CFI STUDY GUIDE
PROVEN CARPET INSTALLATION METHODS

The CFI Study Guide contains information that leads to a successful carpet installation and achieves customer satisfaction every time!

Everyone involved from the sale of the carpet, to the estimating process and the installation should be aware of what is required to achieve customer satisfaction.

Review and discuss these procedures with the entire staff.

It’s a “win-win” situation for everyone!
THE CFI INSTALLER
1. CFI Certified Installer is identified by shirt and ID Badge and proudly displays CFI logo
2. CFI Certified Installer is dressed in a professional manner; no torn clothing or offensive logos
3. CFI logo is worn or displayed ONLY by those who are certified. It is earned!
4. CFI Certified Installer answers recalls in timely manner, preferably within 72 hours
5. CFI Certified Installers guarantee all labor for a minimum of one year
6. CFI Certified Installer is requested to attend local CFI Chapter Meetings if available in area.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE
1. CRI Carpet and Rug Institute, the manufacturer’s organization that is located in Dalton, GA
2. CRI Carpet Installation Standard for commercial installations is prepared by the Carpet and Rug Institute
3. Individual manufacturer’s installation guidelines supersede the CRI Guidelines
4. Applying water to synthetic backing of carpet will NOT cause it to shrink, but encourages delamination
5. Carpet stored more than 3 rolls high may be the cause of crush marks.
6. The "pick" of the backing is described as the number of weft (widthwise) yarns in one-inch that are shuttled across the warp (lengthwise) yarns that indicates the closeness of the length weaves. A larger pick number & a closer weave = a backing of higher quality. Example: 5 pick backing = larger areas in backing that allow the "fillers" to fall through 12 pick backing = smaller areas that keep the fillers and backing intact
8. At measure, allow 3-inches overage for EACH cut. If patterned carpet, add full pattern match to width and length.
9. Installer is to receive a detailed diagram that outlines the placement of seams
10. Plastic sheeting should not be used over any type of installation as it may trap moisture, retard the curing of adhesive or promote the growth of mold and mildew.
11. The selvage edge of the carpet is the factory-finished edge of the carpet
12. Allow the carpet to acclimate or adjust to room temperature as long as possible prior to installation for the ease of installation. Check with manufacturer.
13. Pile direction runs LENGTH of the stair unless the pattern is to be matched on the floor below.
14. The spike is NOT an acceptable tool
15. Carpet in the hallway is to run lengthwise with a minimum number of seams
16. Axminster is a woven carpet
17. ANSI S600 (American National Standards Institute) is the standard for residential carpet installation after 2012.

INSTALLATION TECHNIQUES – FOLLOW MANUFACTURER GUIDELINES
1. Install a continuous section of carpet through the spindles of the step
2. Install carpet on the stairs; starting at the bottom and working to the top
3. Secure cushion with staples or cushion adhesive with the exception of fiber cushion. Seams are to be secured with appropriate cushion tape. Do NOT use duct tape on cushion seams.
4. Duct tape is recommended on the edge of the cushion installed over the nosing of the step to protect the cushion.
5. Cushion must cover bullnose of stair regardless of the type of stair treatment.
6. Never install carpet over existing carpet UNLESS Manufacturer specifies.

FLOOR PREP – FOLLOW MANUFACTURER GUIDELINES
1. For a fee, subfloors must be properly prepared. All cracks, holes, joints and protrusions must be adequately addressed to ensure a smooth, finished appearance.
2. There is usually a minimum of 18” of air space under wood subfloors – refer to local codes.
3. On-site temperature requirement is to be between 65-95 degrees for 48-hours prior to & during installation. It is maintained for a minimum of 72-hours following installation. The slab temperature is never less than 65-degrees. Inside temperature is NEVER to fall below 50-degrees to ensure quality of installation.
5. Moisture tests should be performed before installing over existing resilient tile or concrete – ASTM standards should be consulted.
6. It is recommended that the Owner or General Contractor submit to Flooring Contractor a written report on moisture and alkalinity ratings of the slab to determine if substrate is suitable PRIOR to installation according to the industry-accepted WHITE PAPER.
7. If a powdery or overly porous surface is present, use a primer compatible with the adhesive to provide acceptable surface for a direct-glue / double-glue installation.
8. Mix floor patch and apply according to manufacturer’s recommendations.
9. Do NOT apply adhesive over existing sheet vinyl, solid vinyl tile and certain rubber products. Consult manufacturer for correct installation procedures.
10. The use of liquid adhesive removers may void applicable warranties. CHECK!
11. Minimum 90-120 days is required for curing of concrete slab to reach acceptable dryness for installation of carpet.
12. Generally, for adhesive installations, a moisture emission rate above **5-pounds in 1000-square feet in 24-hours** is considered unacceptable. Consult the manufacturer for specific details.

