



# A GUIDE TO EXPLAINING THE CARPET AND RUG INSTITUTE'S CLEANING TESTING AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

## Program Questions:

### *What's the Carpet and Rug Institute?*

Headquartered in Dalton, Georgia, the Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) is the national trade association representing carpet and rug manufacturers and suppliers of raw materials and services to the industry. CRI members account for more than 90 percent of all carpet produced in the United States. CRI is the leading source for science-based information and insight on how carpet and rugs create a better environment indoors. CRI's mission is to provide the carpet industry, its customers and the public with facts that enable informed flooring choices. CRI offers considerable information about carpet selection, installation, and care and cleaning to consumers and commercial and institutional users at [carpet-rug.org](http://carpet-rug.org)

### *What's the Seal of Approval Program?*

The CRI Seal of Approval program tests the effectiveness of carpet cleaning products and certifies those products that remove difficult stains or a sufficient amount of soil without damage to the carpet. Not all products clean well enough to earn this distinction; the blue and green CRI Seal of Approval helps customers recognize that they are buying quality products.

### *What types of products are tested?*

Under the Seal of Approval program, tests are conducted on cleaning solutions and deep cleaning machines. Each product is tested at an independent laboratory against control samples to assess product performance using scientifically accredited cleaning standards.

- **Spot removers and pre-spray/in-tank cleaning solutions** are tested for overall cleaning effectiveness, rate of resoiling, pH, optical brighteners and colorfastness to light.
- **Deep cleaning extractors** are tested for soil removal efficacy, amount of residual moisture and appearance retention.
- **Deep cleaning systems (processes which incorporate a specific machine used with a particular cleaning agent, following a set procedure)** are tested for soil removal efficacy, resoiling, appearance retention, residual moisture, surface appearance change with repeated cleaning, colorfastness, pH and optical brighteners.

Future plans call for evaluating interim and light appearance cleaning equipment (rental or do-it-yourself) and vacuums.

### *Why is the Seal of Approval program necessary?*

Not all cleaning equipment and solutions achieve the same results. Independent testing has shown that various cleaning detergents and spot removers clean no better than water. More seriously, they can leave a sticky residue that attracts soil at a faster rate. Also, the equipment used to clean carpet varies widely in its ability to remove soil, recover water and maintain a carpet's appearance.



### ***What should a customer know about the Seal of Approval?***

Effective carpet cleaning helps maintain the life and beauty of the carpet. This means customers get more enjoyment out of their carpet – and more value for their investment. Customers should know that some large carpet companies have announced they will require the use of Seal of Approval products as part of their carpet warranties in 2007. Also, helping carpet maintain its life-cycle cuts down on its premature removal to landfills. And that benefits everyone.

### ***Why are some Seals gold, silver or bronze?***

The Seal of Approval program utilizes X-ray fluorescence (XRF) technology to measure precisely how much soil a deep cleaning extractor removes from a carpet sample. Extractors that meet the stringent minimum requirements for the Seal of Approval qualify for the bronze rating. Those achieving higher soil removal receive a silver rating. And extractors achieving the highest level of measurable soil removal are awarded a gold level Seal of Approval. Because extractors are part of the deep cleaning systems category, this category also has gold, silver and bronze designations.

### ***What is Space Foundation Certification?***

An important feature of the Seal of Approval program is the use of XRF technology to measure the amount of soil removed from the carpet by a deep cleaning extractor. Because the Space Foundation recognizes the XRF component of the Seal of Approval program as a Certified Space Technology<sup>®</sup>, companies with certified extractors are eligible to display the Space Foundation Seal along with the green and blue CRI Seal of Approval. This is an excellent way to showcase that space science is applies to y to everyday lives.

### ***What about vacuum cleaners?***

CRI began certifying carpet cleaning with its Green Label Vacuum program. While Green Label Vacuum certified products are still commercially available, future plans include merging vacuums into the Seal of Approval program while still maintaining Green Label status. Vacuums will be required to show cleaning effectiveness and appearance retention, but also must meet an air quality test that ensures the dust and dirt collected by the vacuum stays within the bag and canister.

### ***What else should people know about carpet cleaning?***

Today's carpets are more stain resistant and durable than ever, making them relatively easy to clean and maintain. However, maintaining the life and beauty of carpet depends on several factors: the quality of products and equipment used to clean carpets; the frequency carpets are cleaned; and the skill and knowledge of people doing the cleaning.

**Please learn more at [carpet-rug.org](http://carpet-rug.org)**



## Consumer Questions:

### *Why should I buy Seal of Approval products?*

The Seal of Approval provides assurance that you are buying a carpet-cleaning product that works. Using effective cleaning products helps preserve the life and beauty of your carpet; this means you get more out of your investment.

### *Which products have earned the Seal of Approval?*

A full list of manufacturers that have earned the Seal of Approval can be found at [carpet-rug.org](http://carpet-rug.org). While you're online, check out the handy carpet care and cleaning information. Plus, there's a wealth of information on how carpet makes for a better living, learning, working and healing environment.

### *Aren't all cleaning solutions the same?*

No. In fact, independent testing has shown that various cleaning detergents and spot removers clean no better than water. More seriously, they can leave a sticky residue that attracts soil at a faster rate. This leads to customer dissatisfaction and the mistaken belief that carpet won't stay clean. That's why you should only buy cleaners with the Seal of Approval. It's your assurance that a cleaner is up-to-the-job.

### *Aren't all extractors the same?*

No. In fact, there are vast differences in the soil removal capability among extractors, some of which are designed for deep cleaning, others for interim cleaning, and still other for light appearance cleaning. Extractors that people rent or purchase are designed for removing surface soil. The carpet's appearance may improve, but embedded soil remains. Over time, this build-up may greatly affect a carpet's appearance. Proper carpet care requires periodic deep cleaning, preferably every 12 to 18 months, by professionals to remove embedded soil. The Seal of Approval identifies those deep cleaning extractors and deep cleaning systems that provide high performance cleaning.

### *What are the benefits of effective carpet cleaning?*

Carpet serves as a trap for allergens and other particles that fall to the floor. Removing them with vacuums that keep dirt and dust within the canister improves air quality. Likewise, using extractors that effectively recover water and cleaning detergents from the carpet minimizes the possibility of mold growth, which can occur when dirt and moisture remain in the carpet.

### *What is the environmental impact of an effective cleaning product?*

The CRI testing program is raising the bar for all cleaning products. Better cleaning products mean longer life for carpets. And that means less carpet will prematurely end up in landfills. That is why the Seal of Approval program has won the endorsement of the Florida Green Lodging program, sponsored by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. CRI is spearheading other "green" initiatives such as the Green Label and Green Label Plus programs, which identify carpet, carpet cushion, adhesives and vacuums that help contribute to better indoor air quality.

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