

CARPET CLEANING - COMMON QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

ALLERGIES & CARPET CLEANING PRODUCTS

I have a customer who says they are allergic to certain chemicals / asthmatic. Can I go ahead and use Prochem cleaning chemicals?

As we do not know exactly what the customer is allergic to, the cleaner should never guarantee that cleaning can be carried out without provoking an allergic or asthmatic reaction. The person should not stay in the room that is being cleaned and if possible should leave the house as a precaution until the carpet is dry. Offer to use **PURE CLEAN** which is **fragrance free** and contains no soaps, optical brightener, enzymes or solvents. Show the customer the Safety Data Sheet. Always leave it up to the customer to decide whether the cleaning is to be carried out or not and give no guarantees.

My customer wants to know if it is safe for children / babies / pets to stay in the house while I clean the carpets. What should I say?

Children, babies and pets should be kept away from areas that are being cleaned and until the carpet is dry. There are no known risks to health and safety if they remain in another part of the house but if the customer is in doubt, it is preferable that they are kept out of the house during the cleaning and drying process.

I cleaned a carpet a few days ago and my customer is now complaining that they have had an allergic reaction. What should I do?

A carpet cleaner used Prochem's "named product" to clean my carpets and now I am itchy / sneezing / wheezing etc.

Genuine allergic reactions after carpet cleaning may be due to allergen contaminants in the carpet and not the cleaning chemicals. All such questions should be put through to the Chemical Product Manager E, H & S or the Chemical Compliance Administrator at Prochem Europe Ltd.

ANTI-STATIC TREATMENT

Which product do I use for carpets with static electricity?

Apply **SHOCKAWAY** sprayed onto clean, vacuumed carpet.

What's the coverage?

One 5 litre bottle, diluted at 1 part to 8 parts water, will cover approx. 450m².

How long will it last?

This is impossible to say as it will wear away with the friction of foot traffic and be affected by atmospheric conditions. The customer should be advised to implement other forms of anti-static control such as anti-static barrier mats and increasing relative humidity.

SHOCKAWAY can also be used on hard surfaces, but be aware that over application could lead to slipperiness.

BROWN MARKS APPEAR AFTER CARPET CLEANING

I cleaned a wool carpet in the normal way and now brown patches have appeared.

What should I do?

These brown marks may have one of three causes:

1. Soil wicking back up
2. A previous spillage (probably tea or coffee) wicking back up.
3. Browning caused by lignin which is released from the jute of a woven carpet when over-wet.

REMEDIES:

Test a small area of the stain with a pre-spray. If it is soil it will transfer to a pad of absorbent tissue. Tannin stains or cellulosic browning will not transfer.

- If the stain is soil, re-clean the area and hasten drying to prevent re-wicking. If the stains are likely to be tea/coffee (near a coffee machine; the carpet is NOT woven) use **COFFEE STAIN REMOVER**.

- If this is cellulosic browning (carpet is woven) treat with **BROWNING PRESCRIPTION**. On large areas treat with **BROWNING PRESCRIPTION AND FIBRE SHAMPOO** applied with a rotary. Dry the area quickly with air movers, towelling/bonneting to avoid re-wicking.

I spot cleaned some oil stains on carpet tiles with a solvent and now there are brown stains on them. What should I do?

If these carpet tiles are bitumen-backed this is most likely to be bitumen bleed which is irreversible. The tiles will have to be replaced. In future, identify the tile backing before stain removal and use **CITRUS GEL** for oils/ cosmetics/ chewing gum etc. If the tiles are not bitumen-backed it is probably the oil wicking back to the surface and more spotting is necessary.

I cleaned carpet tiles with pre-spray and extraction detergent and now there are brown patches on them. What should I do?

If this is not soil (test a small area of the stain with a pre-spray; soil will transfer to a pad of absorbent tissue) and if this is not tea/coffee spillages, it could be that the dyes in the tiles have been subjected to a colour change due to wear and soil. Blue dyes are particularly susceptible. The damage is probably permanent and irreversible.

CARPET PROTECTORS

Which product should I use?

FLUROSEAL CF is our latest product for carpet and upholstery protection.

How do I apply it?

Apply by pressure sprayer with a fan tip nozzle to freshly cleaned, still damp carpet. Cross spray and brush in. If the carpet is new: vacuum and dampen the carpet with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE** solution. Do not walk on the carpet until thoroughly dry.

How long will it last?

The cleaner cannot guarantee how long the protector will last. This depends on the amount of foot traffic and how often the carpet is cleaned.

What is the coverage?

30m² to 50m² depending on how thick and deep the pile is.

Can I use this product on upholstery fabric?

Yes. **FLUROSEAL CF** is a dual-function WoolSafe Approved product suitable for use on carpets and wet cleanable fabric upholstery.

DRAUGHT MARKS

How do I get rid of black marks round the edges of the carpet and under the doors?

