



IICRC Consumer Floor and Furnishings Care Information

- 1. Fire Retardant or “Ticking” Issues**
- 2. Brown out of Browning**
- 3. Natural Fabric Issues**
- 4. Fabric Protector not Bleeding**
- 5. Urine Odors-Upholstery**
- 6. Smoke Odors**
- 7. Car interior odors, smoke, milk, pet, gas, etc.**

1. Fire Retardant or “Ticking” Issues

Many modern down/feather-filled upholstered pieces are treated internally with a flame retardant on the ticking (the cloth bag that surrounds the inner cushion material). This treatment can create serious staining or color change with the upholstered fabric, especially if exposed to moisture.

Humidity, damp clothes or pets, spot cleaning, skin oils, perspiration, or a professional cleaning can all contribute to discoloration or random staining on cotton and linen fabrics. There is no rhyme or reason in how or when the discoloration occurs, and, in many cases, correction is impossible. In some instances, staining occurs when no moisture was ever present, and only age and poor chemistry can be blamed.

The Federal Trade Commission has recently banned the application of these problematic retardants in the US.





2. Brown out or Browning

Cellulosic browning occurs when plant-based upholstery fibers such as linen or cotton get wet and dry slowly. Sugars, or lignin in the plant fiber cells, rise to the surface and leave a yellow to brown discoloration. Water rings are a form of browning that can occur from spills or spot cleaning attempts.

If your upholstery experienced browning after it dried, contact your IICRC Technician or Firm to set up a visit to have the issue corrected. **DO NOT** attempt to fix browning yourself.

Care Tips:

- Dry vacuum natural fiber upholstery frequently to prevent embedded soil build-up
- Have a professional IICRC certified cleaner apply a fabric protection product when new and reapplied after each professional cleaning.
- Consider using washable arm covers



3. Natural Fabric Issues

Natural fiber fabrics have long been valued for their feel and texture as well as their appearance. Many also appreciate natural fibers for their low impact on the environment. While modern synthetic upholstery fabrics can handle the aggressive measures it takes to remove heavy soiling, most natural fiber fabrics require a lighter touch.

Cotton, linen, silk, wool, and rayon fabrics are all susceptible to color loss, bleeding, texture change, shrinkage, yellowing, or worse if not handled with care by an experienced IICRC certified textile specialist. Specialty water-based cleaning agents and tools must be carefully chosen and used with expertise to prevent damage to the fabric.

There are low-moisture and dry-cleaning methods available that are very safe but, unfortunately, are usually not very effective on heavy soiling. If a natural fiber upholstery piece has been neglected or abused, there can be no guarantee that the end result will meet your expectations.

Using a pair of well-worn cotton blue jeans as an example, with every wash cycle, some shrinkage, color loss, thinning of the material, and some permanent staining occurs. For this reason, most natural fiber upholstery is not recommended for daily use areas.

There are many textiles that are a combination or blend of natural and synthetic fibers, and these considerations apply to those fabrics as well.

It is highly recommended that a fabric protector formulated for natural fibers be applied. The protective barrier will help keep stains from setting, make vacuuming dry soils more effective, and will allow for more aggressive measures to be used during spot or professional cleanings.



4. Fabric protector, not beading:

When an aftermarket fabric protection product is applied to fabric, there often is the misconception that liquids will bead-up and sit on the surface of the fibers. While this may occur immediately and shortly after application, it will not likely continue. As the furniture is used, the surface layer will break down; however, the individual fibers will still be coated and protected. REMEMBER- fabric protection is not plastic sheeting; it does not plug holes or gaps.

Fabric protectants do three basic things:

- 1-Make general vacuuming more effective because fewer soil particles cling to the carpet or fabric fiber strands, allowing you to remove more dry soil when you vacuum.
- 2-Provide additional time to blot up spills before they start to absorb into the fibers.
- 3-Yield better results from regularly scheduled cleaning as well as spot cleaning since soil and stains have not penetrated into the fiber as deeply.

Protectors DO NOT negate the laws of chemistry or physics, meaning it does not plug holes or gaps in fabric weaves, nor does it keep soil from getting on the carpet or fabric.



5. Urine Odors-Upholstery

Urine odors may be difficult to remove from your upholstered furniture. Urine typically penetrates beneath fabric into the fiberfill or down inside of cushions and into structural materials beneath the body of upholstered furniture.

Your IICRC certified technician may be able to inject odor treatments beneath the fabric but will not be able to tell if the treatment has reached all of the urine deposits. In addition, there may be risks of permanent staining from materials beneath the fabric that can bleed as a result of the treatment. Replacing deeply contaminated seat and pillow cores, along with a thorough cleaning and deodorization of the covers, may be necessary for heavy contamination.

Your cleaning technician is not responsible for hidden damage and will need your approval that you understand this risk before any odor treatments are applied. It is recommended to contact an IICRC-Certified Odor Control Technician and Upholstery Cleaning Technician.



6. Smoke odors

Smoke odors can be difficult to remove from your upholstered furniture. Tiny particles in the smoke penetrate the fabric and into the foam or down cushions and into structural materials beneath the body of cloth furniture.

Your IICRC certified technician may be able to inject odor treatments beneath the fabric but will not be able to tell if the treatment has reached all affected areas. In addition, there may be risks of permanent staining from materials beneath the fabric that can bleed after treatment. Replacing deeply contaminated seat and pillow cores, along with a thorough cleaning and deodorizing of the covers, may be necessary for heavy contamination.

Your cleaning technician should not be held responsible for hidden damage and will need your approval that you understand this risk before any odor treatments are applied. It is recommended to contact an IICRC- Certified Fire and Smoke Restoration Technician and Upholstery Cleaning Technician.



7. Car interior odors, smoke, milk, pet, gas, etc.

Many odors, especially those originating from a liquid source, may be difficult to remove from your vehicle's upholstery, carpet, and liner material. Liquid spills typically penetrate beneath the fabric into the foam inside of cushions and into structural materials below.

Your IICRC certified technician may be able to inject odor treatments beneath the fabric but will not be able to tell if the treatment has reached all of the affected areas.

Stubborn odors such as cigarette and dog dander travel throughout the vehicle contaminating the HVAC system, liner materials, foam cushions, and other unreachable areas. Some service providers offer a fogging or ozone system to treat vapor molecules in hard-to-reach areas.

Replacing deeply contaminated seat foam and carpet cushions along with a thorough cleaning and deodorizing of the complete interior, fabric, and carpet may be necessary for heavy contamination.