

# Consumer Awareness Guide

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## How To Get Everything You Want When Choosing A Carpet Cleaning Service

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6 Misconceptions  
Of Carpet Cleaning  
&

7 Questions  
You Should Ask Before  
You Ever Let A Carpet Cleaner  
Into Your Home

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# Consumer Awareness Guide

Hi! I'm George Tally. Thank you very much for taking the time to read this very important message. I am grateful for the opportunity to provide you with information about carpet cleaning and help you choose a carpet cleaning company.

I am involved in the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) and owner of TALLY'S inc. I am certified as a Master Carpet Cleaning Technician, a Master Upholstery & Fabric Cleaning Technician, a Master Textile Cleaner and have certifications in Water Damage, Odor Control, Color Repair, Carpet Repair & Installation and Floor Care Technician. TALLY'S inc. is a certified firm with IICRC. I have been in the carpet cleaning business for over eighteen years. In that time, I learned that carpet cleaning is the subject of much confusion. **In fact, people have so many misconceptions about carpet cleaning that I decided to offer this consumer education pamphlet so when you select a carpet cleaning company, you can make an informed, intelligent decision.**

In just a moment, I will share with you six costly misconceptions about carpet cleaning, offer four recommendations, and give seven questions you should ask a carpet cleaner before you invite him into your home.

**Misconception #1:** You should wait as long as possible before cleaning your carpet.

No. Dirt is an abrasive - like sand paper. Every time you step on the carpet, you grind dirt into the carpet fibers. This cuts your carpet, just as if you had used a knife, causing it to wear out faster. A dirty carpet will not last nearly as long as a clean carpet. Though vacuuming helps, by itself it is simply not enough. Then, the longer you wait to have your carpet cleaned, the more damage you do to your carpet and the faster it wears out.

**Misconception #2:** The only reason to clean your carpet is to get the dirt out.

No. As you probably know, outdoor air contains pollens, fungus, bacteria, air pollutions, cigarette smoke, car exhaust and hundreds of other chemicals. When you and your family members come into your home, you carry those pollens, bacteria and chemicals in your hair and on your skin, clothing and shoes. Not surprisingly, all those chemicals, pollens and bacteria wind up - you guessed it - in your carpet.

If you have allergies, asthma, emphysema, or other breathing problems - one major source could be pollens, fungus, and chemicals in your carpet.

In addition, as you may know tobacco smoke contains over 4,000 different chemical compounds, 43 of which cause cancer. And even if you don't smoke those chemicals get on your shoes, you track them in your home and you leave them in your carpet.

If you are sensitive to cigarette smoke, you might find that you will breathe easier after you hire a company to get those harmful chemicals out of your carpet.

So in addition to getting rid of dirt, another important reason to clean your carpet is to get rid of pollens, fungus, bacteria, chemicals and the tars and residue from tobacco smoke.

**Misconception #3:** One method of carpet cleaning is as good as another.

No. You can choose from two primary methods: dry cleaning or hot water extraction. First, I will explain dry cleaning. Many people believe dry cleaning your carpet is like dry cleaning your clothes. This is not true. All carpet cleaning methods use water in one form or another. Here are the three methods of dry cleaning carpet:

When a carpet cleaner uses **dry foam**, he applies shampoo to your carpet, allows it to dry, and then sucks the dry shampoo into a vacuum. Can you image applying shampoo to your hair, allowing it to dry and then removing the shampoo from your head with a vacuum? This method can leave a residue in your carpet, which is one reason dry foam is not very effective.

The **dry-chem** method is similar to dry foam. The major difference is that when dry-chem is used, the company sets a large cotton bonnet on your carpet. Using a machine, the bonnet spins from side to side, absorbing the dirt that's in the carpet. After the bonnet is saturated with dirt, another cotton bonnet is applied. Bonnet cleaning is like trying to use a large towel to rub the dirt out of your carpet. Like dry foam it is not very effective.

The **dry-compound** method spreads an absorbent mixture that looks like dry sawdust all over your carpeting. Then the machine brushes the mixture into your carpet, which in theory causes the dirt to absorb into the mixture. When the mixture has dried, a vacuum cleaner sucks the material out of the carpeting. Because the carpeting is not rinsed in any way, this method is not very effective.

The second carpet cleaning method is called **hot water extraction**. This is a fancy way of saying that a hot water cleaning solution under pressure is forced into the carpet and then sucked out of the carpet. This method is also referred to as steam cleaning, even though steam is not used.