**CUTTING, SEAMING, SEALING SEAMS – FOLLOW MANUFACTURER GUIDELINES**
1. Whenever possible, seams are positioned away from the traffic areas.
2. Main traffic runs parallel to rather than across the seams.
3. Whenever possible, natural light should not strike across seam.
4. Seams should be kept away from areas that receive pivotal traffic.
5. Whenever possible, do NOT construct seams perpendicular to the doorway openings.
6. A maximum of 2 crossgrain seams is acceptable per fill section.
7. It is always important that the customer is aware of seam location.

**SEAMING TECHNIQUES – FOLLOW MANUFACTURER GUIDELINES**
1. Seams are a reflection of the installer’s skill. Use the proper techniques to achieve customer satisfaction.
2. Seal **ALL** seams with appropriate seam sealer UNLESS manufacturer’s directions state otherwise.
3. Correct iron temperature is essential—depending on type of seaming tape, iron and carpet, with the exception of the radio-wave seaming system.
4. Carpet construction and the type of carpet backing determine the type of seaming tape to be used.
5. Most carpets are cut from the face, not from the back. Check with the manufacturer.
6. When carpet is cut from the backing, low rows of yarn may appear if the knife blade cuts too deep.
7. Trim ALL carpet edges far enough into the workable material to maintain the structural integrity of the carpet. Always follow the manufacturer’s instructions.
8. A heat shield is required for the seaming iron.
9. Heat distorts synthetic carpet backing and can affect or discolor face yarn, such as wool.
10. **Seams are constructed on a hard surface**; never on top of the cushion unless manufacturer specifies.
11. Use non-heat conducting surface behind seaming iron, preferably a wood weight.
12. Apply seam sealer to the thickness of both seamed edges when installing over cushion. Be careful that the seam sealer does not come in contact with the face yarns.
13. Star rollers are **NEVER** used when heat is involved in the construction of the seam on cut pile carpet.

**POWERSTRETCHING – FOLLOW MANUFACTURER GUIDELINES**
1. CFI states that **ALL** rooms are to be powerstretched, regardless of size. According to the CRI-105, stretch synthetic-backed tufted 1 to 1-1/2 % in length and width, unless manufacturer states otherwise.
2. Proper use of the **powerstretcher is MANDATORY**.
3. Stretching synthetic-backed tufted carpet slightly less in width may lessen seam peaking tendencies.
   **NOTE:** Woven and specialty carpets require specific installation methods.
4. The use of a slick surface positioned between the wall base and the powerstretcher assists in eliminating scratches and dents. If the wall base/quarter round is painted, it is almost impossible to avoid scratching. However, using this “buffer” will make a difference. Estimator should alert customer that touch-up is necessary.

**PATTERN MATCHING – FOLLOW MANUFACTURER GUIDELINES**
1. **SET MATCH PATTERN** - figure matches straight across each side of the carpet width.
2. **DROP MATCH PATTERN** - the figure matches in the middle of the design. **ALWAYS check with manufacturer concerning pattern tolerances.** The following are guidelines, but do not apply if the manufacturer stated tolerances do not agree. NO industry standards are available.
3. **BOW TOLERANCE** – pattern sags in center. Tolerance usually is 1-inch in 12-feet. Tolerances are stated by manufacturers and may vary. ALWAYS refer to manufacturer guidelines.
4. **SKEW** - portions of printed or tufted patterns that deviate from a straight line – out of “square”. Tolerance may be 2-inches in 12-feet. Check with manufacturer as there is no industry standard.
5. **PATTERN ELONGATION** – patterns vary in size, length or width from one match to the other match. Tolerance is generally 1-inch in 10-feet. Check with manufacturer.
TACKSTRIP – FOLLOW MANUFACTURER GUIDELINES
1. The gully is the space between wall and tackstrip that is slightly less than carpet thickness - not exceed 3/8-inch.
2. Standard tackstrip is 1-inch wide and 1/4-inch thick
3. Carpet is NEVER stapled to the tackstrip
4. Tackstrip is not installed across doorways
5. Tackstrip is to be installed on each tread and each riser for a waterfall step installation.
6. No tackstrip section is to be installed with less than two nails
7. Tackstrip is placed on all sides of the stair spindles and on all sides of the tread.
8. Architectural tackstrip with three rows of pins is used for carpet with heavy backing, woven and specified Berber carpets, for rooms exceeding 30-feet and for commercial installations.

