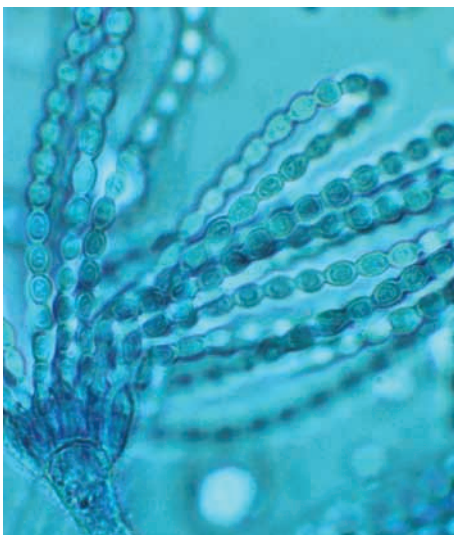




BLC Mould Solutions



BLC sees increasing numbers of products affected by mould contamination. Mould can be particularly problematic in leather products but it can be prevented.

BLC offers mould inspection, testing and solutions at our UKAS accredited laboratory. We can help to eliminate mould problems in leather products which can be harmful to customers, damage products and brand reputation, cause delays in production, late deliveries, lost sales and reduced profits for your business.

BLC is one of the fastest testing laboratories in Europe and our aim is to deliver results within 3-5 working days. Established for over 90 years we have the technical pedigree in testing and problem solving to ensure fast accurate support. We also understand the need to provide a swift solution.

This information sheet discusses what to look out for, the causes of mould, why it is present and how BLC can help.

What Causes Mouldy Products?

Mould is often seen after shipping where products have been stored for long periods of time. Mould needs a source of food and moisture to grow: leather acts as an ideal food source for mould, therefore it is vital to ensure moisture is controlled at all stages of manufacture, storage and shipping.

Packing and shipping are areas where mould growth is common due to environmental conditions, which can cycle between hot and cold. BLC can advise on best practice for packaging and shipping to avoid mould related problems from affecting your products.

Many factories and assembly plants, particularly in Asia, are ideal breeding grounds for mould due to the high levels of warmth and humidity. Inappropriate

storage and/or packaging may exacerbate the mould problems. Once the mould has taken hold it can spread throughout the facility and cause even more problems.

It is important to note that mould can be present in the leather prior to product manufacture.

Mould - Safety Aspect

Mould growth is problematic on leather not only because it is unsightly but there are also potential health issues associated with mould spores. Many mould species have been identified as potential pathogens, with people who are immuno-compromised most at risk. Mould growth on leather can also lead to further leather problems such as staining and fat spue, as the mould breaks down the fats within the leather making it more likely to migrate and form spue.

One of the most serious concerns with mould is that certain types can be toxic and pose a health risk to people who come into contact with the spores. It is therefore important to handle mouldy goods with care. Knowing which species of mould you are dealing with is important in understanding how to deal with the problem.



Preventing Mould – Factory Audits

It is difficult to completely prevent contamination by spores, but providing a clean environment can greatly reduce the number of spores present. This is why cleanliness and moisture control are crucial in storage and manufacturing environments. Most moulds thrive in moist, warm conditions with little movement of air. The minimum level of relative humidity for the inhibition of growth, for most mould species is about 70%, which is why moisture management is crucial.

BLC can work with your product suppliers to prevent mould problems occurring by conducting mould audits at manufacturing facilities to help investigate the conditions under which products are manufactured, stored and packed. During the mould inspection the moisture content and humidity of the manufacturing plant will be measured and assessed, including monitoring of packaging materials, general housekeeping and mould management. Once the mould detection process has been completed, BLC can provide recommendations for on-going mould management, highlighting key action points.

Please note: **Cleaning the affected product area is a temporary fix, the mould will return within a short period of time.**

BLC Mould Services & Solutions

At BLC our team of experts use specialist equipment to test and analyse products to identify the type of mould, the potential cause of contamination and provide solutions on how to prevent re-occurrence.

BLC experts will use specialist equipment to investigate:

- if mould spores are present within the product and the likely origin of the mould
- if contamination is present in the raw material and/or finished leather
- to what extent the fibre structure has been affected by contamination
- when the mould contamination occurred for purposes of arbitration
- to suggest a remediation strategy if possible

BLC can also carry out mould spore challenge testing to assess the potential for mould growth to occur or determine the resistance to mould if the correct conditions prevail.

BLC work with all areas of the supply chain, if you would like your suppliers audited or have concerns about their manufacturing facilities please speak to us, we can advise and offer solutions for your business.

If you are experiencing products affected by mould, please contact us for advice and support.

Mould Training Courses

BLC carries out regular mould training courses in the UK, China, Hong Kong and USA and can also deliver corporate courses. The training provides an insight into the causes and prevention, help and support with mould, including: understanding the causes of mould; when the problem occurs and how it can be prevented; how the problem is investigated; tracing the origin of the problem; ensuring your shipment is not exposed to the problem. Please visit our website for further information www.blcleathertech.com/leather-training-courses.htm

BLC members receive 30% discount on all testing, training and problem solving support.

Contact us

For more information:

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Five reasons to use BLC for your leather and footwear problem solving

- Speed of delivery - testing results in 3-5 days
- Specialists in leather management
- Technical back up and support from experts if needed
- A focus on customer service and support
- An assured pedigree through 90 years of experience

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