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FILTRATION SOILING

Filtration soiling is the term that describes the dark lines that develop along the perimeter walls, baseboards, staircases, under doorways and under floor length draperies. The situation may develop quickly or over a period of months or years. It is not something that can be corrected with standard carpet cleaning.



This is not a carpet defect. It is an accumulation of microscopic airborne pollutants such as dust, smog, smoke, cooking oils, etc. The causes of filtration soil are varied, but

they nearly always involve the ventilation system. Homes today have supply ducts in each room, including larger closets. There are usually fewer return ducts, mainly in hallways or living rooms. When the HVAC (heating, ventilation & air condition) system turns on, it instantly creates positive air pressure in the supply duct area and a negative air pressure area around the return ducts. Positive air pressure rushes to the negative to equalize itself using the least amount of resistance. The air must travel varying distances, under doorways, through walls (under baseboards and sheetrock ends), on staircases, from fireplaces, and even pulled from the outside. As the air passes over and through the carpet fibers, the fibers filter some of these particles out. The particles are very fine and penetrate deep into the yarns of the carpet fibers.

The long term result of the bonding of these particles makes removal of these lines difficult, often impossible, to completely remove.

What would cause filtration soiling to occur more quickly? The more particulate matter in the air, the more rapidly it occurs. Open windows and doors bring in pollen, dust and spores. Unsealed ducts allow soils from an attic or other enclosed areas to blow out the vents. Cigarette smoke, candles (particularly scented candles), and cooking grease originate from inside the home. Dirty or inefficient air filters in the HVAC systems allow more soils to pass through them. Inefficient vacuum cleaners throw dust and pollen back into the air.

Vacuum cleaners cannot reach edge filtration soil, as the edges of a vacuum prevent contact with the affected areas. These areas tend to be tucked under the baseboards meaning they are at a lower level than the rest of the carpet. Carpet cleaning wands have the similar problems in that the width of the metal lips of the wand prevents the reaching of the edges next to walls. Filtration soil in doorways is more accessible but it lets you know how difficult it is to remove.

So, how do we remove filtration soil? There are new products that help us remove it from your carpet. Unfortunately, it requires us to hand scrub the affected areas. This is a time consuming proposition, and fairly expensive. It is more difficult to remove on light colored carpets, where it is more noticeable.

Carpet made of wool or Olefin (Polypropylene) tend to be especially difficult to remove the soiling from. In wool, the soil gets trapped in the cuticle of the hair. Olefin is very oleophilic (oil loving), and greasy soot creates a chemical bond with the fibers that is difficult to break.