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1999 Technical Bulletins

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TB9952

PROPER APPLICATION TECHNIQUES FOR SOLVENT-CARRIED FABRIC PROTECTORS

Many professional cleaners enjoy the benefits of applying solvent carried fluorochemicals, (such as Steam Way FabriCover II®) as a stain and soil resistant treatment for delicate upholstery fabrics and area rugs that contain natural fibers. Because they are being carried by solvents, they dry faster than conventional water carried fluorochemicals (such as Steam Way FabriCover® Plus.) Solvent carried fluorochemicals represent a large advance in solvent based soil and stain repelling technology. Like all solvent carried fabric protectors, FabriCover II® must be handled with good industrial hygiene procedures that minimize the exposure of humans and animals to it. Solvent carried fluorochemicals are carried in odorless mineral spirits and all brands of this type of product should be handled and applied with the precautions out lined below.

Any time you are applying the solution, you should wear a respirator and use proper ventilation. Keep the spray tip of your sprayer below your knees. Do not apply at a pressure greater than 50 psi. Avoid contact with eyes or skin. Consider the use of safety goggles. Before you start spraying:

- Set up cross ventilation, open doors and windows, place an exhaust fan or air mover pointing out a window or door to increase exhaust.
- Remove all people and pets from application and exposure area. We recommend that home or building occupants be vacated from the premises during application and for 4 to 6 hours afterward.
- All personnel that remain in the application and exposure area should be fitted with a respirator with an organic vapor cartridge.
- Turn off air conditioning units or heating units and remove all ignition sources.
- Do not apply at pressures greater than 50 psi. Never use a paint sprayer to apply the product.

After spraying, the solvent will continue to evaporate, so you must do the following until the solvent vapor concentration is below 500ppm (usually about 30-60 minutes):

- Continue cross ventilation
- Keep people and pets out of the spray area.
- Continue to wear respirators in the spray area.
- Do not expose the treated fabric to open flame or other ignition sources.

After the solvent dries, only the fluorochemical protection is left on the fabric. It is non-hazardous and does not create allergic sensitivity reactions in most people. As with all chemicals, if your customer expresses concerns about allergic or chemical sensitivities, have their physician review the chemical label and material safety data sheet prior to application. The fabric will be dry to the touch after 30-60 minutes and is completely cured and ready-to-use within 24 hours. Because of all these variables involved and other factors, Steam Way does not recommend the use of solvent carried fluorochemicals on synthetic wall-to-wall carpeting that has synthetic backing materials.

With all of these necessary precautions, one may wonder why use them at all. A review of the benefits of FabriCover II® is in order. Traditionally, many cleaners have applied silicone/copolymer resin protectors when they were concerned about the over-application of water. However, solvent carried fluorochemicals will not yellow on light colored fabrics like some silicones will. Also solvent carried fluorochemicals will resist oil based soiling, instead of contributing to a build-up of oil based soiling like some silicones do. Because FabriCover II® is fast drying, it makes it ideal for water sensitive natural and delicate fabrics, such as wool and cotton. It just doesn't make sense to work so hard to clean some types of fabrics and area rugs without overwetting them, and then apply a gallon of a water carried fluorochemical back onto every 200 square feet (60 square meters) of fabric. Properly formulated solvent carried fluorochemicals will leave a softer feel to the fabric and are easier to demonstrate with, in showing your customers how well protectors work. Consider calling your local supplier and ordering a container of a solvent carried fluorochemical to allow you to extend the profitable aftercare selling of protectors to specialized fabrics and rugs.

About the authors:

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