

Upholstery & Drapery Cleaning

Upholstery and drapery cleaning are very critical segments of contents restoration. Water damages often leave soil deposits, watermarks, leached wood finish stains, rust stains, color transfer, and browning and yellowing. Re-activation of urine and other pre-existing odors, and mold contamination are other situations encountered. Fire damages often leave floating ash, soot deposits, smoke odors, filtration soiling, grease film and “soot tags” on the fabrics. Oil furnace malfunctions (puff backs), and dry soot deposits from gas log system malfunctions also create upholstery and drapery cleaning needs. As upholstery and drapery cleaners, we possess a great amount of training, experience, patience, and a vast arsenal of cleaning agents, equipment, and supplies to be proficient.

The AFTERDISASTER® upholstery and drapery cleaning process follows the industry standards for professional cleaning of upholstery and drapery.

A thorough initial inspection is necessary and includes:

- √ Identifying the fiber
- √ Identifying the weave and fabric construction
- √ Checking for non-wettable construction materials such as cardboard used for pleats and skirt filler
- √ Checking for cushion marks used in assembly that could bleed through to the surface during cleaning
- √ Identifying soil types
- √ Evaluating the age and condition of the fabric
- √ Identifying and documenting pre-existing damage
- √ Selecting the cleaning agents and application methods to be used
- √ Determining the cost effectiveness of cleaning vs. replacement

- √ Pre-testing the cleaning agents for desired cleaning results, fiber safety, and colorfastness.

It is crucial to review the inspection results with the property owner and establish realistic expectations.



Prevacuuming is crucial in the cleaning process

The first step in the cleaning process is vacuuming to remove dry soil. Fabrics can hold several times their weight in dry particulates that could absorb and waste cleaning agents and/or create more contamination and staining when wet.

The second step is soil release and suspension by using spotters (for specific spots and stains), pre-sprays (for general areas), and shampoos or detergents (to suspend the soil for extraction). The effectiveness of this step is based upon a balance of **T.A.C.T.** (**T**ime, **A**gitation, **C**hemical action, and **T**emperature. A decrease in one element will require an increase in another element. Not enough time decreases effectiveness, whereas too much time may result in damage. Agitation in spotting is usually achieved with a spatula, spotting brush, sea sponge, or blotting towel. Agitation on the pre-spray, shampoo, or detergent is performed with a horsehair brush, sea sponge, and the upholstery tool itself. Agitation is limited by potential fiber or construction damage. Chemical action should always be pre-tested to avoid unwanted surprises. Increasing the temperature of cleaning solutions usually increases cleaning performance, but fiber and fabric construction damage is possible when the cleaning solutions are too hot. It is important that the upholstery is not overwet to avoid damage to cardboard in the skirts or other nonwashable construction materials.

INSIDE

UPHOLSTERY & DRAPERY
CLEANING 1 & 4

AFTERDISASTER® ASSISTS
PUROFIRST® OF METROPOLITAN
WASHINGTON 2

AFTEREFFECTS 3

AFTERDISASTER®

Assists Purofirst® of Metropolitan Washington

On Monday, August 13, 2001, **AFTERDISASTER®** received a call from Purofirst® of Metropolitan Washington (DC). President, Robert Schattner, and their Emergency Production Manager, Sam Nasrawi, were extremely busy responding to calls from customers in the DC area.

Washington had sustained a tremendous rainstorm the previous weekend. Resulting floods were worsened due to the antiquated sewer system, common to many older cities in the United States. Since these older sewer systems combine storm and sanitary sewer, deluges of rain can cause the systems to fail if they exceed their capacity.

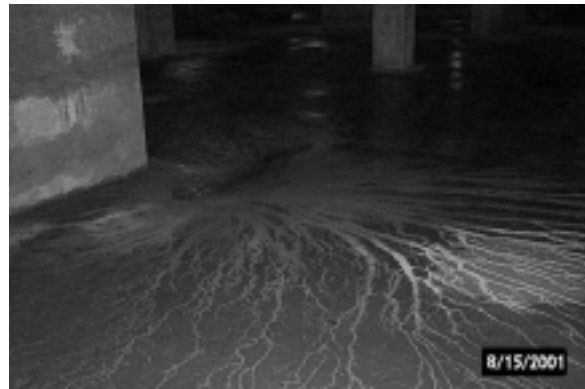
The sewer system in Washington, particularly in the older Georgetown area, was tested far past its capacity. Many of the businesses along Water Street, paralleling the Potomac River, were contaminated with rising water consisting of rain and raw sewage.

Monday morning, Sam Nasrawi was faced with over 125 calls to which their staff had to respond. One of these calls was from a previous customer of theirs, Bovis Construction, who is building a new Ritz Carlton in Georgetown. The contaminated flood waters which had overflowed the drainage systems, affected five stories of the building. Sam contacted **AFTERDISASTER®** to assist Bovis Construction, allowing them to respond to other customers.

AFTERDISASTER® Representatives Lee King and Production Team Leader, Otto Martinez, responded to Purofirst® immediately. Scheduling the work was complicated: the affected areas were 40 ft. below street level and the crews had to work 2nd and 3rd shifts to allow construction to continue during regular working hours. Furthermore, delivery of equipment and supplies in such a large metropolitan area created logistical problems. In less than one week, **AFTERDISASTER®** crews began and completed cleaning and decontaminating over 200,000 square feet of the structure. Ultimately, the hard work paid off, the property was restored, and the customers were very pleased with the quality of work and the timeliness of the response.

