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Survey Suggests U.S. Homeowners Relate Health of Family to Cleanliness of Flooring

Vancouver, Wash. – Dec. 5, 2007 – A survey recently conducted by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) found that eight out of 10 U.S. homeowners (81 percent) feel that their family’s health is directly related to the cleanliness of their floors.

One-third (33 percent) said that someone in their household suffers from indoor allergies. Among households with allergy sufferers, half (50 percent) agree that the type of flooring in the home can be attributed to allergies.

The **You’d Be Floored** survey, commissioned by the IICRC, polled 1,155 homeowners throughout the country about issues related to flooring and floor cleanliness between October 29 and November 2, 2007. Detailed results can be found at www.CertifiedCleaners.org.

Three out of four homeowners (77 percent) vacuum their floors at least once per week and those with children are more likely to vacuum several times per week (47 percent among those with children and 32 percent among those without). When it comes to deep cleaning, almost half of the homeowners (49 percent) deep clean their carpet at least every six months, with 39 percent hiring a professional carpet cleaning service. While nearly half of the homeowners surveyed (45 percent) deep clean other hard surfaces in their home at least every six months, only seven percent hire a professional.

“To maintain the appearance of flooring, not only carpet, but all flooring should receive professional cleaning to preserve finishes and durability, and to improve environmental quality for family members,” said Ruth Travis, IICRC president.

Notably, 75 percent of respondents perceive carpet to be the least effective type of flooring in minimizing conditions that aggravate allergies. Twenty-six percent of respondents view wood flooring as the most effective for improving indoor air quality.

“Homeowners are often misled in believing that carpet itself irritates indoor allergies,” said Jeff Bishop, IICRC technical advisor. “However, scientific studies demonstrate that just the opposite is true: carpet actually traps airborne allergens that can easily be vacuumed out, whereas wood flooring allows irritants to be stirred up by normal traffic or sweeping and released into the breathing zone. Airborne dust, not carpet, is the culprit that triggers allergies.”

The survey also showed that while homeowners feel the cleanliness of their floors is important, 52 percent don’t do anything different to their carpet or floors during the holiday season than other times of the year.

“During the holidays, decorations and other items are brought out of storage, often stirring up dust, and possibly mold, that can trigger allergies,” said Bishop. “If you know you have someone in your home with allergies or asthma, consider cleaning and vacuuming more frequently during the holidays.”

Additional Key Findings:

- Carpet is the most common floor covering in U.S. homes. The majority of U.S. homeowners use carpet in bedrooms (80 percent), living rooms (65 percent), offices/dens (68 percent) and family rooms (63 percent).
- The majority (52 percent) of survey participants indicated the primary advantage of carpet is that it’s comfortable. Forty-one percent say the biggest drawback is that it shows soil.
- Among homeowners who replaced their carpet, 49 percent did so because of wear while four in 10 (38 percent) replaced carpet due to soiling and staining issues.
- Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of U.S. homeowners have rugs in their homes.
- Nearly half (49 percent) of U.S. homeowners are not aware if the cleaning products they use are environmentally safe.
- Fifty-eight percent are likely (likely/very likely/extremely likely) to purchase “green” cleaning products.
- Sixty-three percent of homeowners are concerned (concerned/very concerned/extremely concerned) that cleaning products may be made with chemicals that may be hazardous to their health. One in five (21 percent) are extremely concerned.

- Half of U.S. homeowners (50 percent) say it's extremely or very important to hire a professional cleaning service that is certified by a professional organization.

About the IICRC

The Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) is an ANSI-accredited non-profit certifying body for the flooring inspection, floor covering and specialized fabric cleaning and disaster restoration industries. Organized in 1972, the IICRC currently represents more than 5,200 Certified Firms and more than 48,200 Certified Technicians in 30 countries. The IICRC, with participation from the entire industry, sets standards for inspection, cleaning and disaster restoration. IICRC does not own schools, employ instructors, produce training materials, or promote specific product brands, cleaning methods or systems. It approves schools and instructors that meet the criteria established by the IICRC. IICRC also serves as a consumer referral source for Certified Firms and Inspectors. Please visit www.certifiedcleaners.org or www.iicrc.org for more information.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of IICRC between October 29 and November 2, 2007 among 1,155 U.S. homeowners. Results were weighted as needed for gender, age, education, race/ethnicity, region, household income, number of adults and children living in the household. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100 percent response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the U.S. adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to be invited to participate in the Harris Interactive online research panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

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