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SHADOWS & REFLECTIONS

Every carpet cleaner I know has spent many hours trying to clean shadows. Like other “apparent soiling” issues, such as crushing or shading, shadows can vex consumers and cleaners alike.

Indirect sunlight and reflections are the biggest culprits. Interior lighting or poor carpet installation share some blame as well. The easiest way to check if what you are seeing is a shadow is by shining a bright light directly overhead. Slowly move around the spot, blocking any possible side lighting. If you notice any change in color to the carpet during this exercise, a shadow or reflection likely is the culprit. Here are a few examples I have run into:

Light striking a beveled glass coffee table threw a multicolored streak across a living room.

The light from an ornate gold leaf picture frame reflected blotchy spots onto the carpet.

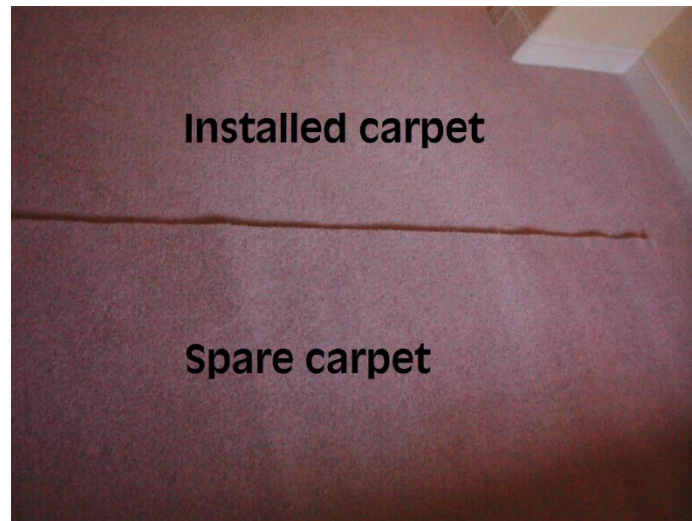
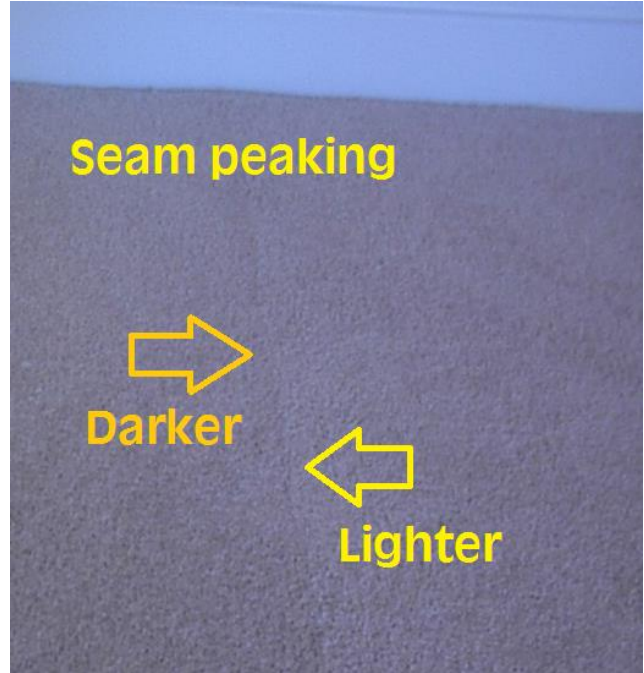
A poorly constructed carpet seam resulted in the carpet having a small “Λ” shape running the length of the room. This “seam peaking” created a light and dark line on the sides of the seam. (See seam peaking photo)

A gloss black jewelry box cast a rectangular shaped gray reflection on the carpet.

A recently trimmed tree allowed sunlight to strike the inside of a Thermopane window, creating a light colored line on the carpet.

A window on a third floor stairway lit the entire stairwell and caused a large hand rail to cast a shadow onto the second floor landing.

Concave dividers inside a Thermopane window are designed to make a larger window look like smaller panes caused light streaks to run across the carpet. The owners’ representative had believed that our poor cleaning processes caused the streaks. When I placed a piece of spare carpet on the floor and the streaks were there as well, she realized it was shadow and not a cleaning issue. (See bottom photo)



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