Carpet Cleaning Business Startup Checklist

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Key takeaways

- Start with a portable extractor and upgrade to a truck mount later
- Price per room with a minimum, plus add-ons for stairs and pet treatment
- IICRC training isn't legally required but builds trust
- Remind past clients every 6–12 months for repeat bookings

1. Plan

- [ ] Choose your niche and the services you'll offer first
- [ ] Define your service area (keep it tight to cut drive time)
- [ ] Write a one-page plan: who, where, what you charge, how you'll get 10 clients
- [ ] Check local competitors' services and prices

2. Register & insure

- [ ] Pick a business name and check your state registry, trademarks and the .com domain
- [ ] Choose a structure (sole proprietor or LLC)
- [ ] Get a free EIN from the IRS (irs.gov)
- [ ] Check city/county business license requirements
- [ ] Open a separate business bank account
- [ ] Get general liability insurance before your first paid job
- [ ] Carry general liability insurance, since you work with water and chemicals in clients' homes. Training and certification, for example through the IICRC, isn't legally required in most places but builds trust and teaches proper techniques.

3. Equipment

- [ ] Portable carpet extractor (upgrade to a truck mount later)
- [ ] Pre-spray sprayer and carpet rake/groomer
- [ ] Spot and odor treatment solutions
- [ ] Upholstery tool
- [ ] Air movers/fans to speed drying
- [ ] Corner guards, hoses and shoe covers

4. Pricing

- [ ] Track your real job times on your first jobs
- [ ] Set a target hourly rate that covers pay, taxes, insurance, fuel and admin time
- [ ] Create a simple price menu and a minimum charge

- [ ] Use estimate and invoice templates for every quote
- [ ] Check your numbers with the free calculator on ServiceStartKit.com

5. Get online

- [ ] Register a short domain and set up a professional email
- [ ] Launch a 4-page website: home, services & prices, reviews/photos, contact
- [ ] Create a Google Business Profile with photos and your service area

6. First clients

- [ ] Google Business Profile with before/after photos
- [ ] Partner with property managers for move-out cleans
- [ ] Offer pet owners a stain and odor package
- [ ] Remind past clients every 6–12 months
- [ ] Referral discounts for existing customers
- [ ] Ask every happy client for a review and a referral

7. Money

- [ ] Invoice every job and log every expense
- [ ] Keep a mileage log for business driving
- [ ] Set money aside for taxes each month
- [ ] Review prices at least once a year

General information, not legal, tax or insurance advice. Rules vary by state and city.