

## **UPHOLSTERY CLEANING - COMMON QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

### **COLOUR CHANGE**

**I've cleaned a sofa in the usual way and now there are pink patches in various places. What can I do?**

The dyes in the fabric have reacted to the cleaning chemicals. Were these tested before use? It's worth trying an acidic rinse such as **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE** if an alkaline product was used, or extract with an alkaline detergent if Fibre & Fabric Rinse was used. This remedy however is best done as soon as the colour change appears.

### **DYE BLEED**

**Some of the colours have run on a patterned fabric. Can I bleach them out?**

No. Dye bleed is irreversible and permanent. Every colour should be tested with the products you are going to use for the cleaning process. Plain colours should also be tested for colour loss. Consider coming on a Prochem Upholstery Course.

### **GREASINESS**

**I have a sofa to clean which has particularly greasy arms and headrests. What do you suggest?**

If **FABRIC RESTORER** is not effective enough then add **CITRA-BOOST** to your usual pre-spray. This is a solvent additive to help remove grease. It can also be added to the extraction detergent.

### **HEAVILY SOILED UPHOLSTERY**

**How do I clean a sofa which is very soiled and not get it too wet?**

Subject to the dye bleed test, use **FABRIC RESTORER** as a pre-spray and extract out with **FAB CLEAN**. **CITRA-BOOST** can be used as an additive for greasiness. It is better to give the upholstery two light cleans than to over-wet. Carry out stain removal after cleaning. Hasten drying with air movers and towelling.

### **HOW DO YOU CLEAN UPHOLSTERY?**

**I usually only clean carpets but my customer has asked me to clean her sofa and armchairs. Can you give me any advice?**

If you have never cleaned upholstery before, consider taking an Upholstery Cleaning Course at Prochem. Depending on the type of fabric there are risks of dye bleed, texture change, ring-marking, shrinkage etc. All products should be pre-tested and tests for the above risks should be carried out. If the fabric is a hard-wearing synthetic, **FABRIC RESTORER** as a pre-spray and rinse-extraction with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE** are a good combination. Make sure the fabric is wet evenly and hasten drying with air movers and good ventilation. See Cleaning Specialist on our web site: Issue 11 page 19 **FABRIC RESTORER**. If in doubt wait until you have been on a course.

**How do you clean silk upholstery / headboards?**

Silk and some other **water-sensitive fabrics** cannot be wet-cleaned. Hand cleaning with **FINE FABRIC SOLVENT CLEANER** can be carried out by lightly spraying the fabric with solvent then towelling off with a clean white terry towel. This method will not remove water-based stains. **SOLVENT CLEANER ADDITIVE** is a solvent soluble detergent which can be added to **FINE FABRIC SOLVENT CLEANER** to help remove water-soluble soils. Always pre-test, as it can affect water-sensitive fabrics. Consult the Safety Data Sheet.

### How do I clean a **leather** sofa?

Smooth leather can be cleaned with **LEATHER CLEANER**. Rinse off with a cloth lightly dampened with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE**. Condition the leather sparingly with **LEATHER CONDITIONER**. See leather cleaning in Cleaning Specialist on our web site; issue 12 page 19. Do not use on suede or aniline leather or leather which has become absorbent due to wear.

### How do I get **felt pen / ink marks / spots of paint** off leather?

If the leather is absorbent (or suede) it will be impossible to remove these stains. On smooth leather the marks may be improved by very carefully treating just the mark with **INK SOLV** or **SOLVEX**, but solvents may damage the finish. It is possible for a leather repairer to re-dye and re-finish the leather. This is an expensive operation which needs an expert.

## HOW DO YOU CLEAN...?

### How do I clean **suede**?

Real suede leather can only be cleaned with a solvent. **FINE FABRIC SOLVENT CLEANER** can be used by towel application subject to pre-testing. Keep in mind that suede will darken in response to solvent cleaning and will not return to normal colour until completely dry.

### How do I tell if it's **real suede**?

It's sometimes very difficult to tell real suede from the imitation faux suede which is a man-made polyester fabric. If you scratch and smell real suede it will have the distinguishable smell of leather. If it is possible to see the reverse side of the suede (inside a cushion for example) this will be leather and not a smooth fabric.

