Safe Work Practices for Carpet Layers



INTRODUCTION

Carpets installed in homes and buildings can enhance the look of a space, provide comfort to its occupants, and add insulation. If you are a carpet layer, you may be exposed to hazards in the installation process. If you are aware of the hazards and take proper precautions to minimize their risks, you can lay the groundwork for a long and rewarding career in carpet installation.

PROTECT YOUR BACK

Carpet laying can be physically demanding, especially on your back. Make sure your body is warmed up and ready for the day’s work by getting enough rest, eating right, and doing some simple stretching exercises.

Other ways to protect your back are:

- Follow proper lifting techniques.
- Get help with heavy or awkward loads.
- Use back-saving equipment, such as power stretcher poles.
- Take periodic rest breaks.

SAVE YOUR KNEES

A major part of carpet installation involves using your knees. Prevent knee injuries from continuous kneeling on hard sub-flooring and repetitious knee kicking to stretch carpets or engage tack strips, by focusing on good ergonomic work practices.

- Wear kneepads to reduce contact stress and prevent punctures from tack strips, flooring irregularities, and other sharps.
- Rise and recover slowly after kneeling for extended periods.
- Use activity-assisting tools such as hand and arm operated power carpet stretchers.
- Rotate installation activities.

HANDLE CHEMICALS CAUTIOUSLY

Some carpets, because of their content or treatment, may require special handling to prevent harmful health exposures. Make sure you know the product’s recommended handling, mixing, and personal protective equipment (PPE) required for safe use.

- Review the safety data sheets for the carpet or product.
- Follow safety directions when using carpet or padding adhesives and glues.
- Ensure that the work area is properly ventilated.

- Use recommended respirators, when needed.

WEAR PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

PPE can help prevent cut, puncture, and burn injuries from sharp tack strips, sewing materials, staples, and heat-tape or carpet irons.

- Wear recommended footwear, gloves, and clothing to protect you from sharp or cutting tools and hot irons.
- Use eye protection to keep flying debris and sharp objects from entering the eye.
- Ensure cutting tools are sharp and in good condition.
- Use kneepads to cushion your knees.

Make sure you cover all areas of safe carpet installation by learning and following recommended work practices.