ADHESIVE APPLICATIONS- FOLLOW MANUFACTURER GUIDELINES
1. Installer must achieve full coverage of adhesive on carpet backing and floor, covering both with equal transfer of adhesive, leaving no voids.
2. OPEN TIME will vary according to temperature, humidity and adhesive
3. The LIGHTEST roller, not to exceed 75 lbs., is used to achieve transfer for a direct-glue installation
4. Most common size trowel used for direct-glue installation is 1/8" x 1/8" x 1/8" U-notch. The type of carpet backing determines depth of notches. Always maintain notch size throughout entire installation.
5. UNITARY or WOVEN CARPET must be rolled a second time, approximately 3-4 hours later.

DOUBLE-GLUE APPLICATION – FOLLOW MANUFACTURER GUIDELINES
1. CFI recommends that ALL seams of double-glue installations are to be sealed and hot-melt taped UNLESS the manufacturer states otherwise or profiling becomes an issue.
2. Use roller weighing 35-50 pounds or stiff broom on double-glue, tufted or woven carpet installations
3. Pressure-sensitive adhesive is recommended between floor and cushion. Recommended trowel size – 1/16”x 1/16”x 1/16” square notch. Always follow manufacturer’s instructions.
4. Use 1/8”x1/8”x 1/16” U-Notch trowel to apply adhesive between smooth-backed carpet and cushion. Always follow manufacturer’s instructions.
5. Use 1/8” x 3/16” x 1/8” U-notch trowel to apply adhesive between rough backed carpet and cushion. Always follow manufacturer’s instructions.

CFI COMMERCIAL INSTALLATION GUIDELINES
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE – Follow manufacturer guidelines
1. CRI Installation Standard is the COMMERCIAL Installation Standard – Always follow Manufacturer's Guidelines
2. Cushion thickness is 3/8-inch for commercial installation--no density is stated in the CRI -104.
3. Review CFI Residential Guidelines. Many also apply to commercial installation.

EPA INFORMATION
1. EPA - Environmental Protection Agency
2. EPA – an Office of Federal Government
3. IAQ - Indoor Air Quality - GREEN label is attached to the backing of carpet samples in the showroom
4. VOC - Volatile Organic Compound - relates to low or no VOC's in adhesive products
5. 4-PC - phenocyclohexene – new ODOR FROM CARPET has never proved to be life threatening. Sensitive persons should consider leaving the area.
6. VACUUMING should be performed by the Customer prior to the removal of the carpet
7. VENTILATE during installation by using fans, windows, doors or HVAC systems.
8. CONTINUE VENTILATION at normal room temperature for 72-hours following installation

OSHA INFORMATION
1. OSHA - Occupational Safety Health Administration or Act
2. OSHA - Office of the Federal Government
3. OSHA #3165 (blue-white) "Employee’s Right To Know" - Employees must be trained to install ALL products they handle.
4. HAZCOM - Hazardous Communications Plan
(a) Keep Safety the #1 Priority! (b) Plan lists training procedures for company employees
(c) States location of MSDS Sheets  (d) Identifies all products company uses and chemical inventory
5. FINES
(a) Maximum first time fine is $7,000.00   (b) Maximum-next offense is $70,000.00
6. FINES issued for items such as:
   (a) No HazCom Plan    (e) Defective Tools
   (b) No knee pads     (f) Improperly labeled or unmarked containers
   (c) No First-Aid Kit   (g) Ground wire removed from electrical cords
   (d) No Ventilation    (h) No MSDS sheets  (Material Safety Data Sheets)