### How do I clean **faux-suede**?

This is a microfiber and can be wet-cleaned using a mild pre-spray such as **PRE-SPRAY GOLD** or **FABRIC RESTORER** and rinse-extracting with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE**. Do not use water that is too hot as this may distort the nap. Inspect your hand tool attachment for sharp edges which could mark the fabric. If in doubt, extract through a piece of net curtain. After cleaning, lay the nap all in the same direction with a folded terry towel. Do not allow to dry with the wand marks left in.

### What is the best way to clean **curtains**?

If the curtains have to be cleaned in situ, the fabric fibre must be identified and tested for shrinkage and sensitivity to water: Mark out a 60mm square with pins. Wet with Fibre & Fabric Rinse solution. Re-measure the square. **Any loss of more than 3mm (5%) means that the curtains will shrink noticeably and off-site specialist dry cleaning should be recommended.** If there is less than 5% shrinkage, vacuum the curtains thoroughly, pre-spray with **PRE-SPRAY GOLD** or **FABRIC RESTORER**, towel off with a folded terry towel, or rinse-extract with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE** using Prochem PM2504 Curtain Tool fitted with maximum 01 fine spray tip. Pre-test all products and follow label instructions.

### How do I clean **vertical blinds**?

Always pre-test the vertical blind material to check the stability of the fabric. Although it is usually synthetic and wet-cleanable, some fabrics may have a stiffening agent which could be affected by water and so should not be wet-cleaned. For light soil: after vacuuming thoroughly, sponge clean with **FIBRE SHAMPOO** foam, then towel wipe. For heavier soil: vacuum then use **FABRIC RESTORER** by sponge, spray or towel. For heavy nicotine type soils: vacuum then use **ULTRAPAC RENOVATE** at 1 to 10 by spray, brush or towel. To lighten white or cream shades **OXIBRITE** can be added to the **ULTRAPAC RENOVATE** solution as for Ceiling Cleaning. Follow the dilution rates on the label. Always pre-test (allow test piece to dry fully before proceeding) and observe all safety precautions.

### How do I clean **mattresses**?

Mattresses can be cleaned like other upholstery with **FABRIC RESTORER** and rinse-extracting with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE**. Be careful not to over-wet. Use air movers. For stains and ring-marking try **STAIN PRO** and **BROWNING PRESCRIPTION**. Once clean, the mattress can be sanitised with **CLENSAN** according to label instructions.

### How do I clean **headboards**?

If the fabric is wet cleanable, clean with **PRE-SPRAY GOLD** or **FABRIC RESTORER** and rinse-extract with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE**. Headboards are prone to greasy marks from heads. It will probably help to add **CITRA-BOOST** to the pre-spray. This is a solvent additive to help remove grease. If the fabric is not wet cleanable and only lightly soiled, then clean by hand application with **FINE FABRIC SOLVENT CLEANER**.

Upholstery such as headboards are known to come into contact with hairspray on hair and this has been known to sometimes react with cleaning chemicals and cause colour changes in fabrics. Ask the customer if hairspray is used and only go ahead with the job once they have signed a disclaimer.

### How do I clean **car seats**?

Car upholstery can be cleaned in the same way as any other upholstery. **FABRIC RESTORER** as a pre-spray and rinse-extraction with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE** are a good combination. Make sure the car remains well ventilated until the upholstery is thoroughly dry.

### How do I clean **velvet**?

First do a burn test to find out if it is natural or synthetic velvet. Cotton velvet or rayon velvet should be cleaned only with **FINE FABRIC SOLVENT CLEANER** (spray on lightly and towel off with a white terry towel). If the velvet is synthetic (e.g. acrylic), it can be wet cleaned with **FABRIC RESTORER** and rinse-extracted with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE**. The pile should be carefully brushed while still damp with a velvet 'boffin' brush or the pile can be laid with a folded terry towel.

Consider coming on a Prochem Upholstery Course.

## **LIGHTER PATCHES**

### **White patches have appeared on a sofa after cleaning in the normal way. What can I do?**

In all probability the customer has used a stain remover to treat spillages and cleaning has revealed the lighter areas. There is no remedy. The cleaner should always ask at the survey stage if any products have been used on the upholstery. He or she should warn the customer that cleaning may cause a reaction with previously used stain removal products which may work by bleaching a stain.

## **ODOUR PROBLEMS**

### **How do I deal with a mattress / sofa which smells of **urine** even after cleaning?**

The fabric and probably the filling still retain residues. Deep spray with undiluted **URINE NEUTRALISER**, feathering out over a wide area. Rinse extract with a hot solution of **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE**. Hasten drying with plenty of vacuum only passes and use an air mover. Apply **CLENSAN** by sprayer and leave for 15 minutes before repeating the extraction process as above. Always pre-test dyes.

