

Many carpet cleaning technicians do not run an emulsifier through their machine during extraction, they prefer to rinse with “clear water”. Here are some explanations given when asked why:

- a) “I am concerned about leaving residues in the carpet”
- b) “It saves time and money because I use less chemical”
- c) “That is what I was told to do in the beginning and that is what I have always done”
- d) “It will damage my machine”

Working on the assumption that we are using a professionally formulated minimum residue emulsifier, let’s share some cleaning principles that might change your thinking.

RESIDUES:

Water is not a good cleaner on its own as it has too much surface tension. Emulsifiers with good quality surfactants (wetting agents) make the water wetter, improve its ability to penetrate the fibres and release the soil so the extraction process is more thorough.

Water conditioned with as little as 1ml/L of an emulsifier quickly penetrates the fibres, emulsifies the detergent/soil residues, and suspends them for easy removal by the wand. The ‘residues’ that we fear are left behind after using a professional emulsifier are fibre friendly, dry to a non-sticky, non-toxic powder, are easily vacuumed away and do not attract any re-soiling.

Un-neutralized pre-spray residues in the carpet that remain after a “clear water rinse” can attract dirt like a magnet.

TIME SAVING:

An emulsifier is in fact, a good cleaner in itself. Not only does it provide a good backup for the pre-spray, you will find that you will not need to pre-spray lightly-soiled areas any more. Simply clean with the emulsifier alone.

This is your first saving on both time and chemical.

The second saving is the pre-sprayed traffic lane areas come clean substantially more quickly and easily. Instead of needing additional wand strokes to get the carpet clean, the emulsifier does the work for you in a single stroke. Lets review the savings so far - Less time on the job, less energy expended, less water on the carpet and a great saving in chemical costs.

Which brings us to the next point - **Drying Times**

DRYING TIMES:

One of the first comments technicians make after using an emulsifier is that the carpets are drying substantially more quickly. There are two reasons for this:

1. As we have already mentioned, less moisture is required to flush away the detergent and soil residues. This obviously leaves less moisture in the carpet after the wand has passed.
2. Secondly, detergent residues trap a significant amount of moisture even after a dry stroke with the wand. The effective removal of these detergent/soil residues by extraction with an emulsifier substantially contributes to the quick release of moisture to evaporation.

COST:

Remember that chemicals are one of your **LOWEST** expenses in doing business. We are talking about less than 1% of the job cost for emulsifiers. Don't let cost be a concern; it is almost insignificant as shown below:

A powder emulsifier, seldom costs more than \$0.01 per RTU litre. On average, 100m² of carpet (3 or 4 bedroom house) uses approximately 3.3L of Truckmount concentrate at a cost of \$1.12. As you can see, the chemical cost is negligible. Using an emulsifier will considerably cut your costs especially on labour. With the soil being released and flushed away more quickly and easily, you not only save directly on initial labour costs, but also on costly call-backs. You'll also save time and pre-spray solution by only needing to pre-spray heavily soiled areas. Lastly, the faster drying times will give you greater customer satisfaction and more referrals.

EMULSIFIERS VS ACID RINSES:

Many carpet cleaning technicians are unclear on the correct application of emulsifiers and acid rinses and their relationship with each other. Both perform a crucial role in the cleaning process. Using an acid rinse is the key to the completed job. Neutralizing carpets/upholstery with an acid rinse after cleaning has many benefits:

1. The carpet will dry faster because the residues are neutralized increasing evaporation.
2. The carpet will be softer to the hand (the ladies love this).
3. You will neutralize pH reducing the chance of rapid re-soiling.
4. The fibres will be better prepared for application of protector (protector will bond better).
5. The carpet will be less likely to brown or bleed.

See also:

- [Emulsifiers and Acid Rinses Article](#)
- [Info Sheet for Emulsifier Plus – liquid extraction detergent](#)
- [Info Sheet for Extracta Pro – powder extraction detergent](#)
- [Info Sheet for Rinse Pro – acid rinse cleaner](#)