Mascot Cleaning & Spa

Purpose

This guide provides the standard process for cleaning, drying, brushing, organizing, and preparing mascot components for return to the customer.

The goal is to keep every mascot **clean, fresh, safe, organized, and ready for its next use** while protecting the materials from unnecessary wear or damage.

When in doubt, **stop and ask before proceeding**. Some materials, stains, repairs, and construction methods require special handling.

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1. SAFETY FIRST

Required PPE

PPE	Use When
Gloves	● Handling any cleaning chemical, including detergent. ● Completing intake and handling used mascot components. ● Cleaning heads. ● Treating stains. ● Handling dirty or heavily soiled items.
Respiratory Protection / Masks	● Handling upholstery spray. ● Handling Sunbrite. ● Working with heavily concentrated vinegar mixtures. ● Working in the spa if you are sensitive to strong smells.

Important: Always follow the product label and current SDS requirements for PPE and ventilation.

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2. CLEANING PRODUCTS

Use the right product for the job. **More product does not mean better cleaning.** Start with a small amount and increase only when necessary.

Cleaning Product	Usage	Use in Washer?	Important Notes / Restrictions
Upholstery Cleaner	Exterior head cleaning and spot treatment. Exterior fabric and fur only.	❌ No	**DO NOT use inside heads or anywhere that directly contacts skin.** Leave on for **5–10 minutes; never more than 15 minutes.** Can yellow fabric or create additional stains if left too long. Gloves and mask preferred.
Sunbrite	Difficult stains and spot treatment. Exterior fabric and fur only.	❌ No	**DO NOT use inside heads or anywhere that directly contacts skin.** Leave on for **5–10 minutes; never more than 15 minutes.** Can yellow lighter fabrics if not rinsed promptly. Gloves and mask preferred.
OxiClean	Stain and odour removal; soaking. Bodies, fur, laundry, and appropriate exterior materials.	✅ Yes	Great for **OxiClean baths/soaks** and certain spot treatments. Do not use inside heads or anywhere that directly contacts skin. Gloves and mask preferred.
Fabric Softener	Softening fur; final treatment. Laundry and **exterior head fur.**	✅ Yes	Can be used as a final treatment on head fur. **DO NOT use inside heads or anywhere that directly contacts skin.** Gloves preferred; mask if sensitive to strong smells.
Detergent	Regular laundry cleaning. Washing-machine loads.	✅ Yes	**DO NOT use inside heads or anywhere that directly contacts skin.** Gloves preferred; mask if sensitive to strong smells.
Vinegar	Odour removal; loosening buildup. Washing- machine loads and appropriate exterior cleaning.	✅ Yes	Can help neutralize odours and loosen certain buildup. Can also act as a fabric-softening alternative. **DO NOT use inside heads or anywhere that directly contacts skin.** Gloves preferred; mask when using heavily concentrated vinegar mixtures.
Dish Soap	Foot-base cleaning. Primarily foot bases.	❌ No	Use warm **water and a scrub brush** to clean the bottoms of foot bases. Can be used sparingly with OxiClean for certain oil-based stains. **Rinse thoroughly before washing removable covers.**

Important: Upholstery Cleaner and Sunbrite are **exterior-use products only**. They must never be used inside mascot heads or on areas that directly contact the performer's skin.

Quick Product Rules

If You Need To...	Start With...
Wash a regular load	**Detergent + Fabric Softener**
Remove general stains or odours	**OxiClean**
Soak a dirty body	**OxiClean + warm water**
Treat a stubborn exterior stain	**Upholstery Cleaner → Sunbrite → OxiClean spot treatment**
Clean the exterior of a head	**Upholstery Cleaner**
Treat a stubborn head stain	**Upholstery Cleaner → Sunbrite**
Clean the inside of a head	**Hot water + clean cloth → Listerine final treatment**
Clean the bottom of a foot base	**Dish Soap + warm water + scrub brush**
Neutralize odour in a regular wash	**Vinegar**

3. INTAKE & ASSESSMENT

Intake is not just for the client, it is for you, too.

A thorough intake helps you:

- Avoid guessing later.
- Prevent major mishaps or accidental damage.
- Document pre-existing damage so it is not mistakenly attributed to the cleaning process.
- Create more accurate repair and cleaning quotes.
- Keep track of which items belong to which mascot/customer.
- Give other departments the information they need to plan repairs.

