

Sources of Sidematch Complaints

Sidematch complaints remain one of the largest problems in the carpet industry. This problem occurs when two pieces of carpet, either taken from the same roll or from rolls of the same dyelot, are laid side to side and do not match at the seam. In manufacturing sidematch problems can occur in tufting, shearing, or dyeing which may cause texture, pile height, and color variations between rolls of the same dye lot. Although slight variations are normal, color is still the primary focus of the consumer when selecting carpet therefore, any color variation at the seam is almost always immediately noted and a complaint is generated.

Sidematch problems cannot be defined as strictly a manufacturing related problem.

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In many cases improper installation influences this condition. In regard to installation, one key factor to help avoid sidematch problems is for the installation of the carpet to be in roll sequence. Roll sequence simply means that the carpets are laid out and installed according to manufacturing roll number sequence. Manufacturers insure that rolls are properly tagged and identified for this purpose. Sidematch complaints created by the installer's failure to follow the manufacturing roll number sequence are not the fault of the manufacturer. This problem is more common in commercial installations where hundreds, even thousands of yards of carpet is often required.

In residential installations it is usual to have multiple cuts made from a single roll of carpet. Because of this, installers must pay particular attention to insure where the cuts fall since some color and texture variation can occur from side to side and end to end within a roll. To avoid this, seams should be laid in a manner consecutive to the order that the cuts are taken from the roll. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for installers to wait until all 12 foot cuts are made before allotting for carpet for the fill pieces. Taken from other areas of the roll, these fill pieces may display slight variations in color or texture compared to the carpet adjacent to the fill.

Sidematch problems often occur due to the installer reversing the nap of an adjoining breadth, by improper pattern match, and by installing different dyelots. In installation they can also occur when a heat shield is not used on the seaming iron, or when a metal tool tray or other weighted metal object is used behind the seaming iron in an effort to achieve more complete contact of the secondary scrim with the hot melt seaming tape. In both instances the excessive heat created can result in changes in the dye and yarn configuration at the seam,

creating a sidematch condition.

Proper trimming of the selvedge edge is also necessary to avoid sidematch complaints. This is especially true with pattern goods where a proper pattern match will otherwise not be obtainable, and with continuous dyed goods, where heavier construction of dye may be gathered on the edges of the carpet. Several manufacturers recommend that 12 foot wide carpet be trimmed to 11' 10" to help achieve a proper sidematch (EXCLUDING PATTERN GOODS which will require their full width repeat).

Seam placement is another vital concern when trying to eliminate the potential for sidematch complaints. Whenever possible seams should be placed where indirect light does not strike across the seam. Additionally, seams should not be placed in an area slightly offset of the location of main overhead lighting since the angle of light can create an apparent sidematch condition if the seam is slightly peaking. Considering these factors, it is easy to see why installers should be aware of where problems with sidematch might occur, as well as how to avoid contributing to this problem.

In almost all cases sidematch problems are a visible condition which should be discovered when the carpet is laid out OR at the very least when the goods are cut prior to actual installation. In all cases' installers are responsible for recognizing potential sidematch conditions before installing the carpet and notifying the dealer so they may obtain mill disposition on the continued installation or replacement of the carpet.

Merry Christmas!