WoolSafe Celebrates 30 Years!

Look inside to find out more!

In the WoolSafe Laboratory!

WoolSafe’s Interactive 3D Grand Expo!
WoolSafe has reached yet another milestone: the first ever independent testing and accreditation programme for carpet care products is now 30 years old!

The test method developed in 1991 by industry experts drawing on years of research, is just as relevant today, as it was 30 years ago. The underlying principles mentioned in the main article on page 5 are still the same, but the actual test methods are kept up to date by constant review to reflect new developments in the chemical industry. As formulations evolve and needs change, more suppliers of special products are seeking WoolSafe certification, prompting us to work out new, relevant test methods e.g. for stain digesters or sanitiser.

The other big development almost ten years ago was to extend our testing and certification to chemicals aimed at man-made fibres under the CleanSeal programme. The CleanSeal Mark, which can also be used on almost all WoolSafe approved products, highlights safe and effective products in markets where wool is not the prominent fibre. WoolSafe also cares about the environment. The Green WoolSafe Mark has been in use since 2007 in cooperation with North American environmental certification bodies, and in 2015 our own EnviroSeal programme was launched with Europe and the rest of the world in mind.

Over the years we have strengthened our links all across the carpet and cleaning industry and carried on being involved in standard making, giving our time and expertise for free for the benefit of the industry globally.

Chairman Paul Bakker was instrumental in developing several ISO Standards earlier in his career, some of the work I carry on now, as well as serving on IICRC Consensus Bodies.

I hope you have all enjoyed working with us and wish you a very happy Christmas and many more prosperous years together.

Dr Ágnes Zsednai, WoolSafe M.D.
I am very excited to announce that the first live WoolSafe Grand Expo 3D virtual event will take place **Tuesday 1st March to Thursday 3rd March 2022**. It’s going to be a ground-breaking expo so please put the dates in your diary today!

The exhibition will go live at 5pm UK time each day when visitors will be able to visit the stands of the WoolSafe Licensees and associate members.

Just like walking onto a stand at a live trade show, visitors can pick up a brochure, talk face-to-face with exhibitor staff, watch a demonstration and find out about and place an order for equipment and solutions.

From 6pm to 8pm the WoolSafe Grand Expo Stage will have a strong line up of educators delivering seminars, workshops and demonstrations and there is also virtual cafe-bar where attendees can meet to network and relax.

**Grand Expo Stage: Seminars & Workshops**

**Meet the team**

**Learn about products**

**Watch demonstrations & promotions**

**Face-to-face meetings**

**View events**

**Pick up a brochure**

**Return to Expo**

*Join the WoolSafe flock . . . and you’ll be jumping for joy too!*
WOOLSAFE NEWS  December 2021

How to Navigate WoolSafe Grand Expo

On a PC or Laptop
Click anywhere on the map and move the mouse to move around the exhibition floor or click on the marker flags to jump to that area. You can zoom in and out with the mouse wheel if you have one or with the – and + buttons bottom left of the screen. Next to them is the reset view button.

On smart phones and tablets
Touch anywhere on the map and move your finger to move around the exhibition floor or click on the marker flags to jump to that area. Zoom in and out by pinching and un-pinching or with the – and + buttons bottom left of the screen. Next to them is the reset view button.

Visit an Exhibitor
Double click on any stand to visit and view products, download brochures, watch video demonstrations, contact a member of the team and join live meeting and demos (during live expos). Swipe left or right to move through the exhibitor stands or return to the map or sidebar list to select your next exhibitor.

Side Bar
A list of exhibitors can also be found in the side bar on the right, click on the three bars in the top right of the screen to make the list visible and again to hide.

Attend a Seminar
Click on the Stage to view the upcoming seminars and the countdown clock to the start of an event. You can also check out what events are coming up by clicking on the calendar icon in the top left corner of the screen.

Networking with other visitors
Double-click on the café stand, to the left of the stage, and click the ‘take a seat on Zoom’ button in the top right corner of the screen (during live events). You will then enter a zoom meeting with other visitors and exhibitors. Take a magazine from the rack, enjoy a chat and relax.
In the mid-1980s carpet technologists at the International Wool Secretariat’s Technical Centre in Ilkley, England, were confronted with increasing numbers of questions about the care of wool carpets and rugs. Complaints included rapid soiling of light-coloured carpets, colour bleeding in patterned carpets and rugs, yellowing of berber carpets, and black spots after stain removal.

