CARPET PROTECTION FILM… What If The Sticky Stays?

So you’re remodeling and you want to put something on top of your carpet to protect it from the builders, construction workers, movers and anyone else that happens to trudge by. There are many different products that might fit the bill, but which one is best?

Adhesive-Backed Protectors
For many years, the most popular type of temporary carpet protection has been a thin sheet of polyethylene film that is coated on one side with an adhesive (think Saran Wrap with spray glue on it). These carpet protection films are relatively inexpensive, which also makes them disposable.

The compounds on the business side of these protective films are called pressure-sensitive adhesives. As the name suggests, these substances require only pressure in order to adhere. They are considered temporary adhesives and are specifically designed to remain on the original surface. Under normal circumstances, that’s exactly what they do. However, there is no such thing as a perfectly stable carpet protection film.

The Dreaded “T” Word
The adhesive on these products can sometimes transfer to the carpet. This transfer is usually a very gradual process, becoming more pronounced with time (and, of course, additional foot traffic).

Manufacturers of these films are well aware of the transfer issue and therefore give recommendations for how long to leave their product on the floor. These maximum allowable use times will vary from 30 to 60 days.

When Things Go Wrong
So, what happens when there is a problem and the adhesive transfers to the carpet? In severe cases, the carpet will feel sticky and the problem will be very obvious. If the amount of adhesive left behind is relatively small, you may not even know it’s there until weeks or months after removing the film.

The adhesive is colorless, so any residue on the floor will be invisible… at first. Later, soil begins to stick to the adhesive and it starts to show as dark spots or soiled areas.

Remedies Can Be Tricky
We have seen firsthand what a tremendous problem it can be to remove these adhesives. The manufacturers of these products make removing the residue sound fairly easy, but the actual cleaning process can be quite difficult.

Adhesives require some type of dry cleaning solvent to remove… yet those same solvent cleaners can damage the backing of the carpet if not used very carefully. These solvents can also soften the adhesive and actually spread it, instead of removing it.

Important Tips
No matter what type of carpet protection film is used, these tips will help avoid some of the more common problems:

- Always read and follow manufacturer’s directions.
- Know the maximum recommended service life of the product you are using (30, 45 or 60 days) and do not exceed this time frame.
Never apply film over a carpet that is not completely dry.

If a carpet has been installed using an adhesive, make sure that the adhesive is fully cured before applying the carpet protection film.

Never use carpet protection film on hard surfaces.

Do not use in situations where film will be subjected to direct sunlight or excessive heat.

Do not use these products on floor coverings made from wool or other natural fibers unless specifically permitted by the film manufacturer.

Alternative Suggestions
First, if new carpet is to be installed, schedule it as late into the project as possible.

If carpet must be protected, consider covering the entire room with some type of drop cloth, attaching it to the baseboard (not the carpet) using painter’s tape. There are also protective runners of various types that do not use adhesives.

Finally, if adhesive-backed carpet film is judged to be the preferred material for the job, be sure to follow all instructions and remove it from the carpet in the shortest possible time.

We Can Help!
Fabrics and floor coverings that are protected by Fiber-Seal’s proprietary treatments are a step ahead when mishaps occur. Add our world-class, no extra charge service and you’ve got a one-two punch that’s more than a match for most stains!

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Or, you can always give us a call at 214.333.9400 or email us at info@FiberSeal.com.