### **How do I get rid of the smell of **smoke** in a sofa?**

If the smoke odour is mild and the fabric is wet cleanable, clean in the usual way but add **SMOKE & ODOUR NEUTRALISER** to the rinse solution. If the fabric is sensitive to water, use **FINE FABRIC SOLVENT CLEANER** with **SOLVENT CLEANER ADDITIVE**. If the smoke contamination is severe, for example after a fire, then the **SMOKE & ODOUR NEUTRALISER** will also need to be misted into the room with a cold fogger as per label instructions.

### **I cleaned a sofa last week and the customer says that it now smells of **mildew or damp?****

The sofa may have been over-wet and / or adequate drying conditions were not in place. Always use an air mover right from the beginning of the job. If it is not feasible to leave the air mover with the customer for later collection, the customer must ensure good ventilation. Remove all cushions and let them dry upright on plastic sheets on the floor. To remedy the odour problem try **CLENSAN** and extract-rinse with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE** after a 15 minute contact time. **ODOUR FRESH** can also be added to the extraction detergent for additional deodorising.

As an alternative treatment for most odour problems in wet-cleanable upholstery, including all of the situations above, apply **FIBREFRESH**, leave to dwell then rinse-extract with **FIBRE & FABRIC RINSE**. This 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. A light application of **FIBREFRESH** can be re-applied and left on to dry in the case of very difficult odours.

### **PRODUCT CHOICE**

#### **Can I use carpet cleaning products on upholstery?**

Some of the "milder" carpet cleaning products may also be suitable for cleaning upholstery. For example: **PRE-SPRAY GOLD**, **FIBRE SHAMPOO** and the carpet products in the **NATURAL RANGE**. Most stain removal products can also be used on upholstery. Always read the label instructions and pre-test the product. Label instructions can be viewed in Product Specification Sheets on the web site. Click on Safety Data Sheets.

### **PROTECTORS**

#### **Do you manufacture a flame retardant for upholstery?**

Prochem do not manufacture flame retardants. However, Prochem upholstery cleaning products have been independently tested by a NAMAS accredited laboratory and have been shown not to adversely affect the ignition resistance of flame retarded fabric used as a composite in conjunction with specified foams.

#### **Which stain protector should I use on upholstery?**

Use **FLUOROSEAL CF** (formerly AQUA SEAL FABRIC PROTECTOR) on wet cleanable fabric and **FABRIC SEAL** on water-sensitive, dry-clean only fabrics. Pre-test for any colour or texture change. See product labels.

#### **Do I need any special equipment for applying protectors on upholstery?**

A fabric protector applicator gun is recommended for an even application. Do not use a trigger sprayer. A pump up hand sprayer can be used for the application of the solvent-based **FABRIC SEAL** but it must be fitted with a fanjet nozzle and Viton® seals. Consult the Safety Data Sheet with regard to recommended personal protection (mask, eye protection gloves etc). Do not use either of these products on carpets.

### **QUICK DRYING & LOW MOISTURE CLEANING**

#### **I have 200 chairs to clean in a hall but I mustn't get them too wet because they need to be used again soon after. Should I **dry clean** them?**

Dry cleaning with solvent will be expensive and the result is not always as satisfactory as with wet cleaning. In many cases solvents take longer to evaporate and dry than low moisture wet cleaning with water-based solutions. Try a low moisture method using **FIBRE SHAMPOO**. Apply the foam only with a sponge to vacuumed upholstery according to label instructions. Towel off with clean dry terry towels to remove excess moisture and lay the nap. On more heavily soiled seats **FABRIC RESTORER** can be sprayed on first and towelled off before applying the foam shampoo. Always pre-test for dye stability.

## **RING MARKS**

### **How do you get rid of ring marks on a white cotton sofa?**

This is a common problem on light natural vegetable fibres such as cotton or linen usually due to uneven wetting or over-wetting. Try **BROWNING PRESCRIPTION** agitated into the marking with a terry towel. Severe ring marking on plain white or cream fabric may require treatment with **OXIBRITE** and **FIBREBUFF** carried in **FIBRE SHAMPOO** (see Oxibrite label for instructions. This can be found on the web site. Click on Safety Data Sheets). Consider attending a Prochem Upholstery Course.

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