

CONTRACT UPHOLSTERY - MAINTENANCE AND CLEANING GUIDE

Maintenance & Cleaning of Upholstery Fabrics - General Information

Proper maintenance of upholstery fabrics permits less frequent cleaning. Maintenance is routine, on-going care which reduces the build-up of soil on the fabric's surface and treats spots and stains. Vacuuming with a proper upholstery attachment should be done regularly and thoroughly to remove airborne dust and lint. Promptly treat spots and stains. Cleaning periodically removes accumulated grime to retain a fabric's original appearance as much as possible. Loose cushions should be turned and rotated to equalize wear and soiling levels. Protective arm covers and head rests should be cleaned to minimize difference between the appearance of these items and that of other exposed areas.

Cleaning codes apply to the outercovering fabric only and it is most important that the fabric not be over wet to avoid contact with filling materials.

- W** - Clean only with water-based shampoo or foam upholstery cleaner. Do not over wet. Do not use dry cleaning solvents to spot clean. Pile fabrics may require brushing to restore appearance. Cushion covers should not be removed and laundered.
- S** - Clean only with dry cleaning solvent. Do not saturate. Do not use water. Pile fabric may require brushing to restore appearance. Cushion covers should not be removed and dry cleaned.
- WS** - Clean with mild detergent or shampoo, foam or dry cleaning solvent as desired. Do not saturate with liquid. Pile fabric may require brushing to restore appearance. Cushion covers should not be removed and dry cleaned or laundered.
- X** - Do not clean with either water or solvent based cleaner. Use vacuuming or light brushing only.

Water based cleaning agents* are often classified as upholstery shampoo. They are usually commercially available as foams, concentrated liquid, and dry compounds.

Cleaning can be either wet or dry, though some suggest a third category, damp.

Wet cleaning equipment using water is classified into two broad types:

- Rotary or hand applied shampoo
- Water extraction (sometimes inaccurately referred to as a steam cleaning)

Two of the damp processes with water are:

- Dry foam
- Rotary mop (bonnet)

Dry systems use a granule or powder that incorporates a cleaning solvent, or a non-water chemical solvent which allows soil to be removed by subsequent vacuuming.

PRE-TEST YOUR CLEANING METHOD ON AN INCONSPICUOUS AREA OF THE FABRIC TO DETERMINE IF COLOR BLEEDS, SHRINKS THE FABRIC TEXTURE OR CHARACTER ALTERED. IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT, SEEK THE ASSISTANCE OF A PROFESSIONAL CLEANING SERVICE.

* Examples include Glamorene, Glory, Blue Lustre and Woolite

IMPORTANT UPHOLSTERY FABRIC AND FINISH INFORMATION

Note: Bleach can only be used with solution dyed fibers, as directed.

Topical FR Treatments

If a fabric has been topically flame retardant treated, it should be solvent cleaned ("S" cleaning code) only. The flame retardant processing involves, in most cases, water-based flame retardants and, therefore, water-based cleaning systems will dissolve or diminish flame resistance.

Solution Dyed Fibers

Fabrics containing 100% solution dyed fibers (eg. Interplay - BASF Nylon) are very colorfast, as pigments were part of the polymer during synthetic fiber extrusion. These fabrics can be cleaned with both ("WS") water-based and solvent-based cleaning systems, including some strong cleaning agents as diluted bleach for stain removal. Conventional cleaning methods and chemicals should be effective for most soils and stains. However some stains require stronger chemicals to break down the stain. Carpet cleaning detergent followed by a diluted bleach solution* (1 part household bleach, 4 parts water) should be blotted onto the stain and allowed to react with the stain for approximately 60 minutes. After 60 minutes, the bleach should be removed by hot water extraction.**

If cleaning with bleach is not totally effective in stain removal, a professional cleaning service should be consulted. Phenol type germicides should be avoided, as these chemicals will stain nylon fabrics, although proper subsequent rinsing with water will remove the germicide stains. Quaternary type germicides can be used but subsequently must be rinsed, as some staining can occur. Disinfectants, such as germicides should only be used according to the manufacturers' recommendations, especially with regard to concentration levels.

* e.g. Chlorox

** Be careful to use procedures that avoid contact with skin and non-fabric parts of furniture.

This latter procedure was found to be especially effective for problem stains such as Betadiene (Iodine), Methylene Blue, Mud, Mustard, Pepto Bismol and Red Fruit Punch.

Note: Typical problem stains that have been found by studies to be difficult to totally remove by conventional methods include ballpoint ink, cream shoe polish, and latex paint that probably require spot removal procedures by a professional cleaning service.

FR Trevira Polyester and CS Trevira Polyester

100% FR Trevira (polyester) and CS Trevira Polyester are permanently flame retardant as a result of inherently flame retardant fibers. Fabrics with these compositions can be cleaned with both ("WS") water-based and solvent based cleaning systems.

Note: Typical problem stains that have been found by studies to be difficult to totally remove by conventional methods from FR Trevira polyester and CS Trevira polyester fabrics include bleach, mayonnaise, latex paint, suntan lotion, catsup, methylene blue, Pepto Bismol, germicide (phenol), motor oil, petroleum jelly, ballpoint ink, mud and shoe polish, that probably require spot removal procedures, by a professional cleaning service.

Wool

Untreated wool fabrics and high content wool fabrics (60% +) are also compatible with both ("WS") water-based and solvent-based cleaning systems, unless otherwise noted.

Special comments for wool and wool-blended upholstery:

100% wool and most wool-blend fabrics clean satisfactorily with any of the standard solvent cleaning agents. If the construction of the furniture can withstand it, wool upholstery can also be cleaned with water-based methods.

Cotton and Rayon

100% cotton and high content (50% +) cotton or rayon fabrics should be cleaned only with ("S") solvent systems, because of potential shrinkage as well as dye bleeding concerns.

Mohair

Fabrics containing mohair (e.g., Mohair Plush) should be maintained by regular brushing with a firm clothes brush in the direction of the nap and/or vacuum with the upholstery nozzle. Rub carefully with a dry, white cloth in the direction of the nap, or allow upholstery to dry and vacuum with the upholstery nozzle. Always allow the furniture to dry completely (at least 24 hours) before using.

Cleaning of mohair should involve a foam shampoo, sprayed and rubbed onto a water-dampened, squeezed-out sponge or a liquid shampoo worked into a foam with a sponge, using only the foam. Always treat the entire surface of the soiled furniture. After each treatment, use a soft brush working in the direction of the nap.

Note: Should the maintenance, cleaning and spot removal procedures not remove a stain, then expert advice from a reputable, cleaning professional service should be obtained. Certain stains are very difficult to completely remove, and may be permanent.