| Product | |
|---|---|
| **Supplier** | Flooring2 |
| **Product Type** | Carpet Tile |
| **Number** | ME |
| **Name** | Metaphor |

# Carpet Tile Care and Maintenance Guide

> **Document Version:** 1.0
> **Last Updated:** January 2026

## Important Notice

> **READ BEFORE USE**

This guide provides comprehensive care and maintenance information for modular carpet tile flooring. Following these guidelines will help preserve your floor's appearance, extend its lifespan, and maintain warranty coverage. Always refer to your specific product's care instructions, as requirements may vary by manufacturer and product line.

**Disclaimer:** This guide contains general recommendations based on Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) standards for commercial and residential carpet. We are not responsible for damage resulting from improper care, use of unapproved products, or failure to follow manufacturer-specific guidelines.

## Quick Reference Card

### Daily Care

| Task | Frequency | Tools/Products |
|---|---|---|
| Vacuum high-traffic areas | Daily | CRI-approved vacuum, suction-only or adjustable height |
| Blot spills immediately | As needed | Clean white cloth, approved spot cleaner |
| Walk-off mat maintenance | Daily | Shake out, clean as needed |

### Weekly Care

| Task | Frequency | Tools/Products |
|---|---|---|
| Vacuum all tile areas | 2-3 times weekly | CRI-approved vacuum |
| Inspect seams and edges | Weekly | Visual inspection |
| Spot clean as needed | As needed | CRI-approved spot cleaner |

### Periodic Care

| Task | Frequency | Tools/Products |
|---|---|---|
| Rotate tiles in high-wear areas | Quarterly | Plan and document rotation |
| Deep clean/extraction | Every 12-18 months | Professional service (CRI-certified) |
| Inspect for loose or damaged tiles | Monthly | Visual/physical check |

# Routine Maintenance

## Daily Care

**Vacuuming - Essential for Carpet Tile Longevity:**

Regular vacuuming removes dry soil before it works into carpet fibers and tile backing. For carpet tiles, proper vacuuming technique is especially important to avoid disturbing tile edges.

**Proper Vacuuming Technique:**

- Use a vacuum with adjustable height settings appropriate for tile thickness
- Avoid aggressive beater bars on thin tiles or loose-lay installations
- Vacuum in multiple directions for thorough soil removal
- Pay attention to seams—use crevice tool monthly
- Use slow, overlapping strokes

**Frequency Guidelines by Traffic Level:**

| Traffic Level | Examples | Recommended Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| High Traffic | Entryways, corridors, workstations | Daily |
| Medium Traffic | Conference rooms, private offices, bedrooms | 2-3 times per week |
| Low Traffic | Storage areas, low-use rooms | Weekly |

## Weekly Care

**Tile Inspection:**

- Check for tiles that may have shifted or lifted
- Look for seam separation or gapping
- Identify any tiles with damage, heavy soiling, or staining
- Note tiles that may need rotation or replacement

**Edge and Seam Cleaning:**

- Use crevice attachment along walls and under furniture
- Clean seams carefully to prevent debris buildup
- Remove any debris trapped at tile edges

**Recommended Vacuum Features:**

- □ CRI Seal of Approval certification (Green Label)
- □ Adjustable height settings
- □ Option to disable or adjust beater bar
- □ Good edge cleaning capability
- □ HEPA filtration (especially for commercial spaces)

## Monthly Care

**Deep Vacuuming:**

- Vacuum with slow, deliberate passes
- Focus on traffic patterns and seam areas
- Move furniture to access hidden areas
- Clean under workstations and heavy furniture

**Tile Condition Assessment:**

- Document tiles showing wear
- Plan rotation schedule if needed
- Identify tiles for potential replacement

---

# Spill and Stain Management

## Immediate Response Protocol

> **Golden Rule:** Carpet tile's modular nature is an advantage—stubborn stains can be addressed individually or tiles replaced if necessary. Still, immediate response gives the best results.

