

# Dye Bleed

**D**ye bleed or color run on rugs is the result of one or more colors transferring to adjacent colors in a wet state. Colors that transfer in a dry state are referred to as crocking. Dye bleed is most often seen in rugs where darker dyes such as red, blue, and black become loosened or fugitive and then are absorbed into adjacent areas of lighter color.

## What Causes Dye Bleed

The causative factors influencing dye bleed are varied. Most of the time it is simply the result of poor or defective dyes. Dye fastness is primarily determined by the interaction of the dyestuff, mordant, selected yarn, time in and temperature of the dye bath.

Mordants, typically metallic salts, such as alum, are agents which join with the dye and the yarn to set the color permanently. In actuality it is the poor selection or use of the mordant which results in a non-colorfast dye. Not all dyes require mordants for fixing but most do. It is of little consequence whether the rug is vegetal dyed or dyed with synthetic dyes. Both can be extremely colorfast or non-colorfast.

Other common factors which can cause dye bleed are prolonged exposure to animal urine, exposure to high alkaline detergents, and sometimes prolonged exposure to water; i.e. flood. With animal urine, and high alkaline detergents sometimes used during home spot treatment, dye bleed may not occur until the rug is washed.

## Dye Bleed Correction

- Color bleed does not necessarily indicate improper cleaning process or negligence during the wash process. An experienced rug washer can usually mitigate or prevent most dye bleed.
- Often dye bleed that does occur can be corrected, sometimes including rugs with pre-existing color run. However even when pre-testing and experience do not indicate potential problems surprises do occur.
- In some cases old dye bleed can even be hidden under soil and does not show in pre-inspection.

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Dye Bleed Treatment on Tabriz Rug



Color Run-Fugitive Dyes