Shaw Industries, the world's largest carpet manufacturer, recommends hot water extraction. You can choose from different types; **portable extraction**, which is done with a small machine, or **truck mount extraction**, which means a large cleaning machine is mounted in a truck or van.

Not surprisingly, the **truck mount extraction cleans more effectively**. It heats the water to a higher temperature and shoots the cleaning solution into the carpet at higher pressure, which breaks up the dirt, bacteria and pollens. Then, the machine uses high suction to draw the dirt out of the carpet. This is the method my company uses.

**No question, the most effective way to clean carpeting is with a hot water unit mounted in a truck or van.** It is the most powerful cleaning machine on the market, and the only machine that thoroughly cleans your carpet and rids it of dirt, harmful bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollens, and tobacco residue.

Methods that use cold or even warm water remove dirt, but not as effective as the hot water truck mount method.

Some people believe that hot water damages your carpet, but this is not true. By washing and then rinsing your carpet with hot water, we clean your carpet completely - in the same way that the person who showers and then rinses off the dirt and soap will be much cleaner than the person who takes only a sponge bath.

**Misconception #4:** Having the right equipment is all a company needs to clean your carpet properly.

Not true. Many companies own hot water cleaners - but a large number of employees do not know how to use them. You probably know someone who bought the newest computer on the market, but did not know how to use it for a year or more. The same is true with carpet cleaning machines. The company may own good equipment, but the employees may not know how to use it correctly. This is why it is important that you carefully choose your carpet cleaner.

The best carpet cleaning companies are those that have been certified by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification, known as the IICRC. A carpet cleaning company cannot buy this certification. The carpet cleaner must earn the certification through study, experience and the successful completion of formal, written examinations. Cleaners who are certified by the IICRC have, in effect, earned a degree in carpet cleaning.

The IICRC provides written credentials to the companies it certifies. So before you choose a carpet cleaner, ask to see written proof of the companies and technicians IICRC certification.

**Misconception #5:** The company that offers the lowest price is the company that you should hire.

Maybe - but not always. Here are two important points to consider.

**Point #1:** The price you see offered may not be for the services you want performed. Before you select a company, decide what you want to accomplish. If you want the carpet cleaner to remove only some of

the dirt, you can choose from hundreds of companies that use small potable units or other cleaning methods. Or you can even rent a machine at the grocery store and do the job yourself.

On the other hand, if you want your carpet thoroughly cleaned - if you want to remove the harmful dirt, bacteria, pollens and chemicals and tobacco residue - then you need to hire a company that uses a hot water cleaner that is mounted in a truck or van.

This is the only way to assure that your carpet remains healthy and free from dirt, disease-causing bacteria, and hurtful chemicals.

So remember that the price you see offered may not be for the services you want preformed.

**Point #2:** The price you see advertised may not be the price you pay.

Many homeowners have learned that the low price they saw advertised was not the amount they were charged.

If you have ever hired a carpet cleaner, you too may have been the victim of false or misleading advertising. You probably learned the hard way that some carpet cleaners offer a cheap price, usually between \$3.95 and \$9.95 per room, and then pressure you into paying a lot more once they get inside your home. Some of them may even break the law by using illegal bait and switch tactics.

As in all businesses and professions, the carpet cleaning industry has its share of bad apples. I take no pleasure in telling you this, but some are unethical. Sadly, a few are dishonest. By their misleading advertising and false promises, they cast a dark shadow on our entire industry.

Then you will find other carpet cleaners - professionals like me who work hard to earn your trust and respect.

As a way of improving our profession, I've dedicated my business to educating the public. The only way you can make an intelligent decision is to have all the facts you need. This is why I've written this pamphlet.

**Misconception #6:** Any honest carpet cleaning company should be able to give you an exact price quote over the phone.

I wish this was true, but it is not. Consumers often think that if they want to clean four rooms and the price is \$6.00 per room, then the price will be \$24.00. But this is not always true.

First, honest, reputable carpet cleaning companies usually price carpet cleaning by the square foot. So if you would like me to tell you the exact cost of cleaning your carpet, I need to know the exact number of square feet you want cleaned. To get an accurate measurement, I have a measuring wheel I use to calculate the exact size of the carpet area.

You will be glad to know that the carpet area to be cleaned is not nearly as great as most people think. For example, if you want your entire home cleaned, and your home is 2,000 square feet, the amount of carpeting to be cleaned might be only 1,200 square feet. This is because most home measurements are outdoor measurements. Plus I deduct the area taken up by walls and room dividers and the like. The result is that the actual area to be cleaned is usually only about 60% of the square footage of the home.

