

Carpet and Upholstery Cleaner

A carpet and upholstery cleaner cleans carpets, chairs, sofas and other soft furnishings in offices, shops and private homes.

The Work

You could be:

- checking what kind of cleaning is needed
- giving a written estimate of cost
- using industrial cleaning machines, such as steam heat or hot water cleaners
- choosing a cleaning fluid and a hose attachment suitable for the type of fabric you are treating
- filling the tank of the machine with water and adding the cleaning fluid
- spraying the solution on to the material and vacuuming up the dirt and water
- using chemical dry-cleaning processes
- applying special treatments after cleaning, such as stain repellents, flame retardants and anti-static chemicals
- doing specialist cleaning after flood or fire damage.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting pay is often based on the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or the National Living Wage (NLW).

As of 1 April 2026 the National Minimum Wage is £8.00 an hour for workers under 18, £10.85 an hour for workers aged 18 to 20. The National Living Wage for those aged 21 and over is £12.71 an hour. This can rise to £9.00 an hour. Income often depends on commission.

Conditions

- You would travel to client's premises.
- You carry the heavy equipment into the premises and move furniture around.
- You spend most of the time on your feet and will bend, stretch and kneel.
- You work regular hours, but might have to work mainly in the evenings or weekends while the buildings are not in use.
- Part time work is common.
- You wear protective overalls and perhaps a mask and gloves.
- Your income may depend on commission and therefore vary widely according to the number of contracts you get.

Getting In

- You do not need formal qualifications but a good general education is useful.
- You usually need a driving licence as you have to take the equipment to different premises.
- Jobs are mainly with private cleaning companies.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- honest
- reliable
- practical
- aware of health and safety procedures
- able to follow instructions
- able to work alone or in a team
- physically fit and energetic.

You should have:

- a careful, methodical approach
- a basic understanding of cleaning chemicals
- number skills to work out prices
- good communication skills and a pleasant manner.

Training

- Training is usually on the job.
- The National Carpet Cleaners Association (NCCA) runs 2-day basic training courses in carpet and upholstery cleaning. They also run courses in spot and stain treatment and removal, leather and hard floor cleaning.
- Some firms who sell cleaning machines and carpet shampoos run short courses in their use.
- You could also work towards a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) Cleaning and Support Services at SCQF Level 5.

Getting On

- If you work for a large company you might be able to move into supervision or management.
- You might set up in business for yourself.
- Some companies have a franchise system where they help you to set up your business, and let you use their product and name. You have to pay money up front to do this.

Contacts

British Institute of Cleaning Science

Tel: 01604 678710

Email: info@bics.org.uk

Website: www.bics.org.uk

X: @BICSc_UK

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheBICSc

National Carpet Cleaners Association (NCCA)

Tel: 0116 271 9550

Email: info@ncca.co.uk

Website: www.ncca.co.uk

X: @NCCA__

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NCCAcarpetcleaning

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.