**Step 1: Contain the Spill**

- Prevent spreading to adjacent tiles
- For liquids, use clean towels as barriers
- Identify how many tiles are affected

**Step 2: Remove Excess**

- **Liquids:** Blot (never rub!) with clean, white absorbent cloths
- **Semi-solids:** Scrape gently toward center using spoon or dull knife
- **Solids:** Vacuum dry particles or let wet substances dry first

**Step 3: Clean the Area**

- Apply CRI-approved spot cleaner to a clean cloth
- Work from outer edge toward center
- Blot and lift—never scrub
- For severe stains, consider removing tile for more thorough cleaning

**Step 4: Rinse and Dry**

- Apply clean water to neutralize cleaning solution
- Blot thoroughly with dry cloths
- Allow to air dry completely
- Ensure tile lies flat while drying

## Common Stain Removal Guide

| Stain Type | Treatment Method | Products to Use | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Coffee/Tea | Blot, apply solution, blot, rinse | CRI-approved spotter | Treat immediately |
| Red Wine | Blot excess, apply solution | Club soda, then CRI-approved spotter | Multiple treatments may be needed |
| Food Spills | Remove solids, blot, clean | CRI-approved spotter | Address quickly |
| Ink (Ballpoint) | Blot with solvent | Rubbing alcohol on cloth (test first) | May require tile replacement |
| Grease/Oil | Apply dry solvent, blot | Dry-cleaning solvent | Test in hidden area first |
| Pet Accidents | Blot, enzyme cleaner | Enzyme-based pet cleaner | May need to treat or replace backing |
| Gum | Freeze and scrape | Ice cubes, commercial gum remover | Work carefully |
| Adhesive Residue | Solvent treatment | Appropriate adhesive remover | Test compatibility |

## Stain Removal Best Practices

**DO:**

- □ Respond immediately to spills
- □ Blot, never rub or scrub
- □ Work from outside edge toward center
- □ Test cleaners in inconspicuous area
- □ Consider tile removal for deep cleaning
- □ Document which tiles have been treated

**DON'T:**

- □ Never let spills sit untreated
- □ Never over-wet—excess moisture can affect adhesive
- □ Never use bleach or harsh chemicals
- □ Never scrub aggressively—damages fibers and backing

---

# Deep Cleaning

## DIY Deep Cleaning

**Frequency:** Every 6-12 months depending on traffic and soiling

**Carpet Tile Advantage:** Individual tiles can be removed for deep cleaning if needed

**Materials Needed:**

- □ CRI-approved extraction cleaner or low-moisture cleaning solution
- □ Portable extraction machine or approved cleaning system
- □ Clean water for rinsing
- □ Fans for drying

**Procedure:**

1. **Preparation**
   - Vacuum thoroughly
   - Mark tiles for rotation (if planned)
   - Remove any tiles that need intensive treatment
   - Pre-treat spots and traffic areas
2. **Cleaning Process**
   - Use minimal moisture to protect adhesive
   - Low-moisture or encapsulation methods often preferred
   - If extracting, extract thoroughly
   - Avoid over-wetting glue-down tiles
3. **Drying**
   - Use fans to accelerate drying
   - Ensure complete drying before foot traffic
   - Verify tiles lie flat (no curling or lifting)

**Tile Removal for Cleaning:**

- For heavily soiled tiles, remove from floor
- Clean both face and backing if needed
- Allow to dry completely before reinstalling
- Use fresh adhesive tabs or adhesive if needed

## Professional Deep Cleaning

**Recommended Frequency:** Every 12-18 months or as needed

**When to Call a Professional:**

- Overall appearance has dulled
- Traffic patterns are visible
- Periodic cleaning required by warranty
- Large-scale cleaning needed
- Specific soil or stain issues