Many of these problems could be traced back to the agents that had been used to remove spots or wet-clean the carpet. It was clear that something was seriously amiss.

The cause of rapid re-soiling after cleaning or spot removal was traced to the use of products that left a sticky residue behind that didn’t dry completely and to which dirt adhered. A preliminary survey of products commonly used, both by consumers and by professional cleaners, showed that quite a few suffered from this fault.

The colour bleeding observed on patterned carpet was caused by chemicals that were too alkaline or too aggressive in other ways. When applied in cleaning, spot removal or as a finish, they either raised the originally acidic pH of the wool to above 7, or otherwise weakened the bond between the fibre and the dye. Both effects led to colour bleeding and cross staining. Something needed to be done to try and rectify this unacceptable situation.

The first step was to design a test protocol and a set of performance standards for carpet maintenance products. The test protocol was based on national or international test methods. The performance requirements, for product efficacy and safety, were drawn up in consultation with carpet mills, fibre suppliers, cleaning research institutes and carpet cleaning industry representatives.

And so, in 1991, the WoolSafe carpet maintenance products testing and certification programme was born.
September 2021 was extremely busy here in the US. We finalized plans for the Experience where we not only exhibited for three days, but also held a “rare” face-to-face WoolSafe Fibercare Specialist course. We had 21 students who seemed quite delighted to learn more about wool and its care during the course.

The day following the Experience we participated in the Rug Revenue Workshop hosted by Lisa Wagner and Mark Kennedy. Unfortunately, the UK contingent (Steve Bakker and Agnes Zsednai) weren’t able to travel to the US due to Covid restrictions, so I was given the honor of making the presentation on the most recent WoolSafe Research on “Chemical, also known as, Luster-washed rugs.” Dr. Zsednai has written an article, that you can read on pages 10 to 12, in this issue of WoolSafe News. I promise, it is a must read for rug cleaners. As you can see, in the photo on the left, WoolSafe was well represented at the Conference.

In late September I traveled to Greensboro, North Carolina where I taught a three day IICRC Rug Cleaning course. There were 15 students in the course, several of whom were WoolSafe Service Provider company owners and technicians.

We continue to receive calls from consumers asking for advice and referrals for professional cleaners. As always I refer them to our network companies.
My Daughter and her partner Ben took over our specialty cleaning business last year, right at the start of the Covid lockdowns. Ben had already done his WoolSafe Certification as he had worked with us for a few years before. Luckily our lockdowns in Queensland were limited to a few weeks and because they do mainly offsite rug cleaning were able to keep themselves busy fitting new drying racks in a larger drying room in their new shed. They managed to find a house with a shed that my shed would fit in three times.

During this time we set up our online training school that can be accessed through www.nationtraining.com.au where we have 9 courses online to cater for everything from the beginner employee or new operator up to carpet colour repairs and even leather cleaning and colour restoration. Courses are available at any time and can be done in your own time at your own pace. There are course ‘Bundles’ where we have linked some courses together to present them in a logical sequence and save money for the learner. These courses are available anywhere in the world and come with downloadable PDF manuals attached to each lecture in the courses.

All this has happened as I reach retirement age and we are taking steps to step back from the busy life to move on to more relaxation and travel. So who is going to look after WoolSafe in Australia? We will be working for a while yet and will be gradually easing a new representative into the roll over the next few months to keep the support and networking alive and well.

So our car is being pimped with more gear to take it further off road so I can access areas that are not accessible by normal cars. We have always loved camping and off road driving and plan to do more of this over the next few years.

My other hobby is painting. I use my colour repair skills to produce Plein Air paintings. This is where I set up my easel and paint the spot that I see. I have been doing this for a few years and am gaining a bit of a following and have the occasional exhibition. You can follow my new exploits on Facebook at Col Nation Art. But I will be around WoolSafe a little longer yet.
Vital Solutions, LLC is a developer and manufacturer of bleach-free solutions for use in both the home and workplace.

Established in 2011, Vital Solutions is located in West Palm Beach, Florida.

At Vital Solutions, the well-being of people and planet is at the forefront of all that we do. With every bottle of Vital Oxide comes the promise that we are actively working toward environmentally sound cleaning and disinfecting solutions.

