



## Cleaning Household Linens and Furnishings

### Cleaning Flood-Soiled Pillows and Mattresses

#### Mattresses

Due to the complex construction of modern mattresses, renovation is usually not possible. It is best to buy a good used mattress or a new mattress.

If a mattress must be used temporarily, scrape off surface dirt and wash with a bleach solution ( $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water) to clean and disinfect the mattress. Use gloves when washing the fabric and then expose the mattress to the sun. Turn occasionally to dry. Household fans may also speed up the drying process. Cover mattress with plastic or a rubber sheet before using it.

#### Pillows

##### Feather Pillows

If ticking is in good condition, wash feathers and ticking together. To ensure that feathers do not come out of the ticking, put another pillow case over the pillow and secure the seams.

- ① Prior to placing in second case, open a few inches of the ticking seam to opposite corners of the pillow, turn edges and sew loosely with strong thread or fasten with safety pins.
- ② Brush off surface dirt.
- ③ Wash in machine or by hand in warm (not hot) suds 15 to 20 minutes. Use a disinfectant in the wash cycle. In an automatic washer, do not wash more than two pillows at a time.
- ④ Rinse at least three times in clear, warm water.
- ⑤ Spin off water or gently squeeze out as much water as possible. Do not put pillows through wringer.
- ⑥ Dry in an automatic dryer at moderate heat setting, in a warm room with a fan, or across two or three clotheslines. Put several bath towels or a clean tennis shoe in the dryer with pillows to

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speed up drying and to keep the pillows moving. Allow at least two hours. Shake up feathers occasionally to hasten drying.

If ticking is not in good condition or if pillow is badly soiled, wash feathers and ticking separately:

“Put several bath towels or a clean tennis shoe in the dryer with the pillows to speed up drying and to keep the pillows moving.”

- ① Use a tightly-woven large pillow case which is two or three times larger than the ticking.
- ② Open one edge of ticking.
- ③ Sew open edges of the ticking and the bag together.
- ④ Shake the feathers from the ticking to the muslin bag.
- ⑤ Close seam of bag.
- ⑥ Wash bag of feathers in lukewarm, sudsy water and disinfectant.
- ⑦ Repeat if necessary.
- ⑧ Rinse in lukewarm water, changing water several times.
- ⑨ Squeeze out as much water as possible by hand. Don't use a wringer.
- ⑩ To air-dry, hang on line by two corners. Change position end to end and shake feathers occasionally to speed up drying.
- ⑪ Wash the ticking if still usable. With a sponge, apply a starch solution to the inside of the ticking or use a spray starch.
- ⑫ Transfer clean feathers to the clean, sanitized starched ticking, using the same methods as for emptying.
- ⑬ Close seam of ticking.

It is very important to completely dry the feathers to reduce potential odors. If pillows have been badly soiled, it may not be possible to remove all objectionable odors.

#### Polyester Fiberfill Pillows

- ① Brush off surface dirt.
- ② Wash by hand or in a washing machine in warm water and low-sudsing detergent. Add a disinfectant to the wash water. Flush water through pillow by compressing it (twisting and wringing will tear filling). Change water and repeat if necessary.
- ③ Rinse three times in clear, warm water.
- ④ Spin off water in automatic machine. Tumble dry in dryer at moderate setting with several bath towels or press out as much as possible by hand and hang on line outdoors to dry.

## Foam Rubber or Urethane Pillows

- ① Remove cover. Brush off surface dirt.
- ② Follow manufacturer's directions if they are available.  
Otherwise, soak in cool water; then wash in warm suds by hand. Use a bathtub or large sink. Then wash by pushing down on pillow, releasing, and pushing down again. Rinse the same way in lukewarm water.
- ③ Gently squeeze or spin out excess water. Blot with towels.
- ④ Dry away from heat or sunlight. Do not dry in dryer unless on an air only setting. Pillows may dry very slowly in the air. If the pillows are old they may crumble.

## Cleaning Flood-Soiled Blankets, Quilts, Comforters and Linen

### Blankets, Quilts and Comforters

Wash only one blanket, quilt or comforter at a time.