These are draught or air filtration marks. Use **ULTRAPAC RENOVATE** or **FILTER OUT** before the overall clean. If the carpet is a wool fibre, neutralise with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE**.

I cleaned a carpet and now there are straight black lines running the length of the room. What can I do?

If the lines are running in the same direction as the floorboards and are evenly spaced, these lines will probably be draught marks. The carpet does not have an impervious layer and sheet polythene should have been laid to prevent these air filtration marks. They have most likely been revealed by the cleaning process or brought up through the carpet from the underlay during extraction. Clean with **ULTRAPAC RENOVATE** or **FILTER OUT**. Rinse-extract with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE**. Advise the customer that the draught marks will come back unless the carpet is re-laid on an impervious sheet.

DYE BLEED

I have cleaned an oriental rug and the colours have run. What can I do?

Dye bleed is permanent and irreversible. Always test all products on every colour before use. Silk rugs should not be wet cleaned. Consult the Prochem web site: click on Cleaning Specialist issue 15 page 15 for tips on rug cleaning. Consider taking a Prochem Training Course.

FLEAS, CARPET BEETLES, MOTHS, DUST MITES

Which product should I use?

Prochem Europe do not manufacture insecticides. For serious infestations, the cleaner should recommend that the customer contact a specialised pest control company or their local council. Mild infestations can usually be resolved with hot water extraction cleaning and spray sanitising treatment with **CLENSAN**.

NATURAL VEGETABLE FIBRE FLOOR COVERINGS

How do I clean a sea grass carpet?

Sea grass, sisal, coconut matting, coir, jute are all natural fibre floor coverings which cannot be wet cleaned nor have stains removed from them as they will ring mark and most likely shrink. Clean with **FIBERDRI** (not easy as it will be hard to remove from a tight weave) or alternatively bonnet with a lightly dampened rotary bonnet using **BONNET BUFF**.

ODOUR - CARPET SMELLS AFTER CLEANING

I cleaned a carpet last week and the customer says it stayed damp for days and it now smells. How can I remedy the problem?

Carpet which takes too long to dry:

- It was over-wet probably because it was heavily soiled and a more pre-spray and / or extraction cleaning solution was used.
- Effective drying conditions were not in place. Doors and windows need to stay open for air flow; air movers should be used; some heating is beneficial but not without ventilation.

REMEDIES:

Bacteria may have set in causing the odour. Use a sanitiser such as **CLENSAN** as a pre-treatment to deodorise the bacteria. Follow label instructions and rinse-extract with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE** to which **ODOUR FRESH** can be added.

ODOUR - CARPET SMELLS "FISHY"

I cleaned a carpet and now the customer is complaining that the carpet has a pungent fishy smell. What can I do to get rid of the smell?

If smell is not due to slow drying as above, it could be that adhesive in the construction or adhesive which is gluing the carpet or tiles to the subfloor has been upset by the cleaning process. This is a difficult situation to remedy. Use **ODOUR FRESH** or **ODOUR NEUTRALISER**. Ensure good ventilation. The odour should improve with time. Avoid over-wetting in future cleans.

ODOUR - CARPET SMELLS OF DOG / SMOKE

I've got an end-of-tenancy clean to do and the previous tenant had dogs / smoked. How do I get rid of the smell?

Clean in the normal way but add **ODOUR NEUTRALISER** to the cleaning solution. It can also be sprayed onto the carpet and rinse-extracted.

For dog odour problems, try cleaning the area where the dog is known to have been lying with **TRAFFICLEAN** or any other pre-spray with the solvent additive **CITRA-BOOST** in order to eliminate natural oils from the dog fur which will have transferred to the carpet or rug. Rinse-extract with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE**.

ODOUR - CARPET SMELLS OF URINE

I'm cleaning a nursing home. How do I get rid of the smell of urine?

1. If the area where the urine went down can be located, spray with a strong hot solution of **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE** and extract out with the same solution in the machine tank. Then treat with **URINE NEUTRALISER** as per label instructions.

2. If the urine odour is everywhere, pre-spray with **NEUTRA-SOFT®** then rinse-extract with **NEUTRA-SOFT®** in the machine. Use this system on a regular maintenance basis to control odour.
3. Use **ODOUR FRESH** as a deodoriser.
Alternatives:
4. Or clean in the normal way then sanitise with **CLENSAN**. Rinse-extract with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE**.

I have a carpet to clean which smells of urine from puppies/kittens. What products do you suggest?

All of the above systems also apply to animal urine. Spraying **URINE NEUTRALISER** onto fresh urine will be the most effective method of controlling the odour.

NB. If the urine has penetrated through the carpet to the underlay and/or subfloor, it is sometimes necessary to roll the carpet back and treat underneath with **URINE NEUTRALISER** to fully eliminate the urine odours.

ODOUR – CARPET STILL SMELLS AFTER STAIN REMOVAL

I successfully removed a stain from a milk spillage on a carpet, but the customer is complaining that the carpet still smells.