**Methods Suitable for Carpet Tile:**

| Method | Description | Best For |
|---|---|---|
| Hot Water Extraction | Traditional steam cleaning | Deep soiling, glue-down installations |
| Low-Moisture/Encapsulation | Quick-dry polymer treatment | Routine maintenance, moisture-sensitive areas |
| Bonnet Cleaning | Rotary pad absorbs soil | Light maintenance only (not deep cleaning) |

**Important Notes:**

- Inform cleaner of installation type (glue-down vs. loose-lay)
- Excessive moisture can affect adhesive
- Low-moisture methods often preferred for carpet tile

**Industry Standards:**

- CRI 104 (Commercial Carpet Maintenance Standard)
- IICRC S100 (Standard for Professional Cleaning)

# Approved and Prohibited Products

## Approved Products

| Category | Approved Products | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Spot Cleaner | CRI Seal of Approval certified spotters | Follow directions carefully |
| Deep Cleaner | CRI-approved extraction or encapsulation cleaners | Use appropriate for installation type |
| Enzyme Cleaner | CRI-approved enzyme products | For protein and pet stains |
| Protective Treatment | CRI-approved carpet protectors | Reapply after deep cleaning |

## Prohibited Products

> **WARNING:** Using prohibited products may void warranty and damage tiles or affect adhesive.

| Product Type | Why It's Prohibited | Potential Damage |
|---|---|---|
| Bleach | Destroys dyes and fibers | Permanent discoloration |
| Ammonia (on nylon) | Can damage nylon fibers | Fiber degradation |
| Oil-based cleaners | Attracts soil, affects adhesive | Rapid re-soiling, adhesive failure |
| Abrasive cleaners | Damages fiber surface | Permanent fiber damage |
| Excess water | Compromises adhesive bond | Tile lifting, mold growth |
| Harsh solvents | Can dissolve adhesive | Tile delamination |

## Cleaning Equipment Guidelines

**Approved Equipment:**

- □ CRI-approved vacuums (Green Label certified)
- □ Professional extraction equipment
- □ Low-moisture cleaning systems
- □ Soft brushes for spot treatment

**Prohibited Equipment:**

- □ **Steam mops** - Excessive moisture, affects adhesive
- □ **Aggressive rotary machines** - Can damage tile edges and seams
- □ **Stiff scrub brushes** - Damages fibers
- □ **High-pressure extraction** - Can disturb tiles

---

# Climate and Environmental Control

## Temperature Requirements

| Condition | Recommended Range | Acceptable Range | Risk if Exceeded |
|---|---|---|---|
| Room Temperature | 65°F - 75°F (18°C - 24°C) | 60°F - 85°F (15°C - 29°C) | Adhesive softening, tile shifting |
| Floor Temperature | 65°F - 75°F (18°C - 24°C) | 60°F - 85°F (15°C - 29°C) | Same as above |

## Humidity Requirements

| Condition | Recommended Range | Acceptable Range | Risk if Exceeded |
|---|---|---|---|
| Relative Humidity | 40% - 50% RH | 35% - 65% RH | Too high: mold, adhesive failure; Too low: static, fiber brittleness |

**Humidity Management Tips:**

- Maintain consistent climate (minimize swings)
- Use dehumidifiers in high-humidity environments
- Monitor humidity in basements and below-grade installations
- Address any water intrusion immediately

## Seasonal Considerations

**Winter:**

- Increase vacuuming to manage tracked-in salt and debris
- Monitor humidity—heating systems dry air
- Watch for static electricity buildup
- Ensure entry mats are clean and effective

**Summer:**

- Monitor humidity levels
- Watch for tile expansion/shifting in very hot conditions
- Ensure HVAC maintains consistent temperature
- Increase cleaning frequency if windows are open

**Transition Seasons:**

- Check tiles for any movement after temperature swings
- Deep clean in spring after winter
- Inspect adhesion in fall before heating season

