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Are You Getting Taken To The Cleaners?

Not All Carpet Companies Squeaky Clean

It's not uncommon to get a coupon in the mail from a carpet cleaner offering services for only \$7.95 per room.



What might be a rarity, though, is actually getting the service for that price.

NewsChannel 32 "Target 32" reporter Steve Burgin recently investigated a couple of area carpet-cleaning businesses, and found in an exclusive report that different companies appear to practice different business philosophies.

"Last year alone, we took over 1,000 calls for requests for information on carpet-

cleaning companies," Better Business Bureau spokeswoman Carrie Lincks said.

The investigation found that at least one area business quotes one price over the phone, and then tries to push a higher price when the service is being performed.

One unidentified carpet cleaner, who refused to be interviewed, went to a Louisville-area home, where Target 32's cameras were undercover, and found that the serviceman said that the price on the coupon was for basic service. But for the homeowner to receive the desired carpet cleaning, a more sophisticated -- and costly -- service would be required.

"That sounds like a typical bait and switch case," Lincks (pictured, right) said.



The owner of the company said that at \$8.95 per room, the total for three areas in the home would cost \$26.85, but would only maintain and sanitize the carpet. The man said that he could do it for that price, but added that a much better job could be done for nearly \$90. The higher price would cover the cost of chemicals needed to get out tough stains, but he still offered no guarantees.

The man finished the three areas, using a portable cleaning unit, in only 35 minutes.

Chris Campbell, of Signature Professional Cleaning, has been in business for 20 years, and has received national certification as a master carpet cleaner. He said that the industry average to clean one room is 25 minutes.

"You have to pre-spray a room and give time for the detergents to dwell," Campbell said. "You want to agitate them and rinse them out and groom the carpet. That's cleaning the carpet."

Campbell added that he's not sure what the other cleaner was talking about when he referred to a basic cleaning.

"I wouldn't know what he means by just a basic cleaning," Campbell said. "If you get the carpet cleaned, you have to do it a certain way."



After the first cleaner finished the job, he dumped the dirty water in front of the house, and at another home, everything in the carpet, including dog hair (pictured, left), ended up in the front yard.

The experts said that that's not the proper way to dispose of the dirty water. And Campbell said that for the \$90 fee, the three rooms could have been cleaned by a much stronger, truck-mounted unit.

The Better Business Bureau recommends against cleaners who advertise one price and try to push a higher price when they perform the service. And the experts said that getting a legitimate carpet cleaner could be like anything else: ask a neighbor; tell a friend.

Here are some other tips from the experts:

- Read your carpet's warranty.
- Know what you want, and don't be talked into something else.
- Be wary of companies who say that their deals are "too good to be true."
- Ask about the extras that could increase the price (i.e. -

moving furniture, etc.).

- Find out what care will be required after the cleaning.
- If you have further questions, contact the [Better Business Bureau](#)

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