This job is an example of how the **AFTERDISASTER®** Network is a win-win for all parties involved. Bovis Construction got the service they deserved, while Purofirst® of Metropolitan Washington was able to concentrate on other emergency calls, and **AFTERDISASTER®** had the opportunity to assist in a large commercial loss situation. **AFTERDISASTER®** appreciates their ongoing strategic alliance with Purofirst® International, Inc. in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

For assistance in the DC area, Purofirst® may be contacted toll-free at 1-800-500-2399, and Purofirst® International, Inc. may be contacted toll-free at 1-800-247-9047.



Flooding due to heavy rains and antiquated sewer systems



Purofirst®'s Emergency Production Manager, Sam Nasrawi, and AFTERDISASTER® Production Team Leader, Otto Martinez, discussing logistics of the job



AFTERDISASTER® completed cleaning and decontamination

Cleaning Upholstery & Draperies

Which is the best type of equipment to clean upholstery and drapery fabrics: a truckmount extraction unit, a portable extraction carpet cleaning unit, or a portable extraction upholstery/drapery cleaning unit?

Based upon years of hands-on experience as well as research, the choice is the portable extraction upholstery/drapery cleaning unit for several reasons:

- Truckmount extraction units and portable extraction carpet cleaning units usually have much greater solution spraying volume and pressure designed to penetrate deeply into carpet and padding, but are usually too much for upholstery and drapery and may leave the fabric too damp, causing damage. A portable extraction upholstery/drapery-cleaning unit has less spraying volume and pressure and overwetting the fabric can be avoided.
- Both the truckmounted and portable extraction carpet cleaning units deliver too much suction pressure for many fabrics and can actually stretch or distort the weave during the extraction unless the excessive suction pressure is relieved with wand attachments. The upholstery/drapery unit has a lower vacuum lift to protect the fabric.
- Truckmount extraction units and portable extraction carpet cleaning units are designed for water-based cleaning solutions *only* and not for dry cleaning solvents. Many upholstery/drapery-cleaning units can use *either* water-based solutions or dry cleaning solutions.
- The portable upholstery/drapery-cleaning unit is much smaller and lighter to carry. It does not require much space to operate in a furnished room, and therefore reduces the possibility of damaging the surrounding contents.
- The solution tank on the upholstery/drapery unit is smaller, so a smaller

quantity of cleaning solution needs to be mixed on a small job. This cuts material costs, leftover waste, and extra mixing time. Cleanup of the upholstery/drapery cleaning unit is easier. It usually has a removable waste tank for quick disposal and fast cleanup, helping to make production more cost-effective for the property owner

- It is not cost effective to tie-up a carpet cleaning unit on a smaller scale upholstery/drapery cleaning job. Those units need to be cleaning rooms of carpet!

Call **AFTERDISASTER®** for all your cleaning/restoration needs. We have the right tools for each job.

Jerry Jones, CR



*Upholstery/Drapery Cleaning Machine
Ultimate PB3 by US Products*

Upholstery & Drapery cleaning, continued from Page 1

The third step is extracting the suspended soil. Some detergents require a rinse to remove residue. Other detergents are so mild and leave so little residue that no rinse is necessary. If browning or yellowing of the fiber is a potential threat, an acid rinse may be used.

The fourth step is grooming the pile or nap by brushing to set the fibers for drying.

The final step of the cleaning process is drying. Rapid drying by the use of airmovers, dehumidifiers when needed, tenting of cushions, blocking and tabs where needed, clamping or pinning skirts off the floor, etc.- all ensure successful completion.

In most water and fire damages the original fabric protector is compromised and may require a re-application of fabric protector to return the item to pre-loss condition.

After drying the furniture and drapery should be re-inspected and evaluated for satisfactory results, then returned and reset into its original location for use. This includes re-hanging the drapes, resetting tented cushions, matching cushion pattern with surrounding pattern, and removing blocks/tabs/clamps.

A final review of the results should be performed with the customer to insure satisfaction with the cleaning. Several important questions need to be answered at this time:

- √ Was the soil/contamination removed?
- √ Was the upholstery/drapery returned to pre-loss condition?
- √ Did the cleaning achieve pre-agreed expectations?
- √ Was the upholstery/drapery returned to a dry state after cleaning?
- √ Were surrounding contents protected during the cleaning and drying process?
- √ Were tabs, blocks, clamps, etc. removed as agreed?
- √ Were the cleaned items re-set to the original location in usable condition?
- √ Was the customer given the opportunity to request a fabric protector?
- √ Was deodorization achieved?

Call your local **AFTERDISASTER®** Business Center for property damage mitigation to prevent additional damage.

We want *AfterThoughts®* newsletters to be a useful source of information to our readers and welcome your opinions on articles in our publication, as well as suggestions for future articles. Please send correspondence via fax (1-336-855-1144) or e-mail to marketing@afterdisaster.com to the attention of Jan Barham, Marketing Development.

Your **AFTERDISASTER®** team provides this information to assist its customers in recovering from a water or fire emergency. However, many disasters often require specialized training and assistance, and the information included in our newsletters may not exactly fit your situation. Please consult your **AFTERDISASTER®** representative for assistance with your cleanup and restoration questions. Contact our office for further information.

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Before Cleaning/After Cleaning

