

7 MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN CHOOSING A CARPET CLEANER

MISTAKE #1: Choosing a carpet cleaner based on equipment alone.

No question, your carpet cleaner needs first-rate equipment. But he/she also needs something else: employees who are skilled at operating that equipment. Many companies own hot-water extractors, but very few companies teach their employees how to use them properly. The best way to know that the carpet cleaner's employees have been properly trained is to make sure the cleaner has been certified by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC). Before you choose a carpet cleaner, ask to see written proof of the company's and the technician's IICRC certification.

MISTAKE #2: Choosing a carpet cleaner based on low price.

Low price could be a problem in three ways:

- (1) Low price can be the bait that attracts your phone call. But once the cleaner gets into your home, they pressure you into a much more expensive job.
- (2) Low price can be for single-process cleaning. Rarely does the consumer know what this means, and when told, asks for dual-process cleaning instead, which costs much more.
- (3) Low price means the carpet cleaner has cheap equipment, which will not effectively clean your carpet.

MISTAKE #3: Choosing a carpet cleaner based on a single telephone call.

Instead, invite the person to your home and ask for a specific written quotation. Then you'll know exactly what the carpet cleaner recommends - and you won't be the victim of high-pressure tactics when the technician steps into your living room.

MISTAKE #4: Choosing a carpet cleaner who doesn't offer a money-back guarantee.

In my view, every carpet cleaning company should be fully accountable for its work. And if you aren't pleased with the job in every way, you shouldn't have to pay for it. Period. Not all carpet cleaners offer a guarantee. Or, if they do, the guarantee may be "limited." Ask the carpet cleaner if he/she offers a money-back guarantee and then make sure the carpet cleaner includes the guarantee on your written quotation.

MISTAKE #5: Choosing a carpet cleaner without getting comments from his/her other clients.

Any carpet cleaner can say anything about their past jobs. And, sadly, some of what is said may not be true. Make sure you ask for references or read comments from current customers so you can depend on the carpet cleaner and his/her work.

MISTAKE #6: Choosing a carpet cleaner who isn't certified by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, and Restoration Certification (IICRC).

If your carpet cleaner isn't a close friend, you may not know whether or not he/she has the knowledge or experience to clean your carpet well. If you want to be sure you're hiring a competent professional, make sure they are IICRC certified. The carpet cleaner must earn that certification through study, experience and successful completion of formal, written examinations. In effect, cleaners who are certified by the IICRC have earned a college degree in carpet cleaning.

MISTAKE #7: Choosing a carpet cleaner who doesn't use a truck-powered, hot-water extraction system.

Portable hot water systems are good, but they aren't as good as truck-mount systems. Truck-powered systems are the Rolls Royce of carpet cleaners. Compared with portable hot water systems, truck-powered systems use hotter water, higher pressure and stronger suction. So all the way around, you get a much better job. No two ways about it!