some cases dishwashing liquid was at least as effective as specialist spot removers from well-known brands.

These findings were immediately – and gleefully – reported in the national press under headings such as “Ditch stain removers, soapy water will do” and “Washing-up liquid beats costly carpet cleaners”.

The application of detergents not specifically designed for use on carpets (or rugs) has long been a sore point for the carpet industry, because it is a well-established fact that using, for instance, dishwashing liquid to clean carpets, invariably leads to more serious soiling than was the case in the first place.

The technical experts at The WOOLSAFE Organisation who studied the details of the *Which?* report, were also not impressed with some of the experiments carried out. And since the list of products tested contained a number of WOOLSAFE Approved products, they decided to run their own comparative tests.

It took a while to get all the products *Which?* used together – some were rather obscure – but tests started in mid-April. These included pH, alkalinity, colour fastness and re-soiling tests.

The only “**Adverse effects**” test *Which?* carried out was to apply each stain remover to a piece of blue carpet (unspecified) and, after five weeks, to assess whether bleaching had occurred.

Not all the WOOLSAFE tests have been completed yet, but a number of interesting facts have already emerged.

It has been confirmed that the dishwashing liquid selected by *Which?* does indeed cause rapid, and serious **re-soiling** problems. This means that, even when a stain has been successfully removed, after a few days in the same area there will be a larger, dark spot.

Interestingly, the washing-up liquid used in the *Which?* tests carries a very specific warning: “Do not use on fabrics”!

Several products also have a **high pH** or are strongly buffered on the alkaline side, which is highly undesirable for carpets and rugs with a wool or advanced generation nylon pile as it greatly increases the risk of colour migrating (bleeding) from dark colours into light(er) ones.

This was confirmed by standardized colour fastness tests carried out subsequently. Another instance of solving one problem and creating another, possibly greater, one.

Once all the tests are carried out and assessments completed we will report the findings in full to put the record straight.

The WOOLSAFE Organisation has been testing all types of carpet cleaning chemicals for over ten years, and we know that there is a lot more to these sophisticated products than checking the removal of some stains. A lot of research and development work goes into formulating these specialist chemicals, which explains why they perform much better – and safer!

There is a need for independent testing and comparing of cleaning products, but it needs to cover all important aspects. And this is better left to the acknowledged experts.

Updated and improved: WOOLSAFE website re-launched

In this age of instant gratification through technology, the internet is increasingly used to find information, services, products and advice. It has never been more important to make the most of this now universal channel of communication and commerce.

The WOOLSAFE Organisation has had a website for 10 years already, but to keep up with technological developments, the site has been completely remodelled and enhanced and was re-launched in March.

The site has been carefully designed so that it is much easier for the visitor to navigate and find the information they are looking for.

On the Home page, the box headed “Click Below to Find...” gives instant access to WOOLSAFE’s main services, partner companies and products and the latest news. For instance it only takes one piece of information inserted in one of the boxes - a postcode or the name of a town - to get the nearest cleaner, with a map and full contact details if required. For



more detailed information, visitors can use the blue navigation bar on the top with its many drop-down menus.

Internet search engines such as Google will find it amongst the first ones when information on (wool) carpet and rug care, WOOLSAFE Approved products, Certified Operators and Registered Inspectors is sought. The new design has already had an impact on the number of visitors to the site and this has resulted in an increase in new business for our partners.

Whilst we took great care to provide our designer with up to date information, and checked the site thoroughly, it is still possible that some details are not correct. So please take a few minutes to test-drive it, and also check your own details carefully, especially if some of them changed recently. Please also tell us if you would like us to add your company logo or an extra hyperlink to the site.

If you do not have a website, get in touch, we can help you launch a basic one for a very competitive price. In this day and age you cannot afford to be without one!

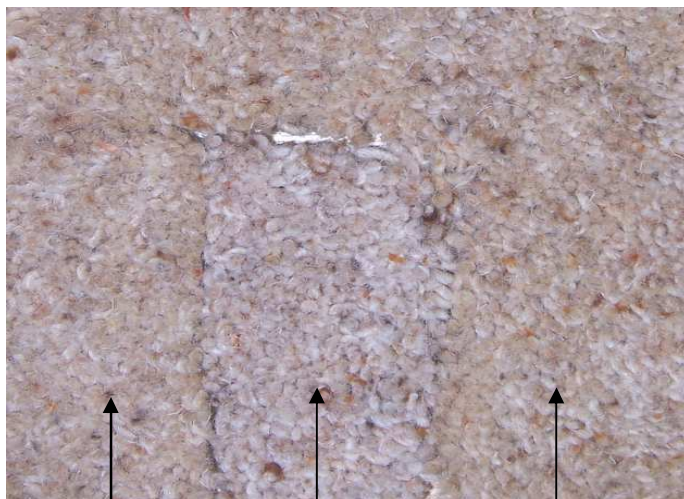
YELLOWING OF CARPETS: BEWARE, IT MAY STRIKE AGAIN