Be thorough and descriptive. When in doubt, document it. Log notes and photos are your best friends!

Use log notes to record:

- Repairs and damage.
- Questions or concerns.
- Items that need clarification.
- Due dates.
- Department handoffs.
- Anything unusual or important that someone may need to know later.

Intake is typically divided into three categories: Head, Body & Sewing, and Accessories & Bags.

3.1 HEAD INTAKE

Documenting the head thoroughly is especially important for Props, as the information collected during intake helps determine repair requirements and create accurate quotes.

Required Photos: Take **5 photos** of every head:

Photo	What to Capture
Front	Full front view of the head
Side 1	Full side view
Back	Full back view
Side 2	Opposite side view
Inside	Interior of the head, including the helmet/foam and other relevant areas

Tip: Use your phone's flashlight when photographing the inside of the head. This can make damage and wear much easier to see.

When inspecting the head, look for:

- Loose or damaged teeth.
- Broken helmets.
- Broken accessories.
- Ripped neck extensions.
- Broken vents.
- Damaged viewing screens.
- Other visible damage or areas requiring repair.

Repair Assessment

1. Write down what you believe needs to be repaired.
2. Get a second opinion from the Props Supervisor.
3. Once confirmed, bring the repair information to your Manager.
4. Communicate with Props about when the repairs are expected to be ready so cleaning can be scheduled appropriately.

3.2 BODY & SEWING INTAKE

Most repairs identified during Spa intake are typically found on mascot bodies.

Required Photos

Photograph any specific problem areas in detail. Take photos of the front and back of:

- Arm shirts.
- Legs.
- Bodies.

Areas to Inspect - Pay particular attention to:

Area	Check For
Collar & Boning	Damage, looseness, or wear
Choke Cords	Damage or loose components
High-Stress Seams	Check gussets, armpits, and other high-stress areas
Zippers	Damage, broken pulls, or malfunction
Lining	Tears, damage, or separation
Suspenders	Damage or loose attachment points
Hems	Loose stitching, fraying, or separation
Tails	Damage, loose stitching, or attachment issues
Gloves / Hands	Check carefully between fingers
Feet	Loose threads, holes, or other damage
Foot Bases	Loose thread, holes, loose foam, or other damage

Feet and foot bases are common problem areas — always inspect them carefully.

Repair Assessment

1. Document all repairs you identify.
2. Quote repairs in **1-hour increments** whenever possible.
3. Bring your assessment to **Hanene or Ruby** for a secondary opinion.
4. After confirmation, discuss the repairs with **James**.
5. Communicate with Sewing about when repairs are expected to be ready so cleaning can be scheduled accordingly.

3.3 ACCESSORIES & BAGS

Accessories and bags typically require fewer repairs, but they should always be inspected carefully during intake. Some bags may arrive damaged and require replacement. Customers may also request that accessories be repaired, reproduced, or replaced.

Check Bags Carefully

Before anything is removed from a bag, check for:

- Safety pins.
- Metal objects.
- Company merchandise.
- Flags.
- Bottles.
- Papers.
- Plastic bags.
- Towels.
- Other miscellaneous items.

IMPORTANT: WHAT COMES IN MUST GO OUT

Rule of thumb: If it shows up in the bag, it leaves in the bag. Customers expect their belongings to be returned with their mascot. The only exception is dryer sheets used during the cleaning process. Everything else should be documented and returned with the mascot.

Documentation:

- Accessories received.
- Items found inside bags.
- Damaged accessories.
- Accessories requiring repair or reproduction.
- Bags requiring replacement.
- Any unusual or potentially important items.

Organization

Use the **gray and blue bins** to hold accessories during the cleaning process.

Always label the bins with the appropriate customer/project information.

This prevents accessories from becoming mixed up between mascots.

INTAKE GOLDEN RULE

PHOTOS + LOG NOTES + LABELS = PROTECTION

A good intake should make it possible for someone to look at the documentation later and understand:

- What arrived.
- Who it belongs to.
- What condition it was in.
- What needs to be repaired.
- What needs to be cleaned.
- What was inside the bags.
- What the deadlines are.
- Who needs to be contacted.

