



**“Service With Integrity”  
Since 1968**

# **Professional Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning**



**Membership  
GUIDE**

# Welcome to the **National Carpet Cleaners Association**

The Only Government 'TrustMark' Approved  
Carpet and Upholstery Cleaning Trade Association in the UK.

The NCCA was formed in 1968 as a non-profit organisation, which simply means that all funds go back in to supporting the membership. Being part of a recognised organisation will assure your customers that you are trustworthy and reputable and, in choosing to gain the qualifications and register with an official body, that you are a professional.

The Association is here to give you as much support as you require and help you build a successful and reputable business. In return members are required to adhere to the Code of Practice and follow best practice for carpet cleaning tasks, set out in PAS86.

The NCCA also aims to keep members fully up-to-date with the latest industry news and developments, to assist them in improving their business, expanding their services and remaining safe in the industry. The most valuable sources of information are the NCCA website and the monthly magazine, Newslink.

The Association has been acknowledged by TrustMark (Government Endorsed Standards), for its training and support procedures and only NCCA members can become eligible to register with this official trusted trade scheme.

This guide provides a summary of information relevant to new members. It covers the specifics of the above, along with details of the membership structure, legalities, rules, benefits and training. The accompanying pack will include a welcome letter, certificate to confirm your membership, related documents and disc containing a logo and other official files.

We wish you every success with whichever path you decide to take your business and remember the NCCA Directors and office staff are here to help should you require any advice or guidance.

## 1. Standards

The NCCA exists to set minimum standards and promote professionalism in the Carpet & Upholstery cleaning industry. All members must sign and abide by the NCCA Code of Practice.

### Code of Practice

*(The following is a summary of the Code of Practice)*

1. **Customer Service and Satisfaction** is one of the most important aspects of the Code of Practice. Members are required to adhere to the relevant standards regarding due diligence, industry standards, the One to One Rule, PAS86 and timely and effective communications.

2. **Pricing** should be fair and offer value for money. The Association does not seek to impose a price structure on its members but retains the right to investigate prices charged should a complaint be received.

3. **Advertising** should be truthful, honest, clear and unambiguous and comply with the official CAP Advertising Codes at all times.

4. **Complaints** must be acknowledged within 24 hours, investigated within 14 days and rectified within 28 days should the member be found to be at fault. Should the NCCA be required to arbitrate in any dispute, the Association's decision is binding on the member.

5. **Owners Risk Clauses** are generally not consistent with the Code of Practice, but can be considered in certain circumstances.

6. **Breaches** of the Code of Practice may result in expulsion from the Association or a probationary period during which further breaches will result in summary expulsion.

7. **Publicity** of the Code of Practice is provided by the Association, however members are required to make the existence of the Code known to their customers and provide a copy if it is requested in the event of a complaint or dispute.

## PAS 86

Professional Inspection, Maintenance, Cleaning and Restoration of Textile Floor Coverings, provides a statement of industry best practice for the actual tasks of cleaning carpets.

This is an officially recognised document and may be referred to by insurers and the legal profession should a complaint arise against a cleaning company or its employees. Failure to confirm compliance with PAS86 recommendation may affect the outcome in the event of a claim.



It is therefore recommended that all carpet cleaning businesses keep at least one copy of PAS86 for reference purposes and that staff are made aware of the procedures and processes recommended therein.

## 2. NCCA Logo



The NCCA is widely recognised by industry, government and the general public as the authoritative source for carpet and upholstery cleaning in this country. The logo is the trademark of the Association and members of all levels can make use of their specific logo to promote themselves as registered and/or recommended by the Association. Use of the logo in marketing and promotion is restricted to current members only. However, the logo used must be correct for the membership level of the company and, where possible, include their membership number. A logo, specific to your company, is included on the disc enclosed with your welcome pack.

**ASSOCIATE MEMBER 1000**

Members are encouraged to report any cases of suspected logo misuse to the office.

## 3. The Membership Structure

The NCCA has a tiered membership structure, designed to recognise continued and long term support and reward additional training beyond the basic criteria for joining, the aim being to raise standards within the industry.