A couple of years ago The WOOLSAFE Organisation carried out a series of tests on a range of carpets to test their “cleanability”. Whilst we found that good quality carpets, those produced by leading carpet mills, presented no significant problems, some other products showed poor twist retention, accelerated soiling and yellowing / browning.

One of WOOLSAFE’s Registered Inspectors came across a graphic example of the problem that yellowing of carpets in wet cleaning can cause.

A professional carpet cleaner wet cleaned a wool-rich carpet which showed significant colour change upon drying. The cleaning chemical he used was suitable for wool and the carpet had not been over-wet and he – and his customer - wanted to know what had gone wrong. WOOLSAFE was asked to carry out a few tests to check whether or not the carpet was at fault.

A piece of the unused carpet was treated with both the cleaning chemical used and with distilled water and left to dry thoroughly. The colour difference between the original and the treated carpet was then measured, using a colour difference meter.



The colour differences measured – expressed in units of ΔE , one unit of ΔE being just visible to the human eye – were 4.3 for the carpet treated with the cleaning agents and 3.1 for that treated with water. Very significant changes in colour in both cases.

Soaking this carpet and then drying it causes it to go darker and more yellow in hue. Where the colour comes from was not clear (we had too little carpet to do further testing) but it came either from the wool, the coloured fibres in the blend or the backing – or a combination of these. This bleeding was more pronounced when the carpet was soaked in a detergent solution, which is due to the detergent’s ability to release more of the colouring matter from the wool or the backing.

The pH of the *original* carpet was near neutral (pH 6.9), but increased slightly to pH 7.8 when soaked in distilled water, probably due to alkaline material from the latex. This neutral pH does *not* help in preventing the colour bleeding.

It was therefore our conclusion that the carpet was faulty due to unacceptably poor colour fastness and the cleaning company was exonerated.

This was also an example where pre-testing the carpet prior to starting the cleaning to see if it might bleed or change colour, was of no help to the cleaner, because the colour change was not apparent until the carpet had fully dried.

WOOLSAFE at THE CLEANING SHOW

The WOOLSAFE Organisation’s stand at The Cleaning Show 2009, held in March at the NEC, Birmingham, UK, had its busiest time ever. The show attracted more than 8000 visitors and a lot of them stopped by!

Despite the current economic difficulties and the pressure this is putting on companies and business people, there was a steady stream of interest to our stand from the moment the show opened on 12th March until it closed on the 14th.



Visitors included carpet cleaners, many of whom interested in becoming part of WOOLSAFE’s network of Certified Operators and wanting to sign up for one of the training courses (see also p. 4). Several others, who had done the course in previous years, but did not join at the time, now asked about membership.

A number of cleaning chemical suppliers expressed their interest in having products evaluated with the aim of acquiring WOOLSAFE Approval.

The 10th anniversary of the WOOLSAFE Certified Operator Network was highlighted on the stand and some of the Operators who joined in 1999 were presented with special anniversary certificates during the show. Our founding members are: **Alco Cleaners**, Luton; **Allpro Carpet Care**, High Wycombe; **Anglia Clean Care**, Cambridge; **Cleaning Maintenance Services**, Bingley; **M Roper Carpet Care**, Whitby; **PowerClean**, Harrogate; **Rainbow International - Yeowil**, Taunton, etc. South Petherton and **FiberSeal**, Dublin, Ireland.



Chris Glasby (Anglia Clean Care Services) and Alan Cox (Alco Cleaners) are presented with 10 Year Certificates by Paul Bakker and Dr Ágnes Zsednai

Approved products update

Clean Control Corporation has launched two new products in their OdoBan Professional Series: a pre-spray and a re-formulated 3-in-1 cleaner. Both have achieved WOOLSAFE certification.



Earth Choice 3-in-1 Carpet Cleaner Concentrate is a revolutionary concentrated detergent-free carpet cleaner specially formulated to be used at different dilutions, so there is no need for separate pre-sprays or spot cleaners.

This patented formulation suspends dirt and soils, reducing wear and damage to carpet appearance.