## Sunlight and UV Protection

- Use window treatments to reduce UV exposure
- Rotate tiles periodically to even fading
- Consider UV-filtering window film
- Accept that some fading is natural over time
- Plan furniture placement to minimize uneven exposure

---

# Preventive Care Strategies

## Furniture Protection

**Furniture Legs and Bases:**

- Use furniture cups or glides under all furniture
- Choose cups appropriate for carpet tile thickness
- Avoid small, concentrated weight points
- Check regularly for debris under cups

**Heavy Furniture and Equipment:**

- Distribute weight with broad bases
- Use furniture cups designed for heavy loads
- Never drag—always lift furniture
- Consider weight limits for your specific tile

**Rolling Furniture:**

- Use chair mats under rolling chairs (especially with casters)
- Choose carpet-rated casters (avoid hard plastic wheels)
- Ensure chair mats are appropriate for carpet tile thickness
- Check for tile wear under frequently used chairs

## Entry Point Protection

**Exterior Doors:**

- Install scraper mats outside entrances
- Use absorbent walk-off mats inside (6-12 feet recommended for commercial)
- Clean entry mats frequently
- Replace mats when worn or ineffective

**Interior Transitions:**

- Use transition strips at flooring changes
- Monitor high-traffic intersections for wear
- Consider adding runners in major corridors

## Pet Care (Residential Installations)

**Daily Maintenance:**

- Keep pet nails trimmed
- Clean accidents immediately with enzyme cleaner
- Use waterproof mats under food/water bowls

**Stain Management:**

- Address pet stains promptly
- For urine stains, enzyme treatment essential
- Severely damaged tiles can be replaced

## Damage Prevention

**Protect Against:**

- Rolling loads (use plywood pathways for heavy deliveries)
- Dropped objects (use care in workspaces)
- Chemicals (clean spills immediately)
- Excessive moisture (address water events immediately)

---

# Tile Rotation and Replacement

## Tile Rotation Program

> **Key Advantage:** Carpet tiles can be rotated to extend floor life and even wear patterns

**When to Rotate:**

- Traffic patterns become visible
- Quarterly in heavy commercial use
- Annually in residential settings
- When individual tiles show uneven wear

**Rotation Strategy:**

1. **Map your floor** - Number or code tiles for tracking
2. **Identify wear zones** - Entry areas, corridors, under chairs
3. **Identify low-wear zones** - Under furniture, closets, storage
4. **Swap tiles** - Move high-wear tiles to low-wear areas
5. **Document rotation** - Track which tiles moved where

**Rotation Best Practices:**

- Maintain pile direction consistency after rotation
- Check that replacement adhesive is adequate
- Clean tiles before reinstalling in new location
- Keep spare tiles from original installation for replacements

## Tile Replacement

**When to Replace:**

- Permanent stains that can't be cleaned
- Physical damage (cuts, tears, burns)
- Backing damage or delamination
- Severe crushing that won't recover

**Replacement Procedure:**

1. Remove damaged tile (cut adhesive bond if necessary)
2. Clean subfloor of old adhesive residue
3. Apply fresh adhesive or adhesive tabs
4. Install replacement tile (match pile direction!)
5. Press firmly and allow adhesive to set

**Spare Tile Management:**

- Keep 5-10% extra tiles from installation
- Store flat in climate-controlled area

- Rotate spares into use occasionally to ensure color match
- Order replacements promptly if spares are depleted

---

# Room-Specific Guidelines

## Offices and Workstations

- Use chair mats under rolling chairs
- Vacuum workstation areas daily
- Pay attention to areas under desks
- Rotate tiles under high-use chairs

## Corridors and Hallways

- Highest wear areas—vacuum daily
- Implement tile rotation program
- Consider commercial-grade tiles for these areas
- Monitor seams for lifting or gapping

## Conference Rooms

- Moderate traffic—vacuum 2-3 times weekly
- Protect from rolling chair damage during meetings
- Watch for food/beverage spills
- Plan furniture moves carefully

