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**Tips For Consumers**

**Summer Sale On Carpets**

The summer months often feature sales on carpeting, notes the Better Business Bureau. "Commercial Broadloom Carpeting--Greatly Reduced--Free Installation" reads the advertisement. Visions of that backroom with its bare floor come to mind.

But pause a moment, says the BBB, and consider more than the color when buying carpeting. Careless buying can be a good way to get "fleeced."

**Start With Color**  
Color, though, is the first consideration. Decide if shades should blend with the furniture, and if a

color is to camouflage dirt and stains. But, also think about carpet size, compare wall-to-wall with room-fit or room size carpets, and learn about various fibers before buying a carpet.

Wall-to-wall carpeting hides unsightly floors, reduces noise and, as a decorating accessory, it "pulls" a room together or makes two adjoining spaces look larger. However, installation costs can be expensive.

Room size or room-fit rugs, although they may not be as luxurious looking as wall-to-wall carpeting, have the advantage of being movable for cleaning purposes. Also, renters of homeowners who move frequently may prefer sized rugs which are not permanent features of the decor.

Whatever its shape or size, carpeting is sold by the square yard. (To figure square yards, multiply in feet the width of the room by its length, then divide by nine.) Although "factory unit" or "commercial" sound like great bargains, these terms are meaningless, says the BBB. There's no such measurement as "factory unit," and commercial carpeting is not necessarily extra tough.

**Know About Fibers**  
Having determined the color and size of carpeting, the buyer's next step is to decipher those bold-letter ads with baffling terms like "Virgin Nylon" or "Genuine Pile." It's useful to know

about the different fibers used in carpeting.

Take into account factors such as how the material resists daily wear, its durability, crash-resistance and cleaning requirements. Here are the most common fibers used in carpeting and their characteristics:

•Acrylic -- Durable and easy to clean; resists fading. May develop fuzz or "pills" with hard wear.

•Cotton -- Wears well; holds color. Has poor resilience. Used mainly in scatter rugs.

•Nylon -- Durable, bounces back easily; not affected by mildew; easy to clean. Bright colors soil easily.

•Polyester -- Crush resistant; very durable; resists moths and mildew. Not as bouncy as nylon, so its pile should be thicker.

•Polypropylene (or "olefin") -- Very durable, soil resistant. Used often in outdoor carpeting.

•Rayon -- Least expensive; wears well. Often machine washable. Not very springy.

•Wool -- Very durable, springy. Resists soil and signs of wear. Doesn't need cleaning as often as synthetics, but requires

more effort when it is cleaned.

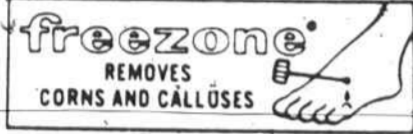
What is most important about carpeting construction, says the BBB, is the destiny of the fiber. Grab the corner and bend it; if you can see through the fibers to the backing, then it's not very dense. A tight, compact weave makes a carpet more durable and easier to clean. Also, the backing should be firm and attached securely to the fibers. This gives the carpet its shape and helps it last longer.

A summer shopper who looks at more than the color of carpeting, says the BBB, probably won't be misled by flashy advertisements with confusing offers. And, looking later at such a good buy will make Mr./Mrs. Homeowner as snug as a bug in a rug.

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