

update

keeping you informed



Welcome to Update.....

Apr 2008

It's April and spring has officially sprung. In this edition of Update we bring you a fact sheet on chrome VI, a reminder of our footwear services, and give a few pointers on the Leather Working Group. You can also register for the June training dates including courses on leather and footwear construction and leather repair, and why not join us in California on September 17-18 for our Product Safety and Environment Workshop.



Footwear testing and FIT services

BLC offers a comprehensive range of footwear and component testing to both members and non members. We offer a 4 day service on our physical testing to meet customer needs.



In a climate that is more focused than ever on the presence of banned chemicals in consumer products, restricted substance analysis has become an important aspect of BLC's testing. BLC offers restricted substance testing in a standard 5 days, if urgent, next or three day delivery can be accommodated.

In response to market demands BLC also offer FIT assessments. Our trained shoe fitters fit children and adults normally within 3 days.



A date for your diary... 17-18 September 2008 Hyatt Regency Hotel, Long Beach, California

- Are you prepared for the new legal restrictions on product safety standards, testing, and labeling?
- Do you understand the new risks to your bottom line and reputation?
- Are you ready to deal with your customers' demands on restricted substances, sustainability, eco-friendly materials and packaging?

Product Safety and Environment Workshop



The Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America (FDRA) and BLC Leather Technology Centre Ltd, invite you to attend the two-day Product Safety and Environment Workshop to help you answer these questions and provide you with the tools you need to address them.

For further information contact vikki@blcleathertech.com

BLC training dates..... an opportunity not to be missed

1 day understanding leather – June 10

Aimed at leather users, designers, buyers, retailers of leather products and those that just want to know more about leather and its unique characteristics, this course offers the perfect balance of information and practical knowledge on leather as a material. Delegates will enjoy presentations and discussion on the different types of leather, how it is made and fitness for purpose. The course will also cover common leather defects, care and maintenance and what happens when it all goes wrong!! An invaluable course for all new employees dealing with leather and leather products.

1 day leather and footwear construction – June 12

A perfect training opportunity for suppliers of leather, leather users and retailers in the footwear sector. Learn all about how leather is made, classified and selected in terms of fitness for purpose for footwear end use. Also included will be footwear construction and product finishing including quality control and common footwear problems.

2 day leather repair – June 24

Offering a practical opportunity to perfect existing skills and develop new ones, this course takes delegates through the areas of leather recognition and maintenance, the techniques required to produce invisible repairs and recolouring and refurbishment to ensure a professional result. Aimed at manufacturers and retailers of leather upholstered furniture and the leather repair sector, the course combines a theoretical and practical approach.

1 day leather finishing – date to be confirmed

Aimed at quality assurance, buyers and designers, this practical course will explain leather finishing to give both performance and fashion effects and answer questions such as why does my leather change colour?, why does my leather fade? And why does the surface crack or peel during use



Book now at www.blcleathertech.com

New member of the team at BLC...

LAURA ROBINSON has recently joined the BLC technical team to provide Chemical and Regulatory Support, a vital role in an environment where restricted substances and the associated complex regulations are key to BLC's customers in a competitive marketplace. Laura graduated with a BSc (Hons) in Animal Science from Imperial College in 2001. Prior to joining BLC, she spent 4 years working for the Forensic Science Service in Cambridgeshire. Laura is looking forward to the challenge of working in this new field and with such a friendly, experienced and supportive team.

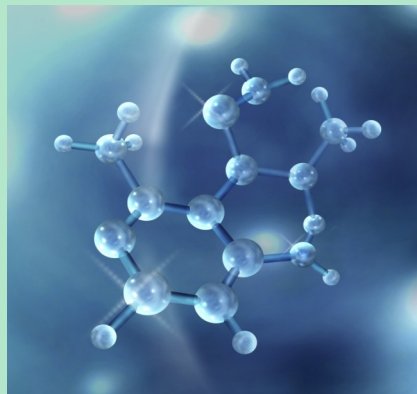
RESTRICTED SUBSTANCE-FACT SHEET

All you need to know about.....

CHROME VI

Names Chrome VI, Hexavalent chromium, Cr VI, Chromates

Main hazards Chrome VI is a known carcinogen, and corrosive to the skin. Chrome VI is also an allergen.



How can it occur? Chrome III is used in the tanning process for the production of chrome tanned leather. If the tanning processes are carried out correctly, the resulting leather will be perfectly safe and free from Chrome VI. In leather production there are three ways, albeit unlikely, in which chrome VI could be present:

- During the tanning process – If the pH is too high then chrome III has the propensity to oxidise to chrome VI.
- Chemicals used – If chrome powder is sourced from a non-reputable supply then there is a possibility that it may be contaminated with chrome VI.
- Finished leather – After the leather has been made, there is a small chance of chrome III oxidising to chrome VI at high temperatures. This is why chrome tanned leather should never be incinerated except under very strictly controlled conditions.

