

10 Ways to Save On Carpet Replacements **by Alan J. Fletcher**

There are many ways rental property owners and managers can reduce carpet replacement and repair expenses.

1. Buy carpet that meets your needs.

The carpet you install in your rental unit must be able to endure the normal wear of your typical tenant. You also need to consider the frequency of your current carpet replacements and if you allow pets. Select a lower grade of carpet if you tend to replace it more often due to pet damage or excessive wear. Choose a better grade carpet if you do not allow pets and your tenants are generally not overly rough on your carpets. The trick to saving money in the long run is to select a grade of carpet with a life expectancy equal to or exceeding the lifestyle and average length of stay of your tenants. Many factors contribute to this approach, including the average age of your tenants, number of children, type of pets, etc. Selecting a better grade carpet can potentially add several years to the life expectancy of your carpets. It could be well worth the additional expense if you do not allow pets and your average tenant stays for five to ten years. It would be a waste of money if your average tenant turnover were less than 2 years and you do allow pets.

2. Select a Nylon carpet.

Nylon is the most recommended carpet fiber for rentals. Nylon outperforms all other fibers and is the most resilient, durable and easiest to clean. Selecting a Continuous filament Nylon carpet will help eliminate the shedding, fuzzing and pilling that is often observed with staple fibers. Carpet samples of continuous filament Nylon are usually labeled BCF (bulked continuous filament) or CFN (continuous filament nylon).

3. Save 10% or more on your padding costs.

In most cases, installing new carpet requires about 10% less padding than carpet. For example: If your 3-bedroom rental unit requires 100 yards of carpet, you probably only need 90 yards of padding to complete the job. Unlike carpeting, padding can be turned in any direction and even the smallest scraps of padding can be utilized. It may require a few extra minutes of work for the installer but you will enjoy the savings. It has long been the industry standard for flooring retailers to charge customers equal amounts for carpet and padding. Some flooring retailers or vendors may be reluctant to negotiate with you regarding this area of potential savings. If this is the case, simply ask the carpet installers to leave your padding leftovers. Store the padding in a dry location and use it on a future carpet replacement.

4. Know your padding options.

The life span of your carpet depends on using good quality padding. What type of padding are you currently using? How much are you charged for it? There are many types of pad available and you may not be aware of all your padding options. With apartment-grade plush carpet, a 7/16" inch, 6-pound, rebond padding is commonly used in rentals. Another less expensive option would be to use a 3/8" inch, 4 to 6-pound, rebond padding. You could enjoy savings of about 25 to 50 cents per yard or more. Ask your flooring provider about your padding options and you may be able to reduce your pad costs significantly.

5. Consider reusing all or part of your existing pad.

When its time to replace the carpet in a rental, consider reusing some or all of the existing padding. Depending on the age, quality and condition of your existing padding, you could save a significant amount of money by replacing only the areas that really need replacing. Of course, someone will have to make the judgment call after inspecting the condition of the padding. The hallways and main traffic areas will usually show the most wear and replacing those areas would be a good idea. Padding in other areas may still be in good condition and you could install the new carpet right over the top. Prices for new padding may vary from \$1.25 to 2.95 per yard so if

you are able to reuse 80 yards of padding, you could be saving anywhere from \$100 to \$236 on each unit.

6. Proper pad selection.

If you allow pets in your rentals it makes good sense to use a less-expensive padding since your chances of reusing the padding are greatly reduced. You could use a less expensive padding and save yourself some money. You might consider using a 3 or 4 pound 3/8", rebond padding and only spend about a dollar or so per yard. The overall savings would add up quickly and you won't lose as much money when the carpet and padding needs to be replaced again in a year or two. On the other hand, if you don't allow pets, you might want to consider installing a higher quality padding now with plans to reuse it the next time you need to replace your carpets.

7. Remove your old carpet and padding.

Most carpet installers charge between fifty cents and one dollar per yard to remove and haul away your old carpet and padding. You could be saving \$40 to \$80 on a typical 2-bedroom, 80-yard unit. Consider having your maintenance people do the removal prior to the carpet installers arriving and perhaps use an onsite garbage dumpster to dispose of it. Be sure that all old carpet and padding is removed and the unit is swept clean prior to the installers arriving to install the new carpet and padding. You may also want to consider recycling your old padding. Some recycling companies are willing to haul away your old padding at no charge to you.

8. Maintain good communications.

Keep your flooring contractors and vendors well informed and you can save time and money. Confusion can quickly undermine even the best-laid plans. When scheduling carpet replacements, be sure to inform your flooring provider of all the pertinent information they may need to know. For example, notify in advance if there are any signs of pet damage, water or dry rot. This would help the flooring installers to arrive well prepared and to be able to complete the installation in a timely and efficient manner. You should also inform them if you are scheduling a floor replacement in an occupied unit. Be sure to have necessary furniture moved, have everything off the floor and have kids and pets safely out of the way. Maintaining good communications will keep your business running smoothly.

9. Make sure tenants know how to care for flooring.

Your tenants can help you save money too if you let them know what you would like them to do. For instance, to make carpets last longer they need to be vacuum as many time per week as the number of people living in the home.

For example, if there are three people living in the household, vacuum three times per week. Educate your tenants using a simple flyer or include useful information in your monthly newsletter. You would be smart to include tips on carpet stain removal, how to properly clean vinyl floors, what products you recommend they use, etc. Providing useful information to your tenants not only makes their life easier but it allows them to help you by making your flooring last longer. Check with your flooring provider to obtain proper care and maintenance information on the flooring materials you currently use.

10. Inspect new installations.

It is very important to inspect your new carpet right after it has been installed. It only takes a few minutes and could save you time and money. If there are any problems, you need to let your flooring provider know as soon as possible for a quick remedy of the problem. Make sure the correct carpet style and color has been installed, check for proper installation, and look for any defects in the carpet itself. Early detection of problems is the best way to help avoid delays in renting your units. If you would like to know more about what to look for when inspecting carpet installations, you can print out Free Carpet Installation Inspections Forms at our website: Landlordfloors.com.

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replacement and repair expenses. Alan can be reached by calling toll-free 1-866-706-0609 or by visiting Landlordfloors.com.

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