



IICRC S800
Standard and Reference
Guide for Professional
Inspection of Textile
Floorcovering



IICRC

Institute of Inspection Cleaning
and Restoration Certification



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The ANSI/IICRC S800 Standard and Reference Guide for Inspecting Textile Floorcoverings (referred to as the "Standard and Reference Guide" or the "S800") is intended to provide information about inspecting textile floorcoverings, and in establishing and maintaining an inspector's professional competence. Users of this document should stay updated and informed about developments in the field of fiber and carpet manufacturing technology, carpet specification and installation, carpet use and maintenance, and inspecting techniques and procedures. Inspectors should keep abreast of changes in technology and procedures as appropriate, as well as follow applicable federal, state, provincial and local laws and regulations. Since every claim that initiates the need for inspection services is unique, in certain circumstances, common sense, experience and professional judgment may justify a deviation from this Standard and Reference Guide.

Furthermore, this Standard and Reference Guide is not intended to be either exhaustive or inclusive of all pertinent requirements, methods or procedures that might be appropriate on a particular inspection. The information upon which this Standard and Reference Guide is based is subject to change, which may invalidate any or all of the information contained herein.

This Standard and Reference Guide was developed through a consensus standard development process, which brought together volunteers representing varied viewpoints and interests to achieve consensus on carpet inspection issues. While the IICRC administers the process and establishes policies, procedures and guidelines to promote fairness in the development of consensus, it does not independently test, evaluate or verify the accuracy of any information or the soundness of any judgments contained in this Standard and Reference Guide.

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Foreword

“The Information contained in the Forward of the ANSI/IICRC S800 is not part of this American National Standard (ANS) and has not been processed in accordance with ANSI’s Requirements for ANS. As such, this Foreword may contain material that has not been subjected to public review or a consensus process. In addition, it does not contain requirements necessary for conformance to the standard.”

The ANSI/IICRC S800 is presented in a two-part format: The procedural Standard and a supplemental informative annex hereinafter referred to as the Reference Guide. The Standard is printed first within, the document on colored pages followed by the longer Reference Guide section. The Standard summarizes most of the significant and important procedures and methodologies of textile floor maintenance, while the Reference Guide restates and further explains those procedures and methodologies and provides additional background information, which supports the Standard. Although the material in the Reference Guide does not carry the official status of a Standard, the two sections complement each other and should always be considered in tandem.

The ANSI/IICRC S800 is a living document that is subject to change as more information regarding carpet inspection becomes available, scientific developments occur, and advancements are made in carpet inspection technology and practice. The ANSI/IICRC S800 will be reviewed, evaluated, and validated through application in the field and thereafter revised and improved. This process and further professional and public review allows our industry to develop a body of carpet inspection science and achieve the overall IICRC goal of developing common, industry-accepted language and terminology that enables us to more universally discuss concepts and procedures regarding cleaning, inspection and restoration.

Volunteering to participate in an IICRC Standards Consensus Body requires openness to new ideas, concepts, and procedures and requires communication, cooperation, documentation, testing, and specialized education. Our evolving industry has consistently attracted professionals from all walks of life and they have donated thousands of volunteer hours promoting professionalism. Many of those dedicated individuals built the foundation that we continually modify. These modifications are necessary to enhance the performance of textile floor coverings and, at the same time, serve to protect occupants.

Inspection Science and Practice

The history of inspection science and practice is as old as broadloom carpet manufacturing itself. But since has carpet gained market share as the consumer’s floor covering of choice, the need for inspection services has grown significantly.

INSPECTION HISTORY

The first formal carpet inspection courses evolved through the carpet manufacturers’ industry association, The Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI). In the late 1960s and early ’70s, specialists in carpet manufacturing took their knowledge to the field in the form of workshops that focused on common problems reported by carpet end-users.

Franchise and independent retailers, and professional installers and cleaners were recruited to serve as the manufacturers’ eyes and ears in the field, to observe and evaluate issues with carpet that were reported by the consuming public. Consultants to the carpet manufacturing industry also began hosting symposia at which knowledgeable and experienced manufacturing experts, chemical formulators, equipment manufacturers and senior inspectors were engaged to share their knowledge on myriad factors that potentially result in end-user complaints and issues with textile floor coverings.

Thus, an inspection industry with a body of science was born.

INSPECTION AND THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

Inspecting textile floor coverings involves both science and practical experience. The process of inspecting carpet begins with a problem that is perceived or observed, or questions that are raised by carpet end-users or specifiers: "What is happening to my carpet? Why is this happening or how did this occur? What can be done to correct the problem, if anything?"

This is where inspection science begins. Academic education provides the foundation for a textile inspector to analyze floorcovering issues, but that education inevitably has to be combined with practical field experience in order to arrive at accurate and objective conclusions using accepted "scientific methods."

Generally, science is defined as knowledge attained through study or practice, or knowledge believed to be truth based on the operation of natural laws as observed through the "scientific method." The Oxford English Dictionary defines scientific method as: "a method or procedure that has characterized natural science since the 17th century, consisting in systematic observation, measurement, and experiment, and the formulation, testing, and modification of hypotheses."