The more thoroughly you document things **at intake**, the less guessing, scrambling, and confusion there will be later.

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4. SHELF ORGANIZATION

Keep the spa organized so another employee can walk in and immediately understand what is happening.

Shelf / Location	What Goes Here	Organization Notes
Top Shelf	Accessory bins, items/bags/heads not currently being worked on, items waiting for pickup, items waiting for approval	Always label accessory bins. Keep items organized so their status is immediately clear.
Middle Shelf	Body bags and bodies currently in progress or waiting for sewing repairs	Keep easily accessible so Sewing and other team members can quickly see what is currently being worked on.
Bottom Shelf	Head bags, foot bases, and other smaller or lower-priority items	Keep items labelled and grouped by project/customer.
Under Tables	Larger bags and items that do not fit conveniently on the shelves	Keep organized and clearly labelled. Do not use this area for unidentified or unfinished items.

Item	Label With
Laundry baskets	Customer/company name + current status
Foot bases	Customer/company name or other identifying information
Heads waiting for repairs	Customer/company name + repair status
Items waiting for repairs	Customer/company name + repair status
Accessory bins	Customer/company name/project
Small parts	Customer/company name/project — e.g., bodyliner rings, cooling-vest gel packs

5. STANDARD WASHING PROCEDURE

Important Washing Rules

Fur	All fur must be washed with other fur. Avoid washing fur together with unrelated materials whenever possible. Other materials can damage the fur.
Water Temperature	Use COOL water for all regular washing. Do not wash fur or other mascot components in warm or hot water.
OxiClean Soaks	The exception is an OxiClean soak. Use warm water for the soak. The water should be warm to the touch, not extremely hot.
Light-Coloured Fabrics	When washing light-coloured fabrics, add a few sheets of Shout as an extra precaution against staining.

Regular Fur Load

Recommended washer settings:

- **Cycle:** Normal
- **Temperature:** Cool
- **Spin:** Medium
- **Soil:** Normal
- **Extra Rinse:** No

Use detergent and fabric softener as appropriate.

Dirty or Smelly Regular Load

Recommended washer settings:

- **Cycle:** Normal
- **Temperature:** Cool
- **Spin:** Medium
- **Soil:** Heavy
- **Extra Rinse:** Yes

For particularly dirty or smelly loads, a small amount of vinegar may be added to the wash basin as an odour-neutralizing aid.

Detergent & OxiClean

A typical starting ratio is approximately: **60% detergent / 40% OxiClean**

Use less product than you think you need. Overusing cleaning products can create additional work during rinsing.

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6. BAGS

Before washing bags:

1. Remove all contents.
2. Remove the **“Clean Me I Stink”** tags.
3. Check that there are no loose parts or objects inside.
4. Place the bag in the appropriate laundry load.

Important

The **“Clean Me I Stink”** tags are not waterproof and their metal clasps can damage the washing machine. Street Characters tags can remain attached because they are waterproof. They can also help identify bags when multiple projects are hanging to dry.

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7. FOOT BASE CLEANING

Removable Covers	Non-Removable Covers	Bottom of Foot Base
If the foot-base covers can be removed: 1. Remove the covers. 2. Wash the covers separately. 3. Clean the foot base itself separately.	If the cover cannot be removed, such as on some BMO-style foot bases: ● Clean the cover similarly to a mascot head. ● Avoid getting the interior wet.	Clean using: ● Dish soap. ● Warm water. ● Scrub brush.

Procedure

1. Apply dish soap to the scrub brush.
2. Scrub the bottom of the foot base.
3. Rinse thoroughly with warm water.
4. Place the foot base upside down to dry completely.

If multiple foot bases are in the spa, **label them** so they do not become mixed up.

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8. STAIN TREATMENT — BODIES

OxiClean Soak. For dirty or heavily stained bodies:

1. Fill an appropriate wash basin or dye bath with warm water.
2. Add OxiClean.
3. Submerge the body.
4. Allow it to soak until the water has cooled completely.
5. Remove and proceed with a regular wash using detergent and fabric softener.

Severe or Localized Stains

For particularly bad stains:

1. Apply upholstery cleaner as a spot treatment.
2. Allow it to sit for approximately 5 minutes.
3. Never exceed 15 minutes.
4. Scrub the affected area.
5. Rinse thoroughly.