Associate Member is the base level of NCCA membership and most new starters will begin here. Companies can progress through the levels of membership by fulfilling additional criteria, such as length of service and further training, in order to receive more benefits and opportunities from the Association.

All Members of the Association must provide proof of both Public Liability and Treatment Risk insurance cover. Confirmation that current insurance is in place must be provided to the NCCA office every year in order to renew membership subscription.

All Members are also required to sign the NCCA Health & Safety declaration and comply with the One to One Rule (see section 4).

### **Membership Tiers and Criteria**

#### **Associate Member**

Associate Members receive all the benefits of membership apart from direct customer referrals. It should be noted that the Association is not, primarily, a referral organisation, but any recommendations passed on must be to registered companies with industry experience. Associate Members will be listed on the NCCA website for any customers wishing to clarify their accreditation.

After one year of membership, Associate Members may progress to Member level, provided they fulfil the necessary criteria (detailed below), and be eligible for referrals.

Associate Members are entitled to use a specific NCCA logo, with the words "Associate Member" and their membership number beneath (this will be

provided with the welcome pack). Use of any other logo variation is prohibited and may result in expulsion from the Association. Copies of the specific logo can be provided by the office in various formats or sent direct to printers/signwriters should they be required.

To achieve Member status (the next level), Associate Members must be registered with the NCCA for one year and in that time must undertake a recognised course on advanced spot and stain removal. If an Associate Member fails to complete or confirm attendance of this compulsory course within one year, there is a requirement to sit an additional exam - for which a nominal fee is payable - in order to remain registered with the Association. Following successful completion of the exam, Associate Members have a further year to attend a spot and stain course. Should this criteria not be met by the end of the second year, renewal may be refused.

### **Member Level**

Once Member level has been achieved, companies will be eligible for direct customer referrals from the office – along with all the benefits available at Associate Member level.

A Member can remain at this level indefinitely if they so wish. However, after two years, an application can be made for Advanced Member level.

In order to become eligible for Advanced membership, the owner/operator or a company employee must be allocated as the Head Technician. This representative must then attend, or confirm completion of, one additional training course during the company's time as a Member. The subject of the course is the Technician's choice but it must be through a recognised training provider.

There are many courses, seminars and other educational events available in the industry and the NCCA highly recommends regular attendance and updated learning for all members and their employees regardless of their level or plans to progress.

### **Advanced Member Level**

Once a Member has fulfilled the criteria detailed above they may apply for Advanced membership. If successful, an applicant will receive a new logo and be eligible to advertise as an Advanced Member. This level includes the full range of membership benefits, along with automatic eligibility for TrustMark registration (see end of section 6).

A Member can remain at Advanced level, without the constraints of further training or criteria (though the Association does recommend continued education at all levels). However, after five years an application can be made for Senior Member level.

In order to become eligible for Senior membership, the owner/operator or a company employee must be allocated as the Head Technician (unless progressing from Advanced level as the Head Technician has already been allocated). This representative must then attend, or confirm completion of, four additional training courses during their time as a registered member. The subjects of the courses are again the Technician's choice but must be through recognised training providers.

## Senior Member Level

After a total of seven years continuous membership, companies that fulfil the criteria as previously stated can apply for Senior Membership. This is the final level of progression within the NCCA membership structure and additional criteria regarding training are in place to maintain this status.

The allocated Head Technician is required to gain additional recognised training qualifications every three years in order for a company to remain eligible for Senior Membership and advertise as such. The Association considers education the most important factor in achieving the highest industry standards and our Senior Members demonstrate this with a commitment to ongoing training and continued learning.

## 4. One to One Rule

The One to One Rule was introduced in 2007 to ensure that all technicians employed by NCCA registered companies had some form of recognised training. All members, of any level, must comply with the Rule and provide confirmation of relevant qualifications for all employees permitted to clean carpets or upholstery. Along with further advancing the professionalism of the Association, and separating the membership from their competitors, the One to One rule will go some way to assist an employer to improve their image and to minimise potential problems or complaints in regard to the service provided by their company.



It is important to remember that the idea of the One to One rule is to ensure that everyone cleaning soft furnishings has at least some basic knowledge of their trade. It does not change the requirements for anyone who wishes to become an Associate Member of the Association. It is still necessary for a new member to either attend the NCCA Professional Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning course or the equivalent course/s through one of the approved training providers, as well as an advanced Spot & Stain Removal course to become a Member.