Earth Choice Traffic Lane Prespray was developed with an advanced surfactant/solvent system designed specifically to remove heavy traffic stains and oily residues from carpeting while avoiding damage to the backing.

MasterBlend have introduced **Ultimate with UV Protector**. It is a ready-to-use fluoro-chemical protective finish for carpets and rugs that is safe to use on wool and wool blends.



UK consumer product manufacturer, **Bissell Homecare** has added a new variety of product to their range of spot and stain removers.



Oxi Pro is a very effective spotter with added hydrogen peroxide to help remove brightly coloured stains.

WOOLSAFE Certified Operators UK & Ireland

Welcome to the most recently joined members of our Great Britain and Ireland network. All are professional carpet & upholstery cleaning companies in England. They are:

Mr Keith Kennett, **Pilgrim Payne & Co. Ltd**
Units 12, 13, 14, Wharfside, Rosemont Road, Wembley, Middlesex, HA0 4PE
Tel: 0208 453 5350, Fax: 0208 453 5604,
info@pilgrimpayne.co.uk

Mr Darren Curtis, **Absolutely Fabulous Carpet & Uphols Cing**
25 Westwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 5PL
Tel: 0118 329 0058, Mob: 0772 987 2424,
enquiries@abfab.uk.com

Mr Derek Jones, **Commodore Carpet Cleaners Ltd**
Reyton House, Bedmond Road, Pimlico, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP3 8SH
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Mr Ian Rendall, **Clean IT**
29 Westover, Frome, Somerset, BA11 4ET
Tel: 01373 462 059, Mob: 0777 924 7961,
IanRendall@hotmail.co.uk

Mr Alex Borg, **Wrennalls Group**
119 Clydesdale Place, Moss Side Industrial Estate, Leyland, Lancashire, PR26 7QS
Tel: 01772 435 739, Fax: 01772 431 289, sales@wrennalls.com

Mr Mike Sams, **Action Clean**
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30 Years of dedication to floor care

When the WOOLSAFE cleaning chemical certification programme was established back in 1991 Vax Ltd was one of the first companies to submit their cleaning agents for evaluation and to secure certification. Today they supply several WOOLSAFE approved products.

Vax, part of the multi-billion dollar TechTronic Industries Group, have always been looking for new ways to deep clean carpets. They developed their first machine in 1977, which was a combined vacuum and wet cleaner, a unique concept at the time. Ten years later it was the best-selling vacuum cleaner in the UK.

They currently market an extensive range of cylinder and upright vacuum cleaners, but it is their pioneering 'carpet washing' machines for which they are probably best known. These machines use Vax's own WOOLSAFE approved carpet cleaning solutions, which lift dirt, stains and odours leaving a fresh fragrance and no sticky residue, helping to prevent resoiling. These innovative and effective cleaning solutions are continuously tested, reformulated and improved to stay ahead in this highly competitive market.

Vax Carpet Cleaner with AAA (Anti Allergen Additive) has varieties to combat pet odours or leave a fresh spring fragrance. On heavily soiled areas, their performance can be enhanced by **pre-treatment**; and the **post treatment** provides protection against soiling and staining.



Whilst originally supplying machines and chemicals to consumers only, their new division, **Vax Commercial** supplies an extensive range of vacuum cleaners and carpet washers to industry users (mainly in health care and hospitality). These compact, robust but very manoeuvrable carpet washers and vacuum cleaners are built with commercial grade motors, hoses and tools to withstand regular high level usage.

At the recent Cleaning Show at Birmingham's NEC, Vax Commercial demonstrated their new VCW-04, which has a brush and wash action with heated cleaning technology, providing improved cleaning and drying performance. A CleanSurge™ button releases extra cleaning solution when needed – perfect for treating high traffic areas – while the flexible hose and wash tool make cleaning stairs, upholstery and hard to reach places a piece of cake. Used with the high quality WOOLSAFE approved cleaning solutions, it is perfect for every carpet.

For further information on Vax visit www.vaxcommercial.co.uk or phone 01905 799609.

WOOLSAFE training courses in 2009

These courses are for carpet cleaning companies or individuals who wish to learn more about wool carpet maintenance, or to become WOOLSAFE Certified Operators.

IICRC certified technicians will earn one CEC credit on completion of the course.

