Carpet stains and recurring marks: a question-led guide

New original text from The Care Guide. This is an editorial guide, not a former company document or service offer.

Describe the mark before treating it

Record when you first noticed the mark, the substance if known, the material and any previous action. A mark that returns after drying is a different observation from one that never disappeared. Keep both the date and photographs so a specialist can understand the sequence.

Choose instructions for the actual carpet

Find the manufacturer guidance before selecting a product or method. Fibre, dyes, backing and previous treatments may matter. A technique described for a commercial carpet is not automatically suitable for a domestic rug. Where the material or instructions are unknown, ask its maker or an appropriate specialist.

Deal carefully with a fresh liquid spill

The Carpet and Rug Institute commercial guidance describes blotting with a plain white absorbent cloth and avoiding scrubbing. Check that this fits the item guidance. Do not turn this general principle into permission to apply a chemical, heat or extra water to an unidentified material.

When a mark returns

Note whether the same outline comes back, whether it follows a traffic route and whether the area ever felt fully dry. These are observations, not a diagnosis. Ask the cleaner to assess possible sources below the visible surface and explain the proposed next step rather than repeatedly adding products.

Prepare the room for an assessment

Identify the affected area, protect access to it and tell the provider about fragile furniture or equipment nearby. Ask in advance which items should be moved and by whom. Share product names already applied, including household remedies, even when they seemed to have no effect.

Keep a useful handover

Write: material or label; suspected spill; first noticed; previous products; visible changes; current condition; question for the specialist. For widespread wetness, a leak or suspected mould, describe that situation separately. This document gives no universal stain-removal recipe and does not guarantee restoration.

Source and edition note

Carpet and Rug Institute: commercial maintenance guidance
https://carpet-rug.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Carpet-Maintenance-Guidelines-for-Commercial-Applications.pdf

Current references checked 29 October 2026. Historical labels establish subject, not current validity. Read the applicable item and equipment instructions.