## Kitchens/Break Rooms

- Clean spills immediately
- Use entry mats at transitions from other flooring
- Consider moisture-resistant tiles
- More frequent cleaning required

## Basements (Residential)

- Monitor humidity continuously
- Use dehumidifiers as needed
- Check for moisture intrusion regularly
- Choose tiles rated for below-grade installation
- Watch for musty odors indicating mold

## Areas with Radiant Heat

- Verify tiles are rated for radiant heat
- Do not exceed maximum floor surface temperature (typically 85°F / 29°C)
- Monitor for any tile movement as temperature changes
- Ensure consistent temperature—avoid dramatic swings

---

# Troubleshooting Common Issues

## Tile Lifting or Curling

**Symptoms:**

- Tile edges curling upward
- Tiles not lying flat
- Visible gaps at seams

**Possible Causes:**

- Adhesive failure
- Moisture under tiles
- Temperature extremes
- Improper installation

**Solutions:**

- Re-adhere with fresh adhesive
- Address moisture source
- Replace adhesive tabs (loose-lay)
- Consult installer for widespread issues

**Prevention:**

- Maintain consistent climate
- Avoid excess moisture during cleaning
- Use appropriate adhesive for conditions

## Visible Seams or Gapping

**Symptoms:**

- Gaps between tiles
- Visible backing at seams
- Tiles appear to have shifted

**Possible Causes:**

- Temperature fluctuations
- Adhesive deterioration
- Initial installation issues
- Heavy rolling loads

**Solutions:**

- Reposition tiles and re-adhere
- Allow temperature to stabilize
- Replace with fresh tiles if backing shows

**Prevention:**

- Maintain consistent temperature
- Avoid temperature swings
- Use appropriate adhesive

## Traffic Pattern Wear

**Symptoms:**

- Visible wear in walkways
- Duller appearance in high-traffic areas
- Fiber crushing in paths

**Possible Causes:**

- High traffic without adequate maintenance
- Infrequent vacuuming
- Sand and grit accumulation
- Normal wear (can be managed)

**Solutions:**

- Implement tile rotation program
- Replace worn tiles from spare stock
- Increase cleaning frequency
- Professional cleaning may restore appearance

**Prevention:**

- Vacuum high-traffic areas daily
- Rotate tiles quarterly
- Use entry mats effectively
- Deep clean regularly

## Odors

**Symptoms:**

- Musty smell (moisture issue)
- Chemical odor (adhesive or new product)
- Organic odors

**Possible Causes:**

- Moisture trapped under tiles
- New product off-gassing
- Spills not properly cleaned
- Mold or mildew under tiles

**Solutions:**

- For new product odor, increase ventilation (normal for 1-2 weeks)
- Remove tiles to inspect for moisture
- Professional treatment for mold issues
- Replace tiles if backing is contaminated

**Prevention:**

- Maintain proper humidity
- Clean spills immediately
- Ensure adequate ventilation

## When to Seek Professional Help

Contact a flooring professional if:

- Widespread tile lifting or curling
- Suspected mold or moisture under tiles
- Large-scale cleaning needed
- Persistent odors despite cleaning
- Need guidance on rotation or replacement
- Warranty claim situations

---

# Common Mistakes to Avoid

## Cleaning Mistakes

| Mistake | Why It's Harmful | Correct Approach |
|---|---|---|
| Over-wetting tiles | Damages adhesive, causes curling | Use minimal moisture, low-moisture methods |
| Scrubbing stains | Damages fibers, spreads stain | Blot gently from outside in |
| Using harsh chemicals | Damages fibers, voids warranty | Use CRI-approved products only |
| Infrequent vacuuming | Soil grinds into fibers | Vacuum high-traffic daily |
| Ignoring seams | Debris accumulates, tile lifting | Clean seams monthly |

