TAKING THE GUESSWORK OUT OF SPECIFYING CARPET

A 6-STEP PLAN USING TEXTURE APPEARANCE RETENTION RATINGS

To make the best carpet choice for your building or facility, you need to arm yourself with the right information. The Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) developed this handy 6-step guide to help architects, buyers and specifiers determine the right commercial carpet for specific areas of use.

▷ STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE INTENDED END-USE AREA

Carpet is used throughout buildings and facilities for many different reasons. The beauty and versatility of carpet enhance the appeal of waiting rooms, lobbies and offices. Carpet is used in public areas and corridors to absorb sound, help prevent slips, and cushion falls. Carpet also provides warmth and comfort in health care and educational settings. So the first step is to identify the environment where the carpet will be used.

▷ STEP 2: UNDERSTAND THE CLASSIFICATION AND TEXTURE APPEARANCE RETENTION RATINGS GUIDELINES

Through a consensus process involving technical experts in the carpet industry and commercial and government specifiers, CRI developed a model specification process that classifies areas of intended use and minimum carpeting texture appearance retention ratings (TARR) for particular areas of use.

A moderate, heavy, severe, or special end-use classification is established for each application based on the level of expected foot traffic in the specific area. For example, private offices or conference areas are classified as moderate use, while corridors or common areas are classified as heavy or severe use. Special end-use involves carpet in transportation settings such as buses, elevators or airports.

Additionally, carpet carries a texture appearance retention rating that gives buyers and specifiers a better indication of how well a particular carpet will perform in a specific end-use application under typical traffic for that application. The ratings are established through simulation wear tests. Based on a 12,000-cycle hexapod exposure conditioning test, commercial carpet should have at least the following:

CLASSIFICATION TARR	Traffic Level Classification
MODERATE	≥ 2.5 TARR
HEAVY	≥ 3.0 TARR
SEVERE	≥ 3.5 TARR
SPECIAL: See last section of Table	> 3.5 TARR

STEP 3: FIND THE END-USE AREAS AND TARR FOR YOUR NEEDS

CRI developed a handy reference chart to help you determine what type of carpet should perform best given the specific location within your facility. However, there may be applications of low or high traffic that could allow for a TARR other than what is recommended. In such cases, it's appropriate to select a different TARR value carpet.

STEP 4: SELECT THE DESIGN AND COLOR

Carpet design plays a key role in disguising stains and wear patterns. For example, in high-traffic areas, select a pattern that works to camouflage stains. While dark colors might appear to be the best choice for hiding soil, they offer sharp contrasts, so dust and light-colored stains show up more easily. Conversely, light carpets readily show dark spots and stains. The optimum selections are color values that fall into the medium range. These colors offer little contrast to accumulated soil and do the best job of concealing stains.

STEP 5: SELECT CARPET TYPE AND BACKING

Industry tests prove that cushion-backed carpets increase comfort and performance. The cushion absorbs the impact of foot traffic, allowing the carpet fiber to look better and last longer. In CRI's *Preparing a Commercial Carpet Specification* using the "Model Specification for Commercial Carpet," you can find carpet specification forms for the following carpet types:

- Broadloom with unitary backing
- Broadloom with synthetic secondary backing
- Broadloom with polymer backing other than latex
- Broadloom with attached polymeric cushion backing

- Broadloom with moisture barrier, polymeric noncushion backing
- Tile carpet
- Tile carpet, cushion backing
- Broadloom carpet, woven

Carpet specification forms for these types of carpet can be found in the model guidelines. Before asking carpet representatives to fill them out, please insert the required TARR value in Part 1.1 of the carpet specification form. The guidelines can be found at http://www.carpet-rug.org/pdf_word_docs/080407_Model_Specifications_Commercial_Carpet.pdf.

STEP 6: SPECIFY A CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE PLAN

A thoughtfully designed and implemented maintenance program performed by qualified personnel who are properly equipped and trained is essential for optimal long-term performance. Whenever possible, plan a carpet maintenance program before installing carpet so such features as budget, personnel, and areas of special consideration can be taken into account. You can also download CRI's commercial guidelines for cleaning and maintenance at www.carpet-rug.org/pdf_word_docs/040504_CM_Guidelines.pdf. You should specify carpet cleaning products, equipment and service providers that have earned CRI's Seal of Approval. For information about the Seal of Approval program and certified products, visit www.carpet-rug/clean.

END-USE APPLICATION	Traffic Level Classification		
	MODERATE ≥ 2.5 TARR	HEAVY ≥ 3.0 TARR	SEVERE ≥ 3.5 TARR
Banks/Credit Unions			
Entrances and customer banking space			●
Open office space		●	
Private offices	●		
Bowling Centers			
Concourses (excluding food service, working and storage areas)			●
Chapels and Other Religious Facilities			
Educational wings		●	
Worship areas		●	
Child Care Centers			●
Clubs			●
Golf Course Clubhouses			
Administrative (no golf shoe traffic)		●	
Dining areas (no golf shoe traffic)			●
Grill areas (golf shoe traffic–special carpet construction)		●	
Pro shops (golf shoe traffic–special carpet construction)		●	
Libraries			
General areas		●	
Conference rooms		●	
Corridors		●	
Lodging Facilities/Dormitories, etc.			
Conference rooms		●	
Combination living/sleeping rooms		●	
Dining facilities			●
Offices		●	
Public areas (lobbies, lounges, TV rooms, day rooms, etc.)			●
Sleeping rooms	●		

END-USE APPLICATION	Traffic Level Classification		
	MODERATE ≥ 2.5 TARR	HEAVY ≥ 3.0 TARR	SEVERE ≥ 3.5 TARR
Medical Facilities (excluding patient treatment areas)			
Assisted living areas		●	
Chapels	●		
Classrooms		●	
Clinical waiting areas (outpatient/pharmacy/ancillary zones)			●
Consultation rooms		●	
Corridors			●
Dining areas			●
Entrance areas (entry mats should be utilized)			●
Libraries		●	
Lobbies			●
Lounges		●	
Offices, private/semiprivate	●		
Patient rooms		●	
Playrooms-OB/GYN-Pediatric clinics			●
Staff sleeping and watch areas	●		
Combination living/sleeping rooms		●	
Multipurpose areas			●
Sleeping rooms	●		
Military Housing Bachelor Enlisted Quarters			
Dining facilities			●
Offices		●	
Public areas (lobbies, lounges, etc.)			●
Sleeping/living rooms		●	
Military Housing Family Housing			
General areas		●	
Sleeping rooms	●		

END-USE APPLICATION	Traffic Level Classification		
	MODERATE ≥ 2.5 TARR	HEAVY ≥ 3.0 TARR	SEVERE ≥ 3.5 TARR
Office Buildings			
Classrooms		●	
Conference rooms		●	
Corridors			●
Entrances			●
Libraries		●	
Lobbies			●
Lounges		●	
Office – Private	●		
Retail Stores			
Offices		●	
Restaurants and cafeteria dining areas			●
Sales areas			●
Theaters			●
Training Buildings/Educational Facilities *(including dependents' schools)*			
Classrooms			●
Corridors			●
Staff/administration offices	●		
Youth Centers			●

SPECIAL END-USE APPLICATION	Special Traffic Level Classification
	SEVERE ≥ 3.5 TARR
Elevators	●
Stairs	●
Transportation	●
Buses	●
Airports – ticket area and concourse	●
Offices – staff and administration	●
Rails	●