BLC test method The test method to detect chrome VI has recently been revised and published as EN ISO 17075:2007.

Maximum accepted levels The above method has a detection limit of 3ppm and for a leather to pass; chrome VI must be none detected.

For further information on restricted substances, contact Laura on +44 (0)1604 679943 or laura@blcleathertech.com

Laura Robinson has recently taken on a new role as Chemical and Regulatory Support at BLC.





Leather industry protocol

- The protocol is intended to provide suggested guidelines for the environmental performance of tanneries
- The protocol was developed and reviewed by footwear tanners, brands and industry experts to ensure adequacy and technical feasibility
- A recent version of the environmental auditing protocol has been peer reviewed by the World Wildlife Fund US and further NGO input will be requested as budget allows
- The leather working group has adopted a guidance document that gives tanners information on suggested best environmental practices

Mission statement

The objective of this multi-stakeholder group is to develop brands, involving tanners and suppliers and maintain a protocol that assesses the compliance and environmental performance of tanners and promotes sustainable and appropriate environmental business practices within the footwear leather industry.

The group seeks to improve the tanning industry by creating alignment on environmental priorities, bringing visibility to best practices and providing suggested guidelines for continual improvement.

It is the group's objective to work transparently involving suppliers, brands, retailers, leading technical experts within the leather industry, NGOs, academic institutions and other stakeholder organisations.

Benefits of the group

- Offers the use of guidelines, consistent across the tanning industry
- Provides regular dialogue and updates with industry peers and leather experts
- Demonstrates public commitment towards environmental protection
- Gives access to a list of audited tanneries (voluntary listing)

Some companies involved in the development

Brands:

adidas-group
Chaco Inc
Clarks International
Ikea of Sweden
Levi Strauss & Co.
Marks and Spencer plc
New Balance Athletic Shoe, Inc.
NEXT Retail Ltd
Nike, Inc
Pentland Group plc
The Timberland Company
The North Face
Wolverine World Wide Inc.

LeFarc SA de CV
Pieles Temola S.A. de C.V.
Perrin-Rostaing Tannery
PrimeAsia Leather Corporation
Sadesa SA
Shanghai Richina Leather Co. Ltd.
Simona Tanning Inc
Wolverine Leathers

Suppliers: BASF

Crest Leathers
E-Leather Ltd.
Lanxess

Contracted facilitator:

BLC Leather Technology Centre Ltd

Tanners:

Asiatan
Industrija Usnja Vrhnika d d
ISA-Tan Tec Guangzhou China

For further information contact: mark_l@blcleathertech.com or stuart@blcleathertech.com

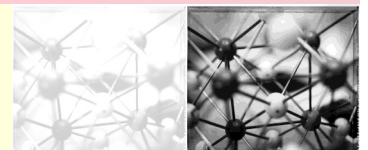
CHINA — statistical snapshot

China's leather and footwear industries achieved a stable growth in 2007 but the growth rate slowed down compared with the previous year. Adjustments of various policies and strict environmental rules brought a big challenge to those industries.

- Gross industrial output value of the industries achieved 12.4 billion dollars, up 20.7% year-on-year. The growth rate reduced by 1.7%.
- Profit before tax of the enterprises achieved 3.3 billion dollars, up 20% year-on-year and the growth rate reduced by 17%.
- The output of finished leather was 680 million square meters, up 9% compared with the previous year but the growth rate was down by 20%.
- In 2007, exports of wet blue were USD55 million, down 54% compared with 2006, finished leather USD1.1 billion, reduced by 32%, while imports of wet blue achieved a record of USD1.3 billion, up 32% and finished leather was USD3.1 billion, down 0.4% on 2006.
- The export of raw hides and skins was USD1.7 million, down by 50% on 2006, while import was USD1.6 billion, increased by 13% than the previous year.
- China exported 1.3 billion pairs of leather shoes in 2007, down by 6% on 2006; a reduction for the first time in a decade. The export value reached USD9.6 billion, up 9%; meanwhile, leather shoe imports were 11.3 million pairs worth USD3.1 billion, up by 42% and 48% respectively.

Coming up next time.

All you need to know about Lead



Disclaimer BLC Leather Technology Centre Ltd has made all reasonable efforts to ensure the accuracy of the information provided. However, the information should not be relied upon as legal advice or regarded as a substitute for legal advice. Due care and attention should be exercised when using this information.

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