So, even though I cannot give you an exact quote over the telephone, here are things I consider when quoting a price.

First, the type of carpet. Certain types of carpet are harder to clean than others. So before I can give you a quote, I need to know the type of carpet you want cleaned.

Second, the amount of soiling. Carpet that hasn't been cleaned for ten years will take longer to clean than carpet that was cleaned within the last six months.

Third, the amount of furniture that has to be moved. If we have to move your furniture, the bid must include that labor. But if you move your furniture, you will save money.

To recap, I consider the type of carpet, the amount of soiling, and the amount of furniture that has to be moved. So, as you can imagine, every quotation is different.

If you are thinking about having your carpets cleaned, I offer these four recommendations:

**Recommendations #1:** Make a commitment to yourself to get your carpets cleaned. The longer they remain dirty, the sooner they will wear out, and the longer you have to breathe all the pollens, fungus, chemicals, and dust mites that live in your carpet.

**Recommendation #2:** List your objectives. Do you want only the dirt removed, something you could do with a rented machine. Or do you want the bacteria, fungus, and chemicals removed, which will require a hot water truck mount cleaner, like I use. Do you want to work with an honest, reputable company - or are you willing to risk working with the company.

that offers you the lowest price, knowing that the company might not be in business tomorrow.

**Recommendation #3:** Ask questions. The way you learn about a company is to ask specific questions and listen carefully to the answers. Here are the questions I suggest you ask:

1. What method of carpet cleaning do you recommend?
2. What type of equipment do you use to clean carpet?
3. What does your equipment remove from my carpet?
4. How often should I get my carpets cleaned?
5. What training have you had in cleaning carpets?
6. Are you a member of any trade associations and, if so, which ones?
7. Are you certified by the IICRC and will you show me



your certificate?

**Recommendation #4:** Once you are satisfied that you are working with an honest, competent professional, invite him into your home and ask for a specific quotation in writing. A written quotation gives you the assurance that you know exactly what your job will cost - no surprises.

By following these four recommendations, you'll gain all the information you need to make an informed, intelligent decision. If you want a quick, cheap carpet-cleaning job, many companies in the phone book can help you. Or you can rent a portable unit and do the job yourself.

But if you want your carpet to be completely and thoroughly cleaned - removing the bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollens, and tobacco products - then I invite you to call me.

I will be happy to answer your questions - provide you with a cost estimate over the phone - or come into your home and give you a free written quotation - without obligation of any kind. To reach me, call **951-672-6413** or 1-800-4-TALLYS.

Here is one last point: I know that many consumers are skeptical about carpet cleaning companies. Before I got into my business, I was skeptical too. So in addition to dedicating my business to consumer education, I do one more thing as well.

I guarantee my work. That's right. I fully guarantee every carpet-cleaning job we do. If you are not happy with our work, we will re-clean the area for free. And if you still are not pleased, you pay nothing. Not one cent.

What could be fairer?

As a matter of fact, add this question to the list. Question #8 is "Do you guarantee your work?" Not all companies do - and it's important that you have this information before you make your decision.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this pamphlet. I hope you found this Consumer Awareness Guide helpful. If you have any questions or comments, or if you would like to schedule a free, in-home quotation, please call me at **951-672-6413** or 1-800-4-TALLY'S. Also check us out on the web at [www.tallysinc.com](http://www.tallysinc.com).

On behalf of TALLY'S inc. -  
I thank you for your kind attention in reading this pamphlet.

*George Tally*

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- Pre-Vacuuming
- Exposed Base Board Cleaning
- Soil Lifting Pre-Conditioner
- High Temperature Soil Extraction with a Truck-Mounted Unit

- Protective Footwear
- 30-Day Spot Guarantee
- IICRC Certified

Upholstery & Mattress Cleaning Includes:

- Pre-Vacuuming
- Soil Lifting Pre-Conditioner
- Fresh Rinse Soil Extraction with a Truck-Mounted Unit
- 30-Day Spot Guarantee
- IICRC Certified

Services We Provide Our Clients:

- Carpet Cleaning & Protective
- Upholstery Cleaning & Protective
- Designer Rug Cleaning & Protective
- Tile & Grout Cleaning & Sealing
- Natural Stone Cleaning & Sealing
- Mattress Cleaning
- Allergy & Asthma Relief Treatments
- Autos and RVs
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