If upholstery cleaner is unsuccessful:

1. Try Sunbrite.
2. Follow the same general spot-treatment process.
3. Never leave Sunbrite on the fabric for more than 15 minutes.
4. Rinse thoroughly.

If these treatments are unsuccessful, try an OxiClean spot treatment.

Remember

Not every stain can be removed. Do not continue escalating chemical treatments indefinitely. Some stains are permanent. When unsure, ask before proceeding.

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9. STAIN TREATMENT — HEADS

Heads cannot be placed in the washing machine or soaked. Head cleaning is primarily spot treatment. If unsuccessful, repeat the process using Sunbrite.

For exterior stains:

1. Use upholstery cleaner.
2. Work the product into the stained area.
3. Allow it to sit for approximately 5 minutes.
4. Scrub as needed.
5. Thoroughly extract and rinse the area.

CRITICAL SAFETY RULE

NEVER USE UPHOLSTERY CLEANER OR SUNBRITE INSIDE A HEAD.

Do not use these products:

- Inside the head.
- On the helmet foam.
- Anywhere that directly contacts the performer's skin.

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10. HEAD CLEANING — EXTERIOR

Step 1 — Intake & Inspection

After intake:

1. Photograph and document the head.
2. Assess for possible repairs.
3. Communicate any repair needs with Props.
4. Place the head on the head holder.

Clean heads early in the process whenever possible. This allows Props time to complete repairs without waiting for the cleaning process to finish.

Step 2 — Dampen the Fur

Lightly mist the entire head with water. The fur should be evenly saturated, not dripping wet. Make sure the entire exterior is damp before applying cleaner.

Step 3 — Apply Upholstery Cleaner

Spray approximately five sections:

1. Front
2. Back
3. Left side
4. Right side
5. Top

Massage the cleaner into the fur. Allow it to sit for approximately 5–10 minutes. Never allow the product to sit for more than 15 minutes.

Step 4 — Extract the Cleaner

Using the shop vacuum:

1. Work in vertical lines.
2. Pull water and dirt downward.
3. Repeat each section several times.
4. Continue until the head is barely damp.

The goal is to remove both the dirt **and the cleaning product.**

Step 5 — Check for Remaining Product

The head should be thoroughly rinsed/extracted.

Signs that product may still remain:

- Bubbles.
- Suds.
- Excessive shine in the fur.
- Fur that continues to produce suds when rubbed.
- Visible cleaner residue.

Continue extracting until these signs disappear. For long fur, cleaning product can become trapped deeper between the hairs. Do not be afraid to lightly re-wet an area with clean water and extract it again.

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11. HEAD CLEANING — STAINED AREAS

If a stained area remains after the regular cleaning process:

1. Follow the head stain-treatment procedure.
2. Apply the appropriate product only to the exterior.
3. Allow the product to work for the appropriate amount of time.
4. Scrub as needed.
5. Use the shop vacuum to thoroughly extract and rinse the area.

Never use upholstery cleaner or Sunbrite inside the head.

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12. HEAD CLEANING — FINAL FUR TREATMENT

Once the head is mostly dry but still slightly damp:

1. Dampen a clean cloth.
2. Add a small amount of fabric softener.
3. Wipe down the exterior fur.

For long fur, manes, and other difficult-to-brush areas:

- Lightly spray Aussie Miracle Curls/appropriate approved detangling product to assist with brushing.

DO NOT BRUSH WET FUR. Wait until the fur is completely dry before brushing.

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13. HEAD CLEANING — INTERIOR

The interior requires a completely different process. Do not use upholstery cleaner or Sunbrite inside the head.

Step 1 — Prepare Hot Water

Fill a small bucket with hot water. The water should be as hot as you can safely handle. Use a clean towel or quick-dry cloth.

Step 2 — Wipe Down

Wet the cloth and thoroughly wipe the inside of the head. Porous areas require extra attention.

Pay particular attention to:

- Helmet foam.
- Front interior.
- Back interior.
- Areas most likely to contact performer body oils.
- Other porous materials.

Complete a total of **three hot-water wipe-downs.** Use fresh water for each wipe. This ensures the interior is thoroughly cleaned.