The idea behind the One to One rule is to ensure minimum training is in place, but that by no means implies the minimum is enough. If it is your policy to send employees on full training programmes, we feel this is very beneficial and a good model for the business. The more training your staff receive the greater their contribution to your company and the Association actively encourages ongoing education and regular training.

*Please see the NCCA Website for more information on the One to One Rule, there is a helpful question and answer page here:*

[http://www.ncca.co.uk/members/downloads/1to1\\_rule.pdf](http://www.ncca.co.uk/members/downloads/1to1_rule.pdf)

*If you have any queries regarding the rule, contact the NCCA office.*

## 5. Association Rules

The NCCA is governed by the Articles of Association. The latest version of this official document will have been provided with the application form and all members are requested to read through the full Articles to better understand the Association rules and legalities. However, the below summary will provide details of the most important regulations and legally enforced items.

- Upon subscription to the NCCA, all members must sign and agree to abide by the Articles of Association (AoA) and Code of Practice.
- The NCCA is limited by guarantee and under UK law each member is liable for a £2 fee if the company were to be wound up.
- Members may resign from the NCCA, but must provide notice in writing in line with Article 4 of the AoA.
- The NCCA is run by a Board of Directors elected from the membership. The Directors are volunteers and each run their own carpet and upholstery cleaning business. Roles are assigned to each Board member including Company Secretary, President and Vice President. Directors also hold positions overseeing membership, training, technical, marketing and other responsibilities.
- Directors communicate regularly and arrange meetings to discuss NCCA affairs and make decisions to develop and progress the Association.
- A General Meeting is held annually in accordance with the AoA (Articles 8 through 19). All members are encouraged to attend and be involved in discussions regarding the past year, current standing and major decisions affecting the future of the Association.

The NCCA was established to set minimum standards in the industry. By doing so it provides support for cleaning companies, assisting them in developing from their foundations to becoming reputable and distinguished service providers. Association benefits range from a variety of sources and the NCCA is always looking to introduce new advantages to being registered. We try to support all our members to the fullest extent we can, whether they have been established for two months or twenty years. However, it does require members to utilise the Association and benefits in order to make the NCCA work for them. This is your organisation, making the most of what is available to you will go a long way in assisting to create a successful venture.

## 6. Benefits of Membership

These are just a few of the benefits of membership. Not all benefits are available to Associate Members, as they require additional criteria such as length of time served and attendance of further training courses.

**Guarantee of good workmanship:** As a member of the Association you will automatically be recognised as a service provider that takes their profession seriously. Having completed the relevant training courses and fulfilling the criteria for membership, your customers should be assured that they are employing a reputable and trustworthy company that abides by the NCCA motto: Service with Integrity.

**Training courses:** One of the most encouraged activities of members is to continue training, from those new to the industry to the well established. The NCCA run courses for Carpet and Upholstery Cleaning along with a variety of other related subjects (covered later in this document). NCCA training is generic (non-product specific) and all members receive discounted rates on courses.

**Events:** Along with the training courses the NCCA arrange or sponsor many different industry events such as technical roadshows, member meetings, and factory tours. Every year we also organise a large exhibition or event featuring the biggest names on the supply and manufacturing side of the industry, along with a heavy focus on continued education.

**Technical Helpline:** All members are able to share the wealth of experience accumulated by fellow members (including the NCCA Directors), many of them very well established and knowledgeable carpet-cleaning practitioners. Members can contact the office to put forward a technical enquiry and be referred to an expert for advice.

**Magazine:** The NCCA publication is the only UK magazine which exclusively covers the carpet and upholstery cleaning industry. All Members receive the magazine, containing news and views as well as updates on technical matters and topics of professional interest, every month. Much of the content used to create the magazine is provided by members of the Association and we are always happy to receive articles from contributors in the industry. So, if you have any expertise that you think could be of interest to other members, or just a story that you would like to share, even a question for one of our experts, send it to [newslink@ncca.co.uk](mailto:newslink@ncca.co.uk).



