

STOP THAT DIRTY!

by Arely Castellón

Dirt, dust, grime, and bacteria seem to be constants in every building and home. We dust, wipe, clean, and mop; yet it seems sometimes that the process is never-ending. What can we do to minimize dirt and dust accumulation in a proactive fashion?

Entry Mats

Simple in nature and functional by design, entrance mats halt the dirt and grime at the door.

Without mats, dirt is tracked in where it scratches, and potentially, damages your floors, and eventually ends up embedded in your carpet. With foot traffic, this dirt is then agitated and spreads as dust throughout your property, where it settles into air ducts and everywhere else (including the blinds of your largest tenant).

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and the Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) recommend using matting of at least 10 to 15 feet, so as to capture as much as 85 to 95 percent of contaminants. It is not a cure-all, but a terrific start.

Safety—

An Additional Benefit

Sometimes overlooked, mats placed on both the interior and exterior of entrances serve as a safety measure. Inclement weather

can quickly make a marble floor subject to slips and falls, when not served by an entry mat. Slippery conditions provide a potential liability, and while an open marble lobby is beautiful, safety comes first.

Entry Mat Options

Options are available, from the plushiest of qualities to durable and well-made mats, manufactured from recycled soda bottles, tires, and grease obtained from restaurant grease traps. Nubs and nosing add to the aesthetics and durability.

HEPA Filter Vacuums

Advanced filtration technology significantly improves the capture of microscopic dust, as compared to just a few years ago. The objective of the four or five level filtration systems in HEPA vacuums is to filter the air at each filtration level, so that 99.9 percent of micron particles, as small as 0.5 micron, is captured, resulting in less dust throughout the facility. This filtration provides cleaner air.

Certification from the CRI (Carpet and Rug Institute) further assures that carpet cleaning product manufacturers pass rigorous standards, which helps protect the carpet investment in every building. Models range from stand-up vacuums with nozzles and multiple cleaning tools, to backpack models that provide great flexibility and reach to areas that might otherwise be missed.

HVAC Filters

While mats will prevent dirt from entering and HEPA filter vacuums trap dust, green products and tools, combined with sustainable cleaning practices, will remove dirt. But what is the additional step that will keep the interior clean? HVAC filters. However, they must either be cleaned regularly or replaced frequently, depending on the HVAC unit. This ensures the building's indoor air quality is the best it can be. No amount of dusting will keep a particular area from accumulating dust if HVAC filters are not clean. If the cleaning crew is cleaning properly, dust should be removed from the exterior of the air vents on a frequent basis. If, however, the dust is accumulating in less than a 3–4 week period, the filters should be checked and cleaned more frequently.

The U.S. Green Building Council estimates that we spend as much as 90 percent of our time indoors, and we need to make sure that indoor air quality is as clean as it can be by being dust-free. The combination of entry mats and frequent changing and cleaning of HVAC filters can go a long way to complementing cleaning, ensuring your building occupants are breathing clean air.

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