7. MSDS-MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEET lists: (Request MSDS from distributor at the time of purchase)
   (a) Manufacturer and product          (b) Physical data (volatile, boiling point, etc.)
   (c) Fire and explosion hazard data - how to extinguish fire, etc.     (d) Hazardous Ingredients

8. HEALTH HAZARD DATA listed on MSDS (exposure limits, first aid) includes the following.
   (a) Reactive data (stability - what not to mix with product)         (b) Special handling precautions
   (c) Spill and leak procedures    (d) Special protective equipment and procedures - gloves/ventilation

9. CHEMICALS can only be transferred by **ONE** person to another properly labeled container.

10. CARPET or CUSHION do not require a MSDS Sheet as they are considered finished products

11. ASBESTOS should **always** be covered or encapsulated - Testing is only way to properly identify its presence.

12. FIRST AID KIT - Contents of kit must be undisturbed with letter containing a physician's signature

**VOCABULARY**

1. ACID – Displays a pH below 7 – Neutral is 7
2. ALKALINITY – A base or salt. Property of water substances with a pH greater than 7
3. AMBIENT AIR – Air around us
4. BIAS – Diagonal in relation to pattern alignment
5. BCF - Bulked continuous filament -continuous strands of nylon fiber
6. BREADTH – Width of broadloom
7. BOND TEST – 24-hour test to determine if flooring will stay adhered with adhesive to substrate
8. BOW – Describes pattern that sags in the center
9. CALCIUM CHLORIDE TEST – 24 hr. test for concrete moisture emissions
10. CONDENSATION - The conversion of the moisture in the air to water
11. DEADMAN – Board with tackstrip installed on one side facing same direction. The tool is used to stretch off of the wall or to match patterns in the carpet. Deadman is also a portable wall.
12. DEW POINT – Temperature at which vapor begins to condense and form water
13. DRY LINE – Line used to aid in determining patterns (such as, a chalk line with no chalk)
14. FRIEZE -Tightly, twisted yarn that displays a nubby, rough appearance
15. GAUGE- Number of ends of surface yarn counting across the width
16. HEAT SETTING -Stabilizing process of carpet yarns by exposure to heat
17. JUTE - A natural cellulose fiber derived from plants of the East used for backing material
18. LITMUS PAPER – A material used to measure alkalinity of concrete or water
19. MAT TEST – Method used to check for water or moisture through substrate by taping section of plastic to floor with duct tape
20. PATTERN ELONGATION – Patterns vary in size, in length or width from one match to the other match
21. pH – Acceptable range of concrete is between 5-9 pH. Indicates relative acidity or alkalinity of concrete.
22. POLYPROPYLENE -Synthetic thermoplastic polymer used in carpet and backing
23. PORTLAND BASED – Gray floor patch, cement based, containing latex that is chemically dry
24. POROSITY – Ratio of volume of air within the boundaries of solid matter. The substrate’s ability to absorb liquid.
25. Rh – relative humidity – moisture in vapor form in the air
26. RMA Test – Method used to assess moisture emissions through concrete. (Rubber Manufacturers Association Test)
27. ROLL SEQUENCE – Numbered order of carpet rolls used to keep dye lot sequence
28. SBR - Styrene butadiene synthetic rubber found in most carpet backings
29. SEAM SEALER - Formulated adhesive for securing cut edges of carpet to be seamed or finished
30. SELVAGE -The factory edge of the carpet
31. SKEW – One pattern does not lay at 90-degree angle to pattern at opposite width – out of square – one pattern runs ahead of another pattern
32. SLAB TEMPERATURE – Concrete substrate temperature no less than 65-degrees
33. 5 lbs. – Amount of moisture allowed to emit from concrete substrate per 1000-square feet
34. 3-4-5 RULE – Easy method used to square area or carpet
35. TUFT BIND - Amount of force required to pull a tuft from the carpet
36. UNITARY CARPET - Carpet backcoated with high-quality latex to increase the tuft bind. Install backing in direct-glue method **ONLY** if you do not have the **WRITTEN** consent of manufacturer!
37. VAPOR EMISSION – Water emission from the substrate in vapor form
Installers are required to identify backings and installation methods.
R-I / C-I (Identify 5 backings)  R-II / C-II (Identify 12 Backings)

All backings are installed following the manufacturer’s written guidelines. Use a powerstretcher, edge seal or seam seal all seams and align patterns. When adhesive is involved, use the correct notched trowel, maintain the notch throughout the installation, roll as directed, seal seams and align patterns. Unroll and acclimate as stated. The above requirements are to be followed unless the manufacturer guidelines state otherwise. The CFI techniques have been proven through years of experience by qualified flooring installers.

