

SAFE METHOD FOR THE REMOVAL OF OLD CARPETS

Old carpets contain a large quantity of pollutants. Fine dust particles, minerals (lead), soot, dust mites, dust mite feces, insect fragments, and microbial spores settle deep into the carpet where they can not be vacuumed out. These particles and the carpet fibers contain absorbed chemicals, pesticides, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, PCBs, and other VOCs. When the old carpet is removed hundreds of thousands of these particles can be spread around your house. The following steps should be taken to minimize polluting your environment:

- 1- Before starting, open all windows and doors in the rooms from which carpet will be removed. Move all furniture to another room, or enclose in polyethylene (poly) and duct tape. Close all doors to this and other rooms.
- 2- Turn heating system off and cover all vents with poly and tape.
- 3- Install one 20" window fan for each 500 - 700 sq. ft. of carpet being removed. The fans must blow OUT of the house (exhaust) in open windows or doors on the down wind side of the building. These work best if the area around the fans are closed off with cardboard to prevent short-circuiting of the outside air, and to draw the inside dusty air from open windows across the carpet.
- 4- Turn the fans on high speed before the carpet is touched, and leave the fans on and the windows open until one hour after the clean up is complete, (or for 8 hours after if new carpet is installed). Wood stoves, combustion furnaces, and fireplaces should not be operated in the building during this time unless they are located in a room that is closed off order to avoid back-drafting.
- 5- Cut the carpet into strips about 6' x 16' so two people can move them easily.
- 6- Cover carpet with poly (plastic sheeting). Attach this to the carpet with staples or double-sided tape. This will help reduce the amount of dust that becomes airborne when the carpet is pulled up. A less effective but still satisfactory option for carpets without a lot of mold, is to spray the carpet with water to reduce the dust release before rolling it up.
- 7- The carpet should be handled as if it were loaded with toxic dust. All movement of the carpet and pad should be done slowly and carefully. The carpet should be carefully rolled, tied, covered with poly and carried out.
- 8- Repeat steps 4, 5 and 6 with the pad.
- 9- Vacuum the entire floor and all exposed surfaces with a HEPA or allergy type vacuum. Pay special attention to cleaning the area between the tack strips and the wall. Mold disinfecting is a separate step that may be required.

NOTE: Carpets should not be removed when pregnant women or young children are present.

EXTRA STEPS FOR SPECIAL SITUATIONS:

If there have been pesticides or chemicals used on the carpet or subfloor, if the subfloor is particleboard, or if there is mold or dampness, you should put down a vapor barrier between the subfloor and the new carpet. Six mil poly will work very well, providing no one in the house is sensitive to it. Also, sealing the particleboard floor with BIN sealer (alcohol based) or alcohol based Kills, is very effective and will also seal in any odors or stains that may still be on the subfloor. For very sensitive occupants aluminum builders foil, Denny Foil, or KSHIELD foil or other non-perforated foils should be installed. These may be purchased from Nontoxic Environments in Canby OR, 800-789-4348.