United Kingdom

7 May 2009 - High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

Venue: SEBO (UK) Ltd, Merlin Centre, Cressex Business Park, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP12 3QL
Course starts: 09.30 hrs, and finishes 16.30 hrs
Course tutor: Paul Bakker & Dr Ágnes Zsednai, *The WOOLSAFE Organisation*
Contact: The WOOLSAFE Organisation, 01943 850 817
 stella@woolsafe.org

20 May 2009 - Tyne & Wear

Venue: TBA
Course tutor: Julie Roberts, *Chemspec Europe*
Contact: Chemspec Europe,
 01274 597 333, julie@chemspec-europe.com

17 June 2009 - Birmingham, West Midlands

Venue: TBA
Course tutor: Julie Roberts, *Chemspec Europe*
Contact: Chemspec Europe, 01274 597 333,
 julie@chemspec-europe.com

30 July 2009 - Farnham, Surrey

Venue: National Flood School, 47A Wrecclisham Road, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 8TY
Course starts: 09.30 hrs, and finishes 16.30 hrs
Course tutor: Adam Jankowski, *NFS*
Contact: The WOOLSAFE Organisation, 01943 850 817
 stella@woolsafe.org

26 November 2009 - Farnham, Surrey

Venue: National Flood School, 47A Wrecclisham Road, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 8TY
Course starts: 09.30 hrs, and finishes 16.30 hrs
Course tutor: Adam Jankowski, *NFS*
Contact: The WOOLSAFE Organisation, 01943 850 817
 stella@woolsafe.org

Spring special: Now **only £99.00 + VAT** per delegate.

Course fee includes refreshments, (light) lunch, handouts, course manual and examination papers, but NOT WOOLSAFE membership and company registration/listing fees.

Australia

14/05/09 Brisbane WOOLSAFE technician course.
 15/05/09 Brisbane Advanced stain removal workshop.

28/05/09 Melbourne WOOLSAFE technician course.
 29/05/09 Melbourne Advanced stain removal workshop.

24/06/09 Sydney WOOLSAFE technician course.
 25/06/09 Sydney Advanced stain removal workshop.

30/07/09 Perth WOOLSAFE technician course.
 31/07/09 Perth Advanced stain removal workshop.

08/10/09 Gold Coast WOOLSAFE technician course.
 (coincides with CleanLink Convention)

Contact Colin Nation at WOOLSAFE Australia for more details.
 office@woolsafe.com.au, phone 0408 966 500 or fax 07 5493 4491.

North America

May 7, 2009, Grand View, MO

Subject: WOOLSAFE®-Approved Fabric Care Specialist Training Course
Venue: Belzer Supply, Grandview, MO
Register: phone Mike Brummett at 785-979-6851 or e-mail
carpetguy@sunflower.com.
Fees: SCRT members: \$199.00, non-members: \$299.00

WOOLSAFE Australia News

We are delighted to welcome a number of additional professional carpet & upholstery cleaning companies who have joined the WOOLSAFE Certified Operators Network in Australia in the last six months. They are:

Shorty Glanville, *Get Shorty Carpet & Upholstery Care*, Edge Hill, Cairns, Queensland;

Ben Mc Henry, *Mc Henry's Carpet Cleaning*, Mildura, Victoria;

Brendan Scott, *Scott's Carpet Cleaning*, Rockhampton, Queensland;

Dave Austin, *Stains Rugs N Dyes*, Orange, NSW;

Dave Sutton, *Glenelg Carpet Cleaning*, Glenelg, S.A.;

Ian Andersen from *AGI Carpet Services* in Mona Vale, NSW.

A WOOLSAFE Registered Inspector course will be held on the 12th and 13th October at a venue (to be decided) near the CleanLink Convention. This course will include a demonstration of the chemical testing required for the determination of many carpet related problems.

We are attempting to organise a WOOLSAFE technician training course in New Zealand this year to co-incide with the Clean NZ conference in May.

WOOLSAFE North America News

WOOLSAFE® Fabric Care Specialist On-line Training School is up and running!

This on-line course provides carpet cleaners with a convenient means for updating their knowledge on wool carpet cleaning and spotting. Successful completion will enable carpet cleaners to join the WOOLSAFE Fabric Care Specialists Network.

Ruth Travis, *WOOLSAFE North America* Director explains: "Previously this course was only offered in a face-to-face format with limited access for professional cleaners interested in learning more about wool and high-value wool carpet and rug cleaning, but for whom travelling to the venue was not practical.

It provides professional cleaners with a convenient and cost effective means for advancing their knowledge of *wool-rich* carpet, high-value rug and upholstery cleaning.

Now students throughout North America and elsewhere will have the opportunity to choose to attend a course in person or study on-line. Students are able to complete the course at their own pace from a home or office computer."

For more information about the course go to:

www.cleancareseminars.com/woolsafe, call 800 455 4278, or contact Ruth at *WOOLSAFE North America*.

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