Our mission is to provide products that quickly eliminate viruses and bacteria, mold and mildew, odors and allergens from your environment that could be potential health threats without exposing you to any harsh chemicals or harmful residue.

Our premiere product, Vital Oxide, is an EPA registered hospital disinfectant cleaner, mold killer and odor eliminator. With a ready-to-use formula designed to be gentle to users but tough on viruses and bacteria, Vital Oxide is non-irritating to skin, non-corrosive to most treated articles, NSF certified (no rinse required) for food contact surfaces and listed as a category IV (lowest approved category) pesticide with the EPA.

Vital Oxide Mold Remover & Disinfectant Cleaner for sanitization dilutions, mold remediation, commercial use in facilities and hospitals, and covering large surfaces and areas. Kills 99.9% of bacteria and viruses, kills fungus, mold, and mildew at the source and inhibits growth, sanitizes 99.999% of bacteria on food-contact surfaces with no rinse required, and eliminates odor at a molecular level, not by masking with fragrance.

Suitable for use on wool carpets and rugs at a dilution rate of 1 to 5 (100 ml product + 500 ml water) rinse out after contact time with acid rinse.
Long-time Licensee, Karcher, have expanded their extensive WoolSafe and CleanSeal Approved product portfolio with the introduction of Disinfectant Liquid RM735.

Ideal for use in public institutions, in the hotel and gastronomy industries, in the healthcare industry and in many other locations, our RM 735 liquid disinfectant – tested in accordance with EN 14476 – is impressive thanks to its high efficacy in combating a particularly broad range of pathogens, including the new coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. Despite its significant bactericidal, yeasticidal and limited virucidal properties, it is particularly gentle on materials and can even be used on acrylic glass (Plexiglas®), linoleum, PVC and anodised aluminium. It can be used as a conventional spray to wipe down surfaces as well as applied to larger areas using a Cleaning Agent Sprayer, a scrubber drier, a high-pressure cleaner or the PS 4/7 Bp Mister. Disinfectant RM 735 is pH-neutral, contains no aldehydes, phenols, alcohol or chlorine, and leaves no lasting odour.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome back Racine International and the HOST® Dry Carpet Cleaner, the workhorse of the HOST system: for carpet, grouted tile, and textured floors, routine maintenance OR overall deep extraction cleaning. Great for spots or traffic areas too!

HOST® SJ Dry Carpet Cleaner has been formulated for special jobs such as: stubborn parking lot track-off, loop pile carpets, solution dyed nylon, PET, and polypropylene.
We know that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and it is heavily influenced by fashion. All through history this resulted in many impractical dresses, footwear, pieces of furniture and so on. Flooring is no exception, as carpet and rug cleaners know all too well!

In this study we looked at what fashion can do to beautiful wool rugs.

We know that wool is a superior fibre for textile floor coverings. It is resilient, it keeps its appearance and with the correct care it can look like new for a very long time.

In the case of hand-made rugs, it had been a long custom to enhance the feel of the rug by a topical treatment, called lustre wash. The aim is to make the rug have more sheen to it, and to soften the feel of the wool pile. They use Chlorine bleach and an alkaline solution to dissolve some of the outer cuticle layers of the wool fibres to make them reflect more light and have a softer touch.

“Chlorine bleach and alkaline”?! Yes, you are justifiably horrified! Those are the very things WoolSafe teaches never to be used on wool, as they do exactly what they are used for here: they dissolve the waxy coating and some of the scales on the surface, in other words the wool’s protective layer.

Picture 1 shows the surface of undamaged wool under scanning electron microscope. Compare that with the picture we took of fibres from lustre-washed rugs provided for this research. (see picture 2)

For our research we were provided with four chemically treated rugs:
- Brown 90 line Chinese
- Gray Tibetan
- Blue Pakistani Bokhara
- Brown Pakistani Peshawar

We conducted various tests to see the extent of the damage and to see whether it could be mitigated.

Some of the results are shared below, the rest will follow in the next issue.
Wool has inherent water repellency – to keep sheep safe out in the rain by not letting their fleece get saturated with water. It should be there even after the wool is shorn, processed and made into carpet. However, as expected after such harsh treatment, all lustre-washed rugs lost this fantastic property and had no or very poor resistance to water, and no resistance to oil. This causes excessive staining, which a carpet or rug cleaner would find very difficult to remove.