1. PRIMARY BACKING

2. 6-pic ACTIONBAC
   Manufacturer: Numerous
   Type of Installation: Stretch-in over cushion, Direct-glue
   Special Characteristics: CFI states that the backing is not sufficiently stable for double-glue installations. However, this is often sold for double-glue installations. Five and six-pic backings are the most commonly used backings today.

3. 11-pic ACTIONBAC
   Manufacturer: Numerous
   Type of Installation: Stretch-in over cushion, Direct-glue, Double-glue
   Special Characteristics: Usually appears on the better quality, high-end residential and commercial carpets.

4. SOFTBAC PLATINUM
   Manufacturer: Shaw
   Type of Installation: Stretch-in over cushion, Direct-glue, Double-glue
   Special Characteristics: Fleece is attached on the secondary backing; designed to protect the base and walls from being scratched. When seaming with hot-melt, the thermoplastic adhesive must penetrate the fleece completely.

5. LUXURY BAC
   Manufacturer: Beaulieu
   Type of Installation: Stretch-in over cushion, Direct-glue, Double-glue
   Special Characteristics: Fleece is attached on the secondary backing. Very similar to Shaw’s SoftBac Platinum in respect to installation.

6. H-5
   Manufacturer: Mohawk, Durkan, Bigelow, Karastan, Lees (known by other names than H-5)
   Type of Installation: Stretch-in over cushion, Direct-glue, Double-glue
   Special Characteristics: Shiny, flat warp wires in the secondary back. The two brown-colored wires which are about 1-inch apart, give the appearance that the secondary backing is striped.

7. UNITARY – STRAIGHT STITCH
   Manufacturer: Numerous
   Type of Installation: Direct-glue only
   Special Characteristics: A primary backing only with a heavy enriched coating of latex. This backing should never be installed over a cushion. Roll or smooth as recommended and roll again as required by the manufacturer.

8. KARA-LOC
   Manufacturer: Karastan, Mohawk
   Type of Installation: Stretch-in over cushion, Direct-glue, Double-glue (installation specifics may vary with manufacturer – always check)
   Special Characteristics: Woven with a heavy coating of latex – often mistaken as unitary backing. Karastan Residential states product should always be stretched in over a very firm/dense cushion to support the backing. Karastan Commercial, Mohawk or Helios state the backing can be direct-glued or double-glued. Consult the manufacturer.
9. TR-18
   Manufacturer: Crossley, Tandus
   Type of Installation: Direct-glue only
   Special Characteristics: A cushioned product with polypropylene scrim attached. Benefit: can be stretched with less recoiling. Follow manufacturer’s glue-direct installation directions.

10. HP
    Manufacturer: Mannington Commercial
    Type of Installation: Direct-glue
    Special Characteristics: MT-790 vinyl-compatible adhesive is to be used with MT-800 seam sealer. The carpet backing has memory and should always be acclimated to room conditions and temperatures prior to installation.

11. Unlisted at this time

12. UPS – UPS RE – UNIBOND FLEX
    Manufacturer: Mohawk, Durkan, Bigelow, Karastan, Lees
    Type of Installation: Stretch-in over cushion, Direct-glue, Double-glue
    Special Characteristics: BLACK backing. Stretch-in seams require specific seam tape: Orcon-XU90, TRAXX-Capitol-Mega-Loc, Seam Master-One Tape or the Kool Glide Seaming System. Each manufacturer has specific installation guidelines. Three-pin tackstrip and 3-inch seaming tape covered edge to edge with thermoplastic is required.

13. LEES UNIBOND Flex “PLUS” and UPS BLOC
    Manufacturer: Mohawk, Durkan, Bigelow, Karastan, Lees
    Type of Installation: Direct-glue, Double-glue (Check with manufacturer)
    Special Characteristics: Moisture-resistant backing with attached vapor barrier - BLUE backing. Check with the manufacturer for specific installation guidelines. If installed double-glue, a modified EVA/Universal seam tape is required.