**Arbitration Service:** In the case of complaints or disputes, members can contact, and customers be passed on to, the Association's Standards and Fair Trading Department. The SFT Dept. can provide advice and assistance for members and their customers in regard to such specifics as liability, services and consumer protection, along with recommendations on how best to resolve potentially complicated situations.

**Website:** The NCCA website has been developed for both the consumer and the member. It provides an opportunity for the public to see the workings of the Association, understand the benefits of employing NCCA registered companies and utilise the Trusted Local Cleaner facility to find a Member in their area and contact direct to book work or ask any questions. Members of all levels also have access to a dedicated area providing latest news, marketing assistance, archived copies of Newslink, online merchandise ordering and official documents/information. The website also provides our latest announcements and information about what is happening within the Association including training courses and events, etc.

**Social Media:** The NCCA Social Media campaign features many online outlets, most prominently Facebook and Twitter, that are regularly updated with the latest information for members, the public and other interested parties.

**Central enquiry/referral system:** A fully staffed office at the NCCA's Leicester headquarters, ensures that all enquiries received, whether from members of the public or from industrial or commercial customers, are passed on to the appropriate local NCCA members. The online 'Find A Member' service also provides the public with the option to search for and contact their local member.

From Member level onwards, there is also the opportunity to advance the listing on the NCCA website. This includes the addition of a logo, further information on the company and a direct website link, to further promote the company and assist visitors in choosing a member.

**Third party referrals:** The Association has links with a variety of organisations, such as official bodies, manufacturers, trade-specific service providers and other relevant parties, which will only recommend use of a NCCA member. For this reason it is important for members to query their customers and track their referrals to understand how leads are being generated and gauge the success of their marketing.

**Promotional items:** Merchandise and other official NCCA items are available to assist members in promoting their companies and registration with the Association. These items can be purchased securely via the NCCA office or online shop (a full price list is included in your welcome pack).

A Promotional Video aimed at the consumer has also been created by the Association and is available to members for free. The video introduces the NCCA and benefits of employing their local member to consumers and can be added to websites and online media to further promote membership and professionalism.

**Corporate Members:** The NCCA has a long list of registered companies that provide services and supplies to members including equipment, chemicals, advice, training and support for all aspects of running a business in the carpet and upholstery cleaning industry. These companies pay a Membership fee to be associated with the NCCA and often provide offers, discounts and other incentives that are exclusive to members.

**TrustMark:** Only available to NCCA Members with a minimum of two years recent industry experience, an Advanced Spot & Stain Removal training qualification, and a signed declaration regarding health and safety. The Government endorsed trusted trader scheme has enlisted the Association to set the TrustMark criteria for the carpet and upholstery cleaning industry. TrustMark affiliation is exclusive to NCCA members that fulfil the necessary criteria (a Government fee is also incurred). Registered companies are recommended by The Citizens Advice Bureau and Office of Fair Trading, amongst other officially recognised organisations.



## 7. Continued Learning

As well as providing training, the NCCA approves courses run by some of the Corporate Members. These courses do not just maintain, but improve the standards required for membership and encourage growth in the number of members, ensuring the future strength of the NCCA. This enables the Association to continue promoting the professionalism of its members to the general public, insurers, cleaning industry, Government and commerce, bringing benefits to all.

*(Please contact the organisations direct, for more information on their courses dates and availability).*

### **NCCA Training Courses**

- Professional Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning (two days)
- Advanced Spot & Stain Treatment and Removal
- Leather Cleaning and Identification
- Rug School
- Curtain Cleaning & Anti-Soil Protection
- Health & Safety for the Carpet and Upholstery Cleaner
- An Introduction to Insurance and Insurance-related Work

Other course topics are also covered, a full list of which can be found on the NCCA website.

All courses run by the NCCA are held at the NSPCC Training Centre, Leicester unless stated otherwise on the booking form. Accommodation is available at local Premier Inn Hotels, the closest being Premier Inn Leicester Central (A50), LE3 9QH.



Course booking forms can be found on line at [www.ncca.co.uk/training.php](http://www.ncca.co.uk/training.php) and returned to the office at the registered address.

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Details of Corporate Members and other organisations that offer NCCA approved training, can be found in the magazine and on our website.





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