



PRODUCT TESTING – Industry Standard Testing

Protection Products (these will include Protectors, Conditioners, Leather Food! Creams, Balms etc.)

This type of product are always tested on Crust leather (unfinished full grain hide). The reason for this is that it is the only leather surface type that will be of a reasonably consistent finish that will show a reaction. All finished leather (including Aniline styles) will vary from batch to batch and from suppliers, so would not be consistent in a comparative testing situation.

How to apply the products.

Check the leather samples to be used for damage or irregularities. Check that all the swatches to be used in this test absorb moisture (use foam cleaner) at the same rate.

Apply an even coat of the product, according to label instructions, onto the selected (marked) swatch and do the same for each product in this particular test. Also it is useful to keep a control swatch untreated for comparison.

Because the samples are untreated they will absorb the product immediately, so you can apply a second coat within a few minutes.

Leave the samples to dry for 2-3 hours and then apply a third coat.

Apply the tests as described below.

Now put the samples aside for 2-3 days to fully cure.

Test as previous.

(During this period for a more aggressive test (when dry) slip them into your back pocket, one sample per pocket for 2-3 days then re-test)

The reason for the 2-3 day period is so that the product can cure fully on the leather. Generally, chemically formulated products will improve over 24-48 hours whilst simpler (cheaper) products made from oils or waxes quickly lose their protective qualities.

The 'back pocket' test simulates a certain amount of the 'wear factor'.

To Test the Products

Oil Drop: - drip oil onto the surface of each sample and allow it to sit. The test is to see which sample resists the oil for the longest. Remove oil residue when the results are obvious and then over the next few days check how the samples recover.

Oil wipe: - drip some oil onto the surface and spread it with one wipe of the finger, then leave it on the surface for 30 seconds before removing the residue with paper towel.

Water test: - Spray or drip water on the surface and watch for reaction.

Leather protectors should be designed to resist oil more than water so do not be surprised if water resistance is less than oil resistance. Also Protectors are not finishes and have not been designed to seal the surface, only to inhibit absorption whilst allowing transpiration to continue to take place, so there will always be some evidence of absorption. The reason for this testing is to compare the properties of different products.

The point of Protectors in the market place is to increase the effectiveness of simple cleaning processes and not to make the leather dirt resistant. Cleaning and protecting with the correct product will do all the 'conditioning' that is necessary to keep the leather soft and supple so the application of conditioner, feeds, nourishers etc is un-necessary and may create a build up of oily/waxy products on the surface.

©LTTLtd2009