

Carpet-Smart Renovations: Bonded Polyurethane Carpet Cushion Makes a Difference



Alliance for Flexible Polyurethane Foam

CASE STUDY

In January 2003, the American Chemistry Council was faced with moving some of their staff to a different wing of the Commonwealth Tower in Arlington, Virginia, just across the Potomac from Georgetown in Washington, D.C. The domino effect was in place: one group vacating a space to be occupied by another group waiting to move in. Scheduling was critical. Despite the short time allowed for the move, smart decisions in floor coverings were made so that the investment in renovations could have long-term benefits.

A walk-through made it very clear that carpet replacement topped the renovation list. According to facility manager Mike McGraw, "the main eyesore was the carpet. It was worn and ready for replacement." Experience has taught him the balance between performance and cost, and when it comes to soft floor coverings, he has seen that using cushion can extend carpet life.

"Carpet with cushion costs more up front, but saves money in the long run because you probably will not have to replace the carpet as often."

Mike McGraw, Facility Manager

Working with Michael Paul at Allstate Carpets of Alexandria, Virginia, McGraw chose two attractive and durable commercial carpets for the American Chemistry Council installation. A 32 oz. multi-level loop carpet was selected for the corridors, complemented by a 36 oz. cut-pile construction for the offices. The conservative-yet-attractive look was well suited for the occupants, with the dark blue corridors providing a striking contrast to the camel office carpet. To support and protect the carpet, McGraw selected a 10 lbs./cu. ft. density commercial bonded



Get More from Workplace Carpet with Carpet Cushion

Commercial-grade polyurethane carpet cushion absorbs much of the energy from walking and rolling traffic, protecting the carpet face. This helps the carpet to look better longer. Improved ergonomics and acoustics from carpet with cushion provide additional benefits, satisfying both the facilities management and occupants.

When Mike McGraw, a facility manager for the American Chemistry Council headquarters in the Washington, D.C. metro area was faced with carpet replacement, he specified commercial-grade bonded polyurethane installed using the double-glue method.

polyurethane carpet cushion, specifically designed for double-glue installations. Bonded polyurethane is a suitable environmental choice, containing a high recycle content of pre-consumer and post-consumer polyurethane and is recyclable in many locations. Recycling facilities may not be available in all areas. Check to see if recycling facilities exist in your area. A *Recycled Plastics Markets Database* of buyers and sellers of recycled polyurethanes in the U.S. and Canada is also available at www.polyurethane.org. In addition, bonded polyurethane carpet cushion can improve carpet lifespan, sound absorption and thermal insulation.

Most people are familiar with the residential version of bonded polyurethane carpet cushion, easily identified by its multi-colored speckled appearance, but don't confuse the cushion in your home with its commercial counterpart. Made at higher densities and with the additional strength and durability required to meet high traffic demands, commercial bonded polyurethane carpet cushion is a high performance material particularly well suited to meet the needs of modern facilities.

Quick Turnaround

The American Chemistry Council installation went in flawlessly and on schedule thanks in large part to the expertise of the installation group from Allstate Carpets. Led by certified installer Otway Zantzing, the cushion and carpet were installed according to guidelines that have since been published by the Alliance for Flexible Polyurethane Foam. Zantzing is experienced in the double-glue installation method, noting, "the commercial polyurethane bonded cushion was easy to work. It cuts well and it isn't heavy and difficult to position."

Beyond the handsome look of the new carpet, Executive Director Dick Mericle found the comfort and "feel" provided by the carpet cushion composite to be a winner.

"the change has been dramatic... even visitors from other wings in the building comment on how good the carpet feels the minute they walk in. We've had a lot of inquires from other divisions wanting to know how soon they can have carpet with cushion on their floor. The 'wow' factor when people walk into our section is pretty significant."

Dick Mericle, Executive Director

Numerous studies document the benefits of carpet cushion that go far beyond the comfort factor. Sound absorption, thermal insulation, improved soil removal during vacuuming, improved appearance retention and longer carpet lifespan are among other benefits offered by installing recyclable polyurethane carpet cushion under workplace carpet.

Double-Glue Method

The double-glue installation method chosen for the American Chemistry Council project is the preferred method of installing commercial carpet and carpet cushion today. It involves adhering carpet cushion to the floor, followed by adhering the carpet to the installed cushion. Detailed, photo-illustrated guidelines may be downloaded at www.afpf.com.

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The Alliance for Flexible Polyurethane Foam is a joint program of the Alliance for the Polyurethanes Industry and the Polyurethane Foam Association.