The brown Chinese rug lent itself to an interesting experiment. We discovered that, probably due to its dense construction and to the treatment being topical, only the top section of the tufts was eroded (see picture 3).

On the right half of the rug sample, we shaved off the top few mm-s to expose the healthy fibres underneath (see picture 4). Note the difference in depth of colour between the two sides. If you examine the circular shaped red wine and coffee stains that we applied to each half, the difference is clear to see: both stains (but especially the coffee) look much lighter on the shaved (healthy) side, whilst they both absorbed into the weakened fibre tips on the original side, resulting in much more visible staining (see picture 4).

In case of the other rugs, the damage went all the way to the backing. We used these to see whether the damage could be mitigated. We applied a WoolSafe approved carpet protector and a proprietary rug remedy to distinct areas of the rugs and compared their characteristics to the original. We applied 10ml red wine and 10ml hot coffee through a staining applicator from a height and watched how it sank in. After 30 minutes all stains were extracted with lukewarm water and assessed when dry. We also took the repellency rating of the different areas before staining and after extraction. (See table 1; The higher the number, the more repellent the fibre is.)

We can see that the repellency of even these very damaged fibres can be greatly improved by the application of a suitable treatment. Some of the extra repellency provided by the protector is removed during cleaning, but there is still enough left to guard against increased staining. It also provides a reasonable protection against oily stains.  

*Continues next page...*
In this issue, Richard Sudall, (WoolSafe Business Development) discusses ‘the lifetime value of a perfect customer’.

The Psychology of Sales

In this article I’m going to remind you about just how important it is to take a long-term view when valuing your ‘perfect customer’. When I say valuing, I’m talking about financial value to your business.

At this point let me tell you a story. Don’t worry, it’s a short one.

Here in the WoolSafe corner of Yorkshire it’s very common for milk to be delivered door to door each morning by a Milkman. When my wife and I bought our first house we woke the day after moving in to find a bottle of milk on our doorstep, with it was a note from Jim the milkman welcoming us with a free pint. What a lovely surprise! Later that week he called in one evening

The rug remedy, being oil based itself, provides no protection against those types of stains, but is a useful remedy against water-based spillages.

This could be seen on the pictures taken during and after the experiment.

Stains as applied:

And on the grey Tibetan one after extraction:

So, what can a rug cleaner learn from this? As you are not usually present when a new rug is purchased by your future customer, all you can do is to do a thorough pre-cleaning inspection and manage expectations. Look for and point out the signs of damage to the rug, clean it as best as you can and offer a topical treatment to mitigate future damage.
to say hello and to check if a pint each day was enough. That was almost 30 years ago and although we have moved house since then Jim still delivers our milk. Okay I can hear you saying - I’m in the cleaning business not the milk business Richard…Well, my point is that since that first delivery and visit, Jim has delivered us over 10,000 pints of milk. I’d say that he’s received a great return on his investment in the free pint of milk, visit and welcome note he wrote during that first week we met.

So, just like Jim, do you take a long-term view when recruiting and retaining certain customers? I use my words carefully there; I’m not suggesting that you invest the same resources in each customer.

Clearly, you must invest more in those that match the profile of your ‘perfect customer’. That’s because your business will be more successful when all your customers fall into the category of ‘perfect customer’. You know from your experience what type of customer is attracted by your WASP status, but are they already perfect or do you need to help them become even better? Well guess what? It’s your job to coach them to become better, in fact to become perfect. The good news is that for a WoolSafe Approved Service Provider, your cleaning customers trust you and want to be coached by you and even better they will pay you for cleaning whilst being coached.

So, in practical terms what’s next? List the key features that you want from your perfect customer; property location, type of property, size of property, average invoice value, age group, club memberships (this helps with referral rate), review sites used, types of interior textiles, frequency of cleaning, etc.

Then work to improve your customer experience. This starts by investing time in them with the aim of getting to know them and their needs better, then use that information to better serve them. Finally, coach them to provide referrals, reviews and recommendations.