Step 4 — Final Treatment

For the fourth pass:

1. Lightly mist Listerine onto the interior.
2. Wipe the interior with a damp clean cloth.
3. Make sure excess product is removed.

Listerine can leave a sticky residue, so always wipe it down afterward.

If body odour or sweat smell remains:

- Repeat the hot-water cleaning process as necessary.
- Additional Listerine may be used as appropriate, followed by a thorough wipe-down.

Step 5 — Drying

Place the head back onto its stand. Place approximately 4–6 dryer sheets inside the head's crevices. Allow the head approximately one full day of drying time whenever possible.

Important

Because mascot heads contain foam, they require significant drying time. Do not rush the drying process.

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14. DRYING

Proper drying is just as important as washing. Never brush wet fur.

Before brushing or packaging:

- Make sure fur is completely dry.
- Check deep fur and hard-to-reach areas.
- Check the interior of heads.
- Check around seams and other areas where moisture may remain.

Do not package an item while it is still damp.

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15. BRUSHING

Tools

Short–Medium Fur: Use a fur brush without the small balls on the ends of the bristles.

Long Fur: Use a regular hairbrush.

Body Brushing

Work one limb at a time. Brushing can be very time-consuming. Do not leave brushing until the last minute. All brushing should be completed at least the day before pickup whenever possible.

Recommended technique:

1. Back-brush the fur.
2. Brush the fur back into its natural direction.
3. Continue until the fur is clean, smooth, and properly aligned.
4. Inspect for missed areas.

Repairs & Brushing

If an item requires repairs complete repairs before final brushing whenever possible. Repair work may require picking or disturbing the fur. Brushing beforehand can also increase the risk of damaging fragile stitches.

16. FINAL INSPECTION

Before an item is considered complete, check:

Cleaning	● Item is clean. ● Stains have been treated appropriately. ● No unnecessary cleaning product remains. ● Odours have been addressed.
Drying	● Item is completely dry. ● Head interior is dry. ● Fur is dry before brushing
Fur	● Fur has been brushed. ● Fur is properly aligned. ● Long fur is detangled
Repairs	● Required repairs have been completed or communicated. ● No new damage was created during cleaning.
Organization	● Item is correctly labelled. ● Small parts are accounted for. ● Item is in the correct location. ● Item is not packaged prematurely.

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17. COMMUNICATION

Cleaning is not an isolated process. Communicate with managers and department supervisors about:

- Upcoming cleaning.
- Repair requirements.
- Items waiting on Props or Sewing.
- Items that are drying.
- Items that need brushing.
- Items that are ready.
- Potential delays.
- Anything unusual or damaged.

Communicate Early

If you know something will need attention, communicate it as early as possible. Three weeks of advance notice is better than three hours of panic. Keeping everyone informed prevents last-minute stress and helps every department plan their workload.

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18. GOLDEN RULES

DO

- Wear gloves when handling cleaning chemicals and during intake.
- Use the correct product for the material and task.
- Wash regular loads using COOL water.
- Keep fur with other fur.
- Label baskets and loose components.
- Keep the spa organized.
- Allow heads adequate drying time.
- Brush only when fur is completely dry.
- Communicate problems early.
- Ask when you are unsure.

DO NOT

- Do not use upholstery cleaner inside heads.
- Do not use Sunbrite inside heads.
- Do not use either product where it will directly contact performer skin.
- Do not put upholstery cleaner or Sunbrite directly into the washing machine.
- Do not leave upholstery cleaner or Sunbrite on fabric longer than 15 minutes.

- Do not wash fur in hot or warm water.
- Do not brush wet fur.
- Do not put wet items into storage bags.
- Do not assume a bagged item is finished.
- Do not leave items unlabeled.
- Do not keep applying stronger chemicals indefinitely when a stain will not come out.

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19. THE GOAL

A successful cleaning job is more than making a mascot look clean. When you finish, the next person should be able to walk into the spa and immediately understand:

What is clean.
What is dirty.
What needs brushing.
What needs repairs.
What is waiting.
What is finished.
Where everything belongs.

Keep the workspace organized, communicate early, take your time with delicate materials, and never be afraid to ask for help.

Happy cleaning!