As with the natural sciences, inspection science follows several sequential steps:

- **statement of the problem** – The inspection process begins with a statement of the problem by a specifier or end-user, and a request for inspection by a commissioning party;
- **gathering information** – The process continues with gathering empirical information or data about the floor covering itself, first from a commissioning party, who may be: a manufacturer claims analyst, a specifier or retailer, a builder or property manager; an installer, or an end-user or consumer. Later information gathering can extend to those who were parties to the sale, installation or use of the carpet, or associated products that might affect carpet performance;
- **observation** – Once basic product information is obtained from a commissioner or other party to the claim, the inspection process continues with objective and non-biased observation. This process begins with an overview of the carpet installation site and installation components (e.g., carpet, cushion, subfloor, installation supplies), along with external factors (e.g., furnishings, fixtures, building construction), and use (e.g., numbers and types of building users; soiling; maintenance; cleaning);
- **questioning** – Next, additional information can be collected by questioning end-users or parties to the complaint, such as product retailers, installers or associated product manufacturers (e.g., cushion, adhesive);
- **developing a hypothesis** – Inspection science continues when the inspector develops a hypothesis or series of hypotheses about potential causes of a complaint;
- **testing** – As with any scientific method, hypotheses must be investigated and evaluated with field testing, which can involve a number of specialized tools, and ideally, reproducible testing procedures. Testing also can extend to laboratory testing of products or installation components. Testing allows the inspector to confirm or deny hypotheses to narrow them down to suspected or probable causes;
- **conclusions and documentation** – After testing hypotheses about the cause of a complaint, where practical, inspectors can arrive at a conclusion about how a complaint arose, why it is manifesting, and what, if anything, can be done to mitigate or correct the complaint. Documenting conclusions using the body of science (e.g., scientific studies; industry consensus standards, and test methods) specific to the inspection industry also is important in supporting conclusions reached by inspectors;
- **recommendations** – Where appropriate, an inspector may be able to recommend solutions to a complaint raised or a problem observed, and
- **reporting** – Of course, information gathered using the scientific method is of value only when reported to a commissioner in a logical, sequential and understandable format, which includes how hypotheses were developed, how they were tested, and documentation on how conclusions were validated.

The inspection process or system, combined with knowledge and application of the sciences, provides a foundation to better define a problem or condition, along with supporting data to isolate a cause or causes. Isolating a cause

not only leads to better understanding of a problem, but it also can suggest ways to avoid or correct a problem, whether real or perceived; or it might even resolve the misperception or prevent repeating the problem in the future.

IMPACT OF PROFESSIONAL INSPECTION SERVICES TODAY

Today, the carpet inspection service industry has grown and expanded. It includes formal training and certification programs. Partnerships have been formed with fiber producers, carpet manufacturers, specifiers, architects, retailers, distributors, installers, carpet end-users, spotting and cleaning chemical formulators, and cleaners to identify and correct, as practical, issues arising from carpet and associated products.

Manufacturers are using feedback from inspectors about product field-performance to improve current carpet styles and to address problems reported at the manufacturing level. This feedback affects manufacturer instructions regarding product and installation specifications, and expanded warranties as well.

Consumer expectations regarding carpet performance and warranty service have grown and expanded as well. No longer are educated consumers willing to ignore or live with problems, or simply switch to another flooring alternative. Consumers demand answers to product and performance issues that raise questions in their minds.

Indeed carpet manufacturer warranties regarding wear, texture retention, and spot and stain resistance, have become more inclusive, and they extend for longer periods. But coupled with this level of expanded warranty coverage comes the responsibility for retailers to properly specify carpet, for installers to install it according to industry standards of care, and for consumers themselves to properly maintain and clean carpet.

It is for all these reasons that a body of knowledge for the inspection service industry has grown and expanded. Indeed, this is the reason for this document.

Acknowledgements

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Important Definitions

Throughout this document, the terms “shall,” “should,” and “recommend” are used to compare and contrast the different levels of importance attached to certain practices and procedures. It is impractical to prescribe procedures intended to apply to every carpet and rug cleaning situation. In certain circumstances, deviation from portions of this Standard and Reference Guide may be appropriate. Carelessness is unacceptable and common sense and professional judgment are to be exercised in all cases.

shall: when the term shall (previously “must”) is used in this document, it means that the practice or procedure is mandatory due to natural law or regulatory requirement, including occupational, public health, and other relevant laws, rules, or regulations, and is therefore a component of the accepted “standard of care” to be followed.

should: when the term should (previously “highly recommended”) is used in this document, it means that the practice or procedure is a component of the accepted “standard of care” to be followed, while not mandatory by regulatory requirements.

recommend(ed): when the term recommend(ed) is used in this document, it means that the practice or procedure is advised or suggested, but is not a component of the accepted “standard of care” to be followed.

In addition, the terms “may” and “can” are also available to describe referenced practices or procedures, and are defined as follows:

may: when the term may is used in this document, it signifies permission expressed by the document, and means that a referenced practice or procedure is permissible within the limits of this document, but is not a component of the accepted “standard of care” to be followed.

can: when the term can is used in this document, it signifies an ability or possibility open to a user of the document, and it means that a referenced practice or procedure is possible or capable of application, but is not a component of the accepted “standard of care” to be followed.

For the practical purposes of this document, it was deemed appropriate to highlight and distinguish the critical carpet cleaning methods and procedures, from the less critical, by characterizing the former as the perceived and recommended “standard of care”. The IICRC S800 Consensus Body interprets the “standard of care” to be practices that are common to reasonably prudent members of the trade who are recognized in the industry as qualified and competent. Notwithstanding the foregoing, this Standard and Reference Guide is not intended to be either exhaustive or inclusive of all pertinent requirements, methods, or procedures that might be appropriate on a particular carpet inspection project. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the inspector to verify on a case-by-case basis that application of this Standard and Reference Guide is appropriate.