By far the easiest way to monitor the process is by using a trusted customer relations management (CRM) system, this will really help you remember customer details, sales totals, and referral progress with each client. Much of the detail you keep in your records will help convince your customer how much you really care about them. It’s also vital to measure your progress in fiscal terms with each customer, that’s because if you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it. So, when calculating the total worth to a business of a customer, over the whole period of their relationship, remember to include the value of those clients they have referred, those they have recommended and the work you have gained from their reviews. Of course, not forgetting the personal work you have carried out in their property. At that final stage I would rank those customers in lifetime value and see what you get. It will certainly help you decide who you should target those Christmas gifts to.

For low-cost introductions to potential long-term ‘perfect customers’ WoolSafe Approved Service Providers should opt-in to Wool Owner’s Warranty (WOW!)

Contact Steve@woolsafe.org for more information
Occasionally something out of left field pops up that can take us by surprise. One of those issues is colours that change in a fabric depending on the pH of the chemistry.

At one stage the industry would think that because the chemistry of soiling is typically acidic, an alkaline chemical was the obvious way to deal with the acidic soiling. Many chemical formulas were made alkaline, but then we found that alkaline chemistry could cause other effects such as browning or chemical damage to wool and other natural fibres and could lead to other issues such as colour run. Then we had the introduction of acid rinses to combat the alkalis to try to leave an acid finish to help stabilise what we had upset with the alkalis.

This appeared to be working, at least on carpet, but on some vegetable fibres, used primarily in fabrics such as linen and cotton, it led to some other issues. We found a few fabrics would actually change colour. Some of the blue range dyes (including the blue used to make green) could simply change colour. Colours weren’t migrating to other areas (crocking or colour run) they simply lost the blue component or in some cases actually changed into the red colour range. And it could do this simply by altering the pH of the dye.

If you have ever played with a red wine stain by altering the pH you will see this effect. When an alkali is added it changes to a grey or purple colour as blue is added, but then add some acid into it and it will change to a pinky red colour. This is the same effect we can have on these fabrics with their pH sensitive dyes. The colour doesn’t run, it simply loses the blue when we add our acid rinse.

The problem starts as soiling builds up in the fabric. The sweaty soiling is slightly acidic which seems to kick start the change. But at this stage it is not really obvious as the dust, skin flakes and other soiling tends to hide the effect. But the pH dye change is starting underneath. The alkaline prespray detergent counteracts this effect and the fabric remains more true to colour. But then we think we will settle everything down by adding an acid to the rinse to prevent the cellulosic
browning that can be caused by the alkalinity, and this is when the colour change from blue or green to the pink colour.

So how do we deal with this type of fabric if we don’t want it to turn pink? I have changed the way I clean natural fibre fabrics now. I use a WoolSafe Approved pre-spray because it is self neutralising and I don’t need the acid rinse. I will sometimes add around 1% hydrogen peroxide into the mix if we suspect there may be some issues with cellulosic browning. The peroxide and detergent I use are from the same manufacturer and are designed specifically for this and will deal with the browning before it even happens. So with this particular mix, I can happily clean cottons and linens without the risk of browning and very minimal risk of pH dye change as I don’t need the acid rinse.

Fiber-Seal Celebrate 50 Year Anniversary!

Long-time WoolSafe Licensee Fiber-Seal is celebrating 50 years of business! At this time Fiber-Seal have one WoolSafe Approved Product, WaterPel, which is a solvent based carpet protector.

Founded in 1971 by Steve Nelson, Fiber-Seal has become a network of 56 Service Centers serving 95 territories across the USA, Canada and Central America. Fiber-Seal is not just a fabric protection and cleaning company; they are a total Fabric Care System that integrates proprietary protection and cleaning products with a team of specialists in soft-surface management. Fiber-Seal offers state of the art protection and cleaning products formulated with the newest technologies in the industry.

Tim Nelson, son of founder Steve Nelson, is the head of Fiber-Seal Systems Research and Development department. Tim combines an extensive knowledge of both textiles and chemistry with over 40 years of experience in the care of high-end fabrics and floor coverings.

Fiber-Seal does not sell products, they are a service company. Fiber-Seal technicians go to residential and commercial spaces to protect furnishings. After the furnishings have been protected, clients can live worry-free knowing that while under the service policy, a skilled technician will come service any of their treated furnishings at no extra cost. Excellence in customer service and attention to detail is extremely important to their business model. It’s their key component to 50 years of achievement.
New Service Providers

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