

Strictly Embargoed Until:
October 30, 2013

CONTACT: Jamie Lettis
202.454.3006
jlettis@checkbook.org



Highlights: Carpet Cleaners

Whether it's a nasty spill or all-over grime that has you seeking professional help, selecting the right carpet-cleaning company can make a big difference in the quality of the job, and potentially the lifespan of your carpet. *Twin Cities Consumers' CHECKBOOK* magazine, available at www.checkbook.org, rates 21 local carpet-cleaning companies, many of which do a great job for a reasonable price. Highlights from the article include:

- Of the companies CHECKBOOK rated, 10 received CHECKBOOK's top rating for quality. The highest rated companies were more than twice as likely as the lowest rated companies to get "superior" ratings on CHECKBOOK's survey questions on "doing work properly," "neatness," and "overall performance."
- It pays to compare prices. For most jobs, most companies will be able to quote prices over the phone. If you can't get over-the-phone quotes, request in-home estimates. CHECKBOOK found big price differences among companies. To clean a living room, dining room, and hallway (a total of 330 square feet), CHECKBOOK found prices ranged from \$70 to \$186. To clean a 460-square-foot area consisting of a living room, dining room, hallway, and one bedroom, prices ranged from \$90 to \$256.
- CHECKBOOK found consumers do not have to pay more to get good service. Some of the lowest-priced companies received top ratings for quality.
- Beware of quotes by the "room." An L-shaped room, for example, might be one room to you but two rooms to a carpet-cleaning company.
- Don't pay more than necessary for add-ons, such as soil retardants and deodorizers. With some companies, these cost little or nothing; with others, they can double your costs. The specific treatments vary from company to company and may be of little or no value.
- You'll want to be sure to select a company that offers cleaning methods appropriate to your carpet. If your carpet is lightly soiled, any of the methods will probably be acceptable if performed properly. But for badly soiled carpets, you're likely to be best off with a company that offers hot water extraction with truck-mounted equipment or a combination of shampoo and hot water extraction.

CHECKBOOK's article also offers a few tips on dealing with the company you choose—

- Clearly communicate what cleaning method you want used and which add-ons you want.
- Make sure to get a written estimate.
- Ask for a written workmanship guarantee promising the company will at least redo the job if you consider it unsatisfactory.
- Before the serviceperson arrives, move antiques and other prized valuables and vacuum the area.
- Point out stains, explain what caused them and how long they've been there, and get the company to promise it will remove each stain or to tell you in advance if it can't guarantee removal of certain stains.

- Warn the company about furniture with weak legs, possible weak carpet seams, and other trouble areas.
- Be sure plastic or foil shields are placed under all furniture legs when the work is complete.
- Don't pay until you've walked around the carpet and inspected it. (It's okay to walk on it.)
- If you discover spots or other problems after the serviceperson has left, call the company immediately.

The media may cite selected examples of top-rated carpet cleaners, as shown in the new issue of Twin Cities Consumers' CHECKBOOK, and CHECKBOOK's editors are available for interviews. Please contact Jamie Lettis at 202-454-3006 or jlettis@checkbook.org to schedule.

###