- ① Shake and brush to remove surface dirt. Follow maker's laundry directions if available. Otherwise, proceed as follows.
- ② Soak at least 15 minutes in lukewarm water; turn two or three times during soak period. Several soak periods may be beneficial depending on the amount of soil lodged in fibers. Change water for each soak period.
- ③ Wash using a mild detergent, disinfectant and lukewarm water. Immerse blanket and work suds in gently, using as little agitation as possible.
- ④ Rinse in several changes of lukewarm water. Soak each time for five minutes turning once or twice by hand. Extract as much water as possible.
- ⑤ Hang blanket over two lines to dry so it forms an M-shape, or dry it in preheated dryer with several large dry bath towels. Remove blanket from dryer while still damp and hang over two lines to finish drying. Gently stretch blanket into shape.
- ⑥ Brush blanket on both sides to raise nap. Steam press binding, using synthetic setting on iron. Wash lightweight quilts following directions for wool blankets. Dry outdoors in sunlight, if possible, to remove unpleasant odors.

You may need to take thick comforters apart and wash cover and filling separately.

## Washable Woolen Bedding

- ① Shake and brush well to remove loose dirt. Wash in lukewarm (barely warm) water with mild soap or detergent. Use a disinfectant.
- ② Dry in warm place or in direct sunlight.

## Electric Blankets

Follow manufacturer's directions, if available. Most manufacturers recommend electric blankets be washed, not dry cleaned. Cover plug with heavy cloth and follow instructions above. Avoid bending wiring. Do not put electric blankets through a wringer or dry in a dryer, unless manufacturer recommends. To dry, squeeze down blanket lengthwise and hang over two lines.

## Sheets, Towels and Linens



- ① Brush off as much loose dirt as possible.
- ② Rinse mud-stained fabrics in cold water to take out particles of soil lodged in fibers.
- ③ Wash in warm suds and disinfectant several times, if necessary. To avoid setting stains do not use hot water. Rinse well.
- ④ If stains remain after several washings, try bleaching white cottons and linens. Do not over-bleach. Sun drying will aid bleaching. Bleaches may be used on some colored fabrics; follow directions on bleach package.

## Cleaning Flood-Soiled Rugs and Carpets

It is likely that rugs and carpets will have to be cleaned by a professional rug cleaner. However, you can try the following cleaning methods. Dry rugs and carpets as soon as possible to prevent mildew. Mildew is a spreading gray-white mold that stains and rots fabrics.

- ① First, remove as much moisture as possible using a dry-wet vacuum cleaner. Dry blankets and towels can also be used to blot up excess moisture. Lay towels on the wet floor and walk on them to absorb moisture.
- ② Then, pull up water-logged rugs immediately to prevent further damage to the floor. If possible, dry small rugs outdoors in sunlight.

- ③ To get air and heat to carpets, open windows if weather permits or use household electric fans or electric lights suspended on coat hangers. Do not shampoo carpets until they are 100% dry.
- ④ After carpet is dry, thoroughly vacuum or sweep to get rid of dirt and debris. Move vacuum cleaner slowly to pick up more dirt. Clean off as much crusted dirt and sediment as possible before shampooing.



## Shampooing

Note: Some rugs may shrink when shampooed.

- ① Use a commercial rug shampoo which may be applied to the carpet with an electrical rug shampooer, a manual applicator, a sponge mop or a hand brush.
- ② Electrical shampooers agitate carpet fibers and work shampoo into the pile, removing soil. Do not use them on shag-type carpeting because the long pile can be tangled in the brushes.
- ③ After cleaning each section of the carpet, brush the wet pile in one direction with the applicator.
- ④ When the foam has dried thoroughly, vacuum the carpet to remove dry shampoo and loose dirt.
- ⑤ If carpet must be disinfected, dip sponge mop in a weak bleach solution ( $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon chlorine bleach to 1 cup water). Wring out sponge and mop carpet in sections. Use as little water as possible. Caution: Bleach may discolor carpet. Test bleach mixture in an out-of-the-way place before applying.
- ⑥ Rinse several times with clear water, wringing most of the water from the mop each time. Change the rinse water as it becomes dirty.
- ⑦ Blot up remaining moisture with bath towels or other soft absorbent material.

After shampooing, dry rugs or carpets quickly. Hang rugs on line if possible, or lay them out flat in a warm, dry place. An electric fan will speed up drying. Carpets and rugs should be thoroughly dried to avoid future moisture and odor problems.

Even though the surface seems dry, any moisture remaining at the base of the fiber tufts will cause mildew or rot. If you must walk on the carpet before it is dry, put down brown paper. Vacuum again when dry, and brush the nap in one direction.