



# First-Aid Kit!

## Your Emergency DIY Guide to

## Area Rug Spills

1

### I spilled on my Rug! What do I do now?

These tips are provided based on years of experience, they in no way guarantee damage will not occur from the initial spill or from spotting attempts!! Follow these instructions at your own risk!!

### Your Rug First-Aid Kit: Club Soda, Corn Starch, and White Cotton Towels: Blot, Rinse, Blot

The time will come when something is spilled on your rug – coffee, soda, wine, or juice. There is a tendency to grab a cleanser and scrub the area, and this inevitably causes more permanent harm than good.

A good emergency system is a very simple one, and all you need is club soda (or soda water) and cotton towels.

### **BLOT – RINSE – BLOT**

Immediately blot the wet area with a white cotton towel. Do not scrub the affected area, as this untwists and breaks the wool, silk, or cotton face fibers. (If an oil or dense substance, use a spoon or other curved tool to scoop up as much as you can before you begin the blotting process.)

Look at the wet towel for two things: is the liquid spill absorbing into the towel, and also, are any of the rug's dyes absorbing into the towel.

If the rug's dyes are absorbing into the towel, blot a bit more and then STOP. No more work can be done to this area without causing the area's dyes to bleed together. This type of damage can devalue your rug, so you want to stop before you make it worse. At this point you can pack the area with corn starch (or salt) and this will absorb the moisture and the spill into the powder.

If the rug's dyes are NOT absorbing into the towel (you only see the spill absorbing into it), then place a folded towel underneath the affected area and using a sponge dampen the affected area with club soda. This will help you continue to remove the spilled substance into the towel. Once you believe you have removed as much as you can through blotting, if you are still worried about anything foreign being in the fibers, or possible damage occurring to the dyes (if it is a pet stain or other damaging acid stain), then you can pack the area with corn starch.

When you believe the absorption to be complete, elevate the treated area so that airflow can reach the back of the rug (prop it up) and dry the foundation thoroughly. Do this for at least one day to ensure complete drying. The rug will feel dry to the touch, however, the cotton foundation will still have moisture within it, and without air drying it will eventually lead to mildew and dry rot. Use a warm hair dryer to assist if needed. (If you have used

## *Eco-Friendly!*



# First-Aid Kit!

## Your Emergency DIY Guide to

## Area Rug Spills

2

corn starch it becomes hard to the touch when dry, and this can be broken apart with a spoon and scooped up and vacuumed away. However, you want to make sure the inner most cotton fibers are 100% dry, so still elevate the rug to dry for at least a day.)

### **Puppy Puddles and Kitty Catastrophes: Blot, Rinse, Blot**

Pet urine and vomit stains are the worst stain on an Oriental rug. If you do not get to them right away, you can have permanent dye loss, dye migration (“bleeding”), urea discoloration, food dye discoloration, and of course odor. With a pet accident, you want to follow the same steps except you SUBSTITUTE white vinegar for the club soda. The vinegar will help lessen the dye bleed risk, and will help suspend and help you blot away the acidic urine or vomit.

If your work looks good when done, then **TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE** to get the area dry, and dried thoroughly. If you leave the area damp too long you risk dye bleed and mildew. As mentioned before, use a hair dryer if needed to help make sure BOTH sides are 100% dry. Keep the affected area elevated for airflow along both sides for at least a full 24 hours to be safe. 48 hours if possible.

If your work does not look “done” – and you still see red wine and food dye, or pet discoloration, then the next step is to try to absorb as much as possible before taking the rug to a professional rug cleaner (like us!). =)

Pack the area with corn starch. Make sure you cover the spill affected area completely. The corn starch will pull up more of the spill as it dries. It is very absorbent.

Do **NOT** accidentally use baking soda! Baking soda is alkaline and can create a yellowing of wool that will likely not be reversible.

Do NOT use any household spot removers!

Carpet spot removers that you buy in your grocery store are meant for the synthetic fibers in your wall-to-wall carpet and not for natural fiber rugs. Folex, Resolve, Oxyclean are all no-no’s.

In most cases we see more damage done to rugs not from the initial spills, but from rug owner’s applying harsh over-the-counter chemicals to try to remove the stains. Even products approved for wool (like Woolite), in too large a dose, can create permanent color damage to wool rugs. When people are in a panic, they tend to over-apply products.

### ***Eco-Friendly!***