

## Removing Furniture Stains From Carpets

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Staining on carpeting caused by furniture and other personal property is one of the most frustrating events that can occur during a water damage. This problem accounts for a high percentage of carpet replacement involving water damage.

These stains are caused by dye transferred from the bottom of the wood furniture that is in contact with the carpet. In the majority of cases, these stains occur because there is a presence of excess moisture in the environment. However, there are occasions when a large furniture item is moved across the surface of the carpet resulting in a stain transfer (such as china cabinets, vanities or entertainment centers).

Stains can be caused by resting furniture on damp carpet during the cleaning process without placing protective pads or blocks under the furniture, by customer-associated spills or animal urine near the legs or base of furniture. Normally these stains are pre-existing and not a result of a covered event. Loss related stains could develop during times of very high humidity or as a result of water damage.

To understand this phenomenon a basic knowledge of furniture finishes is required. Because the bottoms of furniture legs are not seen, protective coatings are not applied to these areas the way they are to the exposed surfaces of the legs. Protective coats contribute to a more desirable appearance while sealing the staining material into the wood. These coatings generally consist of lacquers and waxes. Due to the absence of a protective coating on the bottom of furniture these areas will cause staining to the carpet when the right conditions exist, i.e., moisture present.

The stains currently used on wood furniture are generally mixtures of dyes that have been dissolved in various solvents. The most common classes of dye used are oil-soluble, water-soluble, alcohol-soluble and non-grain raising. In many instances the furniture manufacturer or builder will use two or more different dyes to achieve the desired color and shade. The color of the stain

transferred to the carpet may not be the same shade as the bottom of the leg when one of the dyes is more soluble.

When confronted with dye transfer to a carpet fiber the degree of success in stain removal will be determined by the kind of furniture stain, carpet dye color and the carpet fiber type (wool,

nylon or olefin). It is essential that an **AFTERDISASTER**<sup>®</sup> technician be dispatched immediately to expedite the stain removal process and prevent additional claim loss exposure.

In certain cases an appreciable amount of staining may not be removed from carpeting made of wool, cellulose and some types of nylon. When synthetic fibers are involved the stain is generally on the surface only. It is necessary to pre-test the carpet in an inconspicuous area to determine what results will be accomplished and what effect the spotting process will have on the carpet fibers and original dyes. The most successful process begins with several types of solvent spotters, then proceeds with a water-based spotter when

the solvent does not accomplish the desired results. In some cases, the use of heat will improve the results. When the stained area is from rust, in addition to furniture dye, the rust stain must be removed first using a special rust remover and neutralizing agent.

Once the stain has been removed the area should be cleaned with the appropriate non-ionic detergent to neutralize the spotters used and prevent future soiling and/or re-appearance of the spot. The application of a special absorbent powder to the stained area will assist in allowing the staining material to wick into the powder. When the powder dries it can be removed with a HEPA vacuum.

For successful furniture stain removal time is critical and emergency mitigation steps must be expedited immediately. There must be a clear understanding between the insured and insurance representative regarding the stain removal process and it's potential success.

*AFTERDISASTER<sup>®</sup> uses styrofoam blocks under furniture to protect carpeting from stains.*



*AFTERDISASTER<sup>®</sup> technicians use spot and stain removal kit to remove furniture stains from carpeting.*