14. KANGA
    Manufacturer: Textile Rubber and Chemical, Beaulieu
    Type of Installation: Direct-glue, Loose-lay
    Special Characteristics: Thickness of backing may cause concern when preparing seams. The backing was first designed for the DIY market segment.

15. JUTE
    Manufacturer: Numerous
    Type of Installation: Stretch-in over cushion, Direct-glue, Double-glue
    Special Characteristics: Moisture (as in adhesive) presents a cause for concern. In the past, jute was the major backing product, but because of problems and the shortage of jute, the polypropylene ActionBAC came into existence. However, the jute backing is currently available in the higher-end products; very installer friendly. If installed with adhesive, close attention is directed to the correct open-time to eliminate excessive moisture in the adhesive.

16A. WILTON TRADITIONAL LOOP
    Manufacturer: Multiple
    Type of Installation: Stretch-in over cushion, Direct-glue, Double-glue
    Special Characteristics: Woven product. Many different styles, face-to-face, loop-pile, cut-and-loop, even face-to-face loop pile. Loop style is easily identified by the color striations on the back which are brought to the surface when needed for design purposes. With the jute backing, close attention is required for sufficient open time if the carpet is installed as a direct-glue/double-glue application. Always check with the manufacturer about installation and seaming requirements to prepare a bid that includes additional time and expertise.

16B. WILTON FACE-TO-FACE
    Manufacturer: Numerous
    Type of Installation: Stretch-in over cushion, Direct-glue, Double-glue
    Special Characteristics: Woven product. Product is identified by pattern design on the surface which mirrors the image on the back. Close attention is required as carpet is manufactured in two sections (A&B) which should not be shipped together. Always check with the manufacturer about installation and seaming requirements prior to submitting a proposal for the job.
17. AXMINSTER
   Manufacturer: Numerous
   Type of Installation: Stretch-in over cushion, Direct-glue, Double-glue
   Special Characteristics: Woven product; always a cut-pile carpet. Check with manufacturer for specifics of installation type and required seaming procedures. All stretch comes in the length (drum tight), but must be powerstretched in the width (snug) also. Roll carpet lengthwise, it is difficult to roll in the width.

18. ENHANCER with CUSHION
   Manufacturer: Numerous using the Dow Chemical process
   Type of Installation: Direct-glue only
   Special Characteristics: High density polyurethane-cushion backing. Product is usually shipped on a very large core with the face fibers rolled to the outside. Rolls tend to be shorter which may require crossgrain seams to be constructed on larger jobs. Very heavy and difficult to position. To assist in positioning, use a leaf blower or some type of air-moving device to blow under the carpet. Always seal seams. Close attention is required for sufficient open-time for the adhesive.

19. POWERBOND
   Manufacturer: C & A, Monterey, Crossley
   Type of Installation: Direct-glue
   Special Characteristics: Manufactured from reclaimed carpet tile. Very heavy product, but will slide over most substrates easily after unrolling in the area of installation.

20. OPTIBACK
   Manufacturer: Mohawk
   Type of Installation: Stretch-in over cushion
   Special Characteristics: This is a specific 15-pic Actionbac product. According to Mohawk, the backing requires minimal or no acclimation. It also provides a 10-year, buckle-free and 10-year no delamination warranty.

21A. VELVET
   Manufacturer: Numerous
   Type of Installation: Stretch-in over cushion, Direct-glue, Double-glue
   Special Characteristics: Woven product. This product can be cut-pile, loop-pile or cut-and-loop pile. Carpet stretches in equal amounts in the width and length. Consult manufacturer for specific installation directions.

21B. VELVET THROUGH-THE-BACK
   Manufacturer: Numerous
   Type of Installation: Stretch-in over cushion, Direct-glue, Double-glue
   Special Characteristics: Woven product. This product can be cut pile, loop pile or cut-and-loop. Carpet will stretch equal amounts in the width and length. Consult manufacturer for installation specifications. Velvet Through-the-Back is identified by the heavy nubs and deep valleys on the back.

22. ECOWORX
   Manufacturer: Shaw Commercial
   Type of Installation: Direct-glue only using adhesives approved by Shaw
   Special Characteristics: 100% recyclable. PVC-free carpet tile. Backing is black with white threads. This is also manufactured as broadloom carpet.