## Maintenance Mistakes

| Mistake | Why It's Harmful | Correct Approach |
|---|---|---|
| Not rotating tiles | Uneven wear, shortened life | Rotate quarterly or annually |
| No spare tiles | Can't replace damaged tiles | Keep 5-10% extra from installation |
| Ignoring climate control | Tile movement, adhesive issues | Maintain 65-75°F, 40-50% RH |
| Allowing rolling loads | Damages tiles and adhesive | Use plywood pathways |

## Protection Mistakes

| Mistake | Why It's Harmful | Correct Approach |
|---|---|---|
| No entry mats | Tracks soil onto tiles | Use exterior and interior mats |
| Wrong chair casters | Creates wear patterns | Use carpet-rated casters or mats |
| Dragging furniture | Damages tiles and seams | Always lift furniture |
| Missing furniture cups | Point loading damages tiles | Use appropriate cups under all legs |

---

# Maintenance Schedule Checklist

## Daily Checklist

- □ Vacuum high-traffic areas
- □ Blot any spills immediately
- □ Check entry mats, clean if needed
- □ Visual inspection of main areas

## Weekly Checklist

- □ Vacuum all carpet tile areas (2-3 times)
- □ Clean edges and under furniture edges
- □ Inspect seams for debris buildup
- □ Spot clean any stains

## Monthly Checklist

- □ Deep vacuum with slow passes
- □ Clean seams with crevice tool
- □ Inspect tiles for lifting or damage
- □ Check furniture cups/glides
- □ Document any tiles needing attention

## Quarterly Checklist

- □ Rotate tiles per rotation plan (if implemented)
- □ Deep clean traffic areas
- □ Inspect all seams and edges
- □ Check spare tile inventory
- □ Address any loose or damaged tiles

## Annual Checklist

- □ Schedule professional deep cleaning
- □ Comprehensive tile condition assessment
- □ Update rotation plan
- □ Replace any worn tiles from spare stock
- □ Review and order additional spare tiles if needed
- □ Consider applying carpet protector

---

# Warranty Considerations

## Maintaining Warranty Coverage

To preserve your warranty coverage:

- □ Follow manufacturer's care and maintenance guidelines
- □ Vacuum regularly using CRI-approved equipment
- □ Have professional cleaning every 12-18 months
- □ Use only approved cleaning products
- □ Maintain proper environmental conditions
- □ Keep spare tiles for replacement

- □ Document maintenance activities

## Actions That May Void Warranty

- Using unapproved cleaning methods or products
- Failure to maintain as recommended
- Improper installation or repairs
- Using incompatible adhesives for replacement
- Exposure to excessive moisture or temperature
- Physical abuse or damage
- Failure to address water damage promptly

## Documentation Recommendations

Keep records of:

- □ Original purchase information and warranty documents
- □ Product identification (style, color, lot numbers)
- □ Professional cleaning receipts with methods used
- □ Tile rotation documentation
- □ Tile replacement records
- □ Any warranty communications

---

# Additional Resources

## Industry Associations

- **Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI)** - carpet-rug.org
  - Seal of Approval product listings
  - Commercial and residential standards
  - Care and maintenance guidelines
- **IICRC** - iicrc.org
  - Certified cleaner directory
  - Cleaning and restoration standards

## Certification Programs

- **CRI Seal of Approval** - Certified vacuums and cleaning products
- **IICRC Certification** - Professional cleaning technicians
- **CRI 104** - Commercial Carpet Maintenance Standard

## Where to Find Help

- **Product-specific questions:** Contact the manufacturer
- **Care products:** Visit carpet-rug.org for CRI-approved products
- **Professional services:** Seek IICRC-certified professionals
- **Spare tiles:** Contact original retailer or manufacturer
- **Warranty questions:** Contact your flooring retailer

---

*This care and maintenance guide is provided for general reference based on Carpet and Rug Institute recommendations for modular carpet tile.*