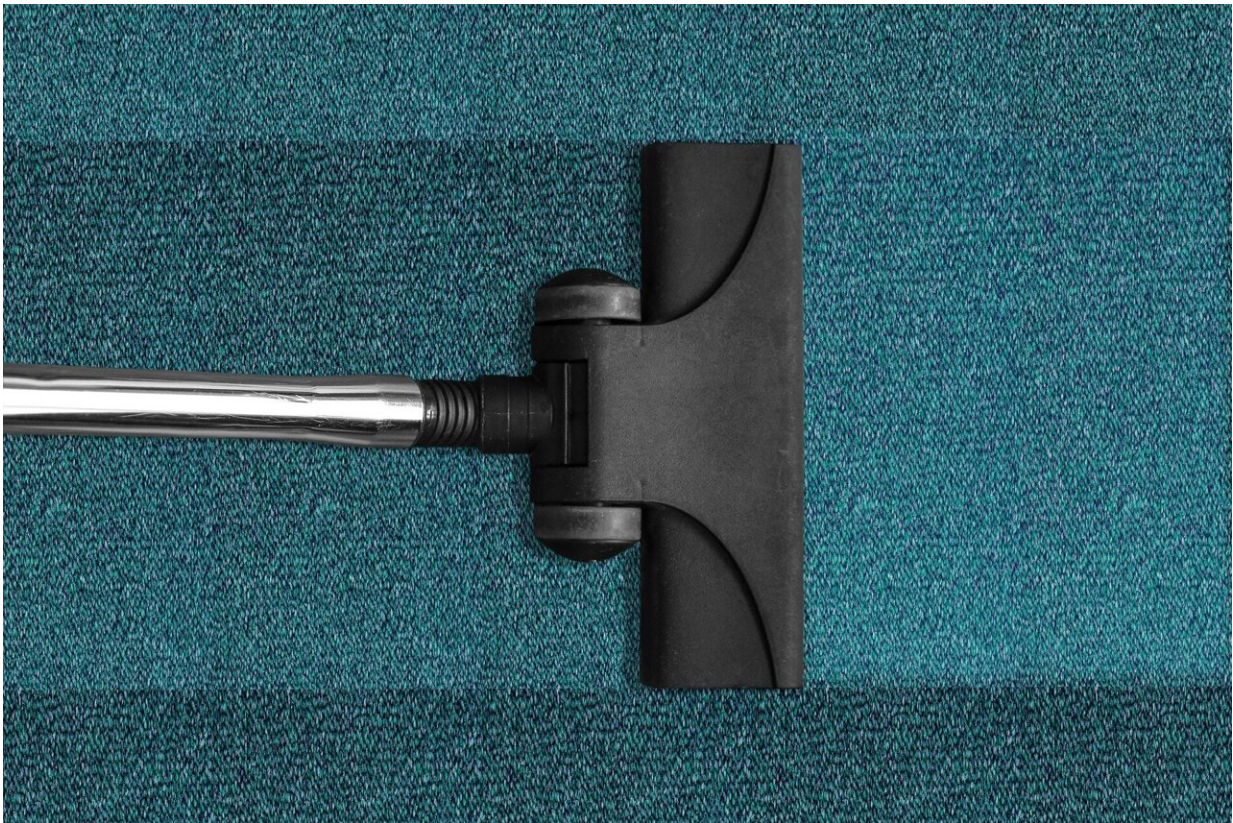


# New report highlights need for carpet industry to roll out microplastic guidance

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A report published this week focuses on the need for the carpet industry to stop brushing evidence of potentially harmful microplastics in their products under the mat.

Researchers are calling for floor covering manufacturers and suppliers to start being more transparent and to work together to find solutions to a growing problem.

The joint [report](#) by Revolution Plastics at the University of Portsmouth and sustainability consultancy experts SB+CO concluded there are currently no [microplastic](#) reduction policies in the carpet industry.

Researchers compared 51 companies from European clothing and carpet industries to evaluate if they had microplastics policies or provided information to customers about the microplastics in their products.

They found that while the clothing industry was now starting to acknowledge the problem of microplastics shedding from their products, with new initiatives targeting zero impact, the carpet industry was a different story.

Microplastics have been shown to have serious negative impacts on many [animal species](#), including reduced growth, intestinal damage, aberrant development and reduced population growth. Recent studies have shown microplastics can enter [human bodies](#), with plastic found in blood, liver, lungs and the placenta.

Carpets are of particular concern, as it has been estimated that they can double the number of microplastics fibers in the home (Soltani et al. 2021). This, coupled with the fact that we spend up to 90 percent of our lives indoors, means there is potential for breathing in high concentrations of microplastics.

Claudia Proietti from SB+CO, says, "Of the 24 carpet companies investigated, we found they are heavily promoting the shift to using recycled plastics as a more environmental and sustainable solution, but are not yet considering the impacts of microplastics. Instead, durability,

cleanability and low prices are the key selling points for plastic carpets. For example one manufacturer claims—'this carpet is made from 100% polypropylene and bleach cleanable, offering extra durability and ensuring that you can clean your carpet with ease while retaining its color'."

The reports main findings were:

- None of the 24 carpet companies reviewed had a publicly-stated position on microplastics, yet all sold carpets made containing plastic.
- Almost 86 percent of the [manufacturing companies](#) included have a sustainability strategy or commitments, but microplastics are not included in the strategy.
- Consumers are unaware of the [health issues](#) associated with microplastics. Retailers only offer guidelines to highlight carpet qualities.

The report recommends that carpet companies work together to standardize testing of microplastics in products (similar to that of the [clothing industry](#) that uses a washing machine test to determine the presence of microplastics). Researchers also urge manufacturers to be more transparent to consumers about using microplastics.

Nigel Salter, from SB+CO says, "Unbelievably, no information on the possible health impacts is made available to consumers. Human health is only noted in relation to chemical usage in carpet production, and even then, only a few companies focus on the issue."

Dr. Fay Couceiro, Reader in Biogeochemistry and Environmental Pollution at the University of Portsmouth, has developed new methods for investigating levels of microplastics in the home.

She says, "It would be unrealistic to think we could just remove all carpets to solve the problem. However, the flooring industry needs to play its part and consider new ways to reduce the release of microplastics from carpets. We spend the majority of our time indoors, and microplastics can concentrate here, as many of the objects in our homes, schools and workplaces are plastic."

Research by the University of Portsmouth has shown high levels of microplastics inside living areas. Dr. Couceiro is concerned about the impact of wear and tear on floor coverings. She adds: "These plastic objects can release microplastics into a semi-closed environment where they are not diluted by large amounts of water or air, as they would be outside."

"When microplastics break up small enough, they can lift into the air as dust to be breathed in, or to later land on food and be eaten. It is therefore sensible to begin taking steps to limit our exposure where possible."

Dr. Couceiro also fears consumers might be misled by environmental claims. "What we are seeing is the flooring industry making strong environmental claims on their products and the use of recycled plastics," she explains.

"Our report is encouraging manufacturers to learn the lessons of the apparel industry and start taking action."

The researchers conclude there is a real need for action. With so much global concern about microplastics, they say it's essential for all industries to join the conversation and be part of the solution.

The hope is that this research will raise awareness of the issues and provide a platform for the [carpet](#) industry to start a meaningful dialogue

on this topic.

**More information:** Report: [www.sbandco.com/latest/microplastics-in-our-homes](http://www.sbandco.com/latest/microplastics-in-our-homes)

Provided by University of Portsmouth

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