



# Carpet Care and the Use of Deicers

## Introduction

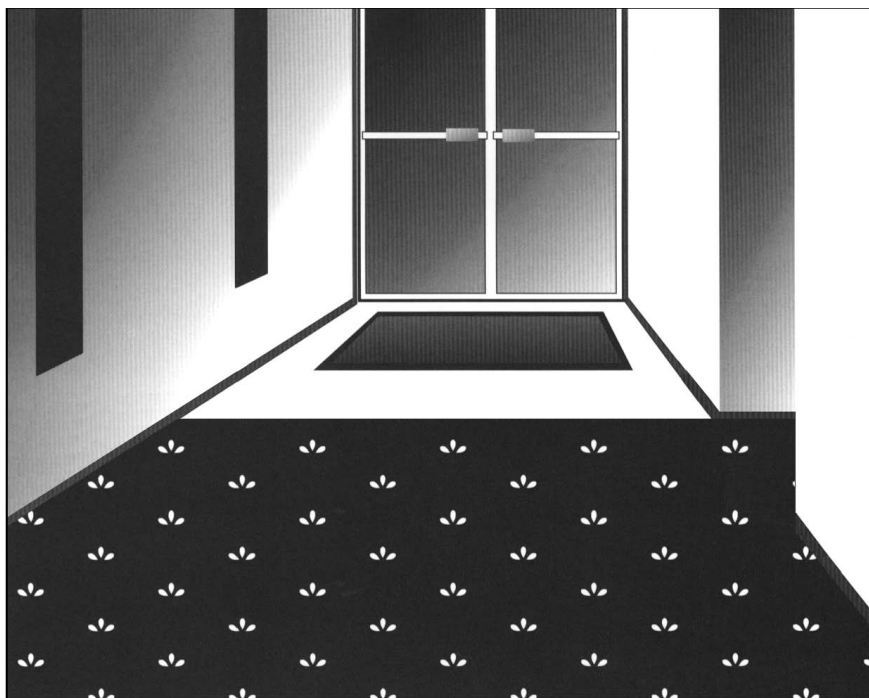
The tracking of deicers into office complexes, schools, and hospitals poses a cleaning challenge to building managers and maintenance personnel. However, this challenge can be minimized by following several winter maintenance tips. This review will explain how to reduce the amount of deicer tracked into buildings and how to properly clean deicers from carpets.

## How Do Deicers Track?

When deicers are applied to snow and ice, the obvious result is slush, meltwater and a small amount of residual deicer. Just as obvious is the fact that foot traffic through this slush, meltwater and residual deicer will track some of the material indoors. While there is no way to completely avoid tracking, there are ways to minimize it.

## Reduce Tracking

Limiting the exposure of carpets to deicers starts with correct use and application. Deicers should be used sparingly; use only enough to break the bond between the ice and the pavement. Once this bond is broken, removal of the remaining ice, snow, or slush should be accomplished by mechanical means. If deicer applications can be made well prior to periods of peak foot traffic, tracking can be significantly reduced. It is a sign of over-application when significant quantities of solid deicer remain on a surface that is basically free of snow and ice.



Another option that will help minimize the exposure of carpets to deicers is the liberal use and maintenance of absorbent walk-off mats. Field studies show that the majority of soil tracked onto carpets is deposited within the first 30 feet of the point of transition from hard surface to carpeted surface. Mats are one of the simplest, yet most effective, means of cutting down on tracking. Absorbent mats placed in entrances, lobby doorways, and immediately in front of access doors will trap slush before it can enter—but only if an adequate mat surface is provided; at least 12 to 15 feet long for high traffic areas. The generous use of walk-off mats helps to minimize the amount of deicer tracked throughout a building.

## Carpet Cleaning

Most deicers are completely water soluble, and are easily removed with a carpet cleaning machine using only hot water. Use of detergent is generally not recommended unless the detergent is pH neutral or citric-based (slightly acidic).

## For More Information

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## Manufacturer Cleaning Recommendations

One manufacturer has put together the following procedures to remove ice melters from carpet.

**Table 1—Cleaning Recommendations for Commercial Carpet—Cut Pile and Cut Carpet Pile**

Carpet Type	Cleaning Recommendations
Commercial Carpet - Carpet Pile	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pile lifting</li> <li>2. Rotary scrubbing (shampoo)</li> <li>3. High temperature (180 to 190°F) hot water extraction rinsing.</li> </ol>
Cut Carpet Pile	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Vacuuming with a good heavy-duty commercial vacuum cleaner with a power driven brush.</li> <li>2. High temperature hot water extract (180 to 190°F) with plain water.</li> <li>3. After the carpet dries, hot water extract with a neutral pH or citric-based (slightly acidic) detergent.</li> <li>4. Hot water extraction (150 to 160°F) with 5% isopropyl alcohol/95% water solution.</li> </ol>

## Cleaning Methods

Several other manufacturers suggest a Hot Water Extraction process to clean deicers out of carpets. A brief outline of this process is given in Table 2.

**Table 2—Hot Water Extraction Cleaning**

Cleaning Method	Process
Hot Water Extraction (Steam)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The hot water method injects water into the carpet pile to loosen the soil and then immediately vacuums the water and suspended dirt out of the carpet.</li> <li>2. Manufacturers recommend against the use of detergents unless the carpet is thoroughly rinsed after washing. When detergents dry, they can attract grease, oils and soils.</li> <li>3. A water temperature of 100 to 150°F at the wand is desired, and the pressure should be 125 to 150 psi.</li> <li>4. It is important to remove as much of the water as possible.</li> <li>5. The carpet must be allowed to dry.</li> </ol>

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