To avoid this type of lingering odour caused by bacteria in food spillages, urine, vomit, excrement and many other organic substances, use **CLENSAN** or **FIBREFRESH** according to the label instructions. **FIBREFRESH** is a bio-enzymatic deodoriser which acts fast and has a long-lasting effect. It both neutralises and digests the source of the odour safely. It should be rinsed out with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE** after some dwell time, but in the case of really difficult odours a light spray can be re-applied and left on to dry.

PRODUCT CHOICE

Which Prochem product is the equivalent of “named product by another Manufacturer”?

We need to know the following things:

- **Type of product** (pre-spray, extraction detergent, stain remover etc.)
- **Powder or liquid?**
- **pH of product** (or at least whether it is WoolSafe, general purpose strong alkaline etc.)

With this amount of information it should be possible to identify a SIMILAR Prochem product in the catalogue, without stating that it is made of the same chemicals. Neutral products are around pH 7 – 7.5. Below that are acidic products and pH8 – 12 are alkaline products.

Which Prochem product can I use instead of “another named Prochem product”?

Apply the same criteria as above. Some products can replace others (e.g. Crystal Green could be used instead of Dry Blend) but some products have no equivalent. Check the Safety Data Sheets and the product Specification Sheets on the web site.

What is Prochem’s equivalent to a “micro-splitter”?

Micro-splitters work differently from Prochem pre-sprays and need more agitation (mechanical brushing) Prochem’s nearest equivalent would be **PURE CLEAN**. **PURE CLEAN** can be used as a pre-spray, extraction detergent and for bonnet cleaning and spotting.

If the Prochem product label doesn’t have the WoolSafe logo does this mean it isn’t safe to use on wool?

No. This is not necessarily the case. Products of pH9 and below are generally safe to use on wool subject to pre-testing for dye bleed, colour and texture change. If an alkaline pre-spray has been used on wool, an acidic rinse agent such as **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE** will help to neutralise the alkalinity, rinse away residues, stabilise dye colour and prevent browning.

Can I mix “Product A” with “Product B”?

The general rule is NOT to mix chemicals unless specifically mentioned that you can do so on the labels. For example, additives such as **CITRA-BOOST** or **ODOUR NEUTRALISER** can be mixed with pre-sprays and extraction detergents as mentioned on the label. Sanitisers such as **CLENSAN** and **MICROSAN** should never be mixed with other chemicals. Sometimes it is possible to use one chemical OVER another. For example when you put down Stain Pro you can then spray Fibre & Fabric Rinse on top of it to neutralise. You can use a solvent first then a water-based product over it. If in doubt consult product labels on our web site. Click on Safety Data Sheets.

SHRINKAGE

I cleaned a wool carpet and it has shrunk. What can I do?

Shrinkage is due to over-wetting a woven carpet. There is no chemical that will remedy shrinkage. Where there is very little shrinkage, it might be possible for a professional carpet fitter to stretch it back into place. Otherwise you will have to replace the carpet. Learn how to identify a woven carpet and either use minimum amounts of cleaning solution or a low moisture method to clean it (**FIBERDRI**, **PROCAPS** or **FIBRE SHAMPOO** for example). Consider taking a Prochem Training Course.

I cleaned a synthetic carpet and it has shrunk. Why was that?

This may be because it was woven. Generally synthetic woven carpets should not be wet cleaned at all. Use **FIBERDRI** or refuse the job.

I cleaned a rug and now it is undulating and will not lie flat. Should I wet it again?

The rug has shrunk because it is woven. Wetting again will only aggravate the problem. The rug may lie flatter as it dries out, otherwise the damage may be permanent. Consider taking a Prochem Training Course.

STRETCHING

A carpet I cleaned yesterday has gone wavy. What can I do?

If the carpet has not pulled away from the wall then the waves indicate stretching. This can happen on a carpet with a synthetic backing where the cleaning solution was too hot and/or too much pressure from the wand was used. Wait a few days – it may shrink back into place. Otherwise a professional carpet fitter can re-fit it. Consider taking a Prochem Training Course.

TECHNICAL TERMS ON LABELS

I see that some of Prochem’s extraction detergents contain anionic and/or non-ionic surfactants. What does this mean exactly?

Surfactants react with oil, grease and fat molecules and dissolve them into solution. They enable your cleaning detergent to wet carpet and upholstery fibres better and thus clean better. The molecule of an anionic surfactant has a slight negative electrical charge whereas as a non-ionic chemical has no charge. Most detergents are anionic and/or non-ionic. You would only really need to know this for questions of compatibility, since anionic detergents will cancel out the effects of cationic products which carry a slight positive charge. The cationic products that carpet cleaners will most likely come across are sanitisers, disinfectants and some deodorisers. Providing you follow the label instructions carefully you should not encounter any problems.

*The above information is intended as a guide only.
Prochem Europe Ltd cannot accept responsibility for the user’s professional cleaning application.*