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## Standard Terminology Relating to Leather<sup>1,2</sup>

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### INTRODUCTION

These definitions are divided into two groups: the first group covers general terms, and the second group covers definitions applicable to sampling.

The definitions of general terms include some of those encountered by personnel concerned with specifications and procurement of hides, leather and leather products by the Federal Government.

The definitions applicable to sampling are mainly to be used in connection with the sampling for, and testing of, physical and chemical properties.

Terms adequately defined by unabridged dictionaries are not generally included.

### GENERAL TERMS

**alligator**—a general term used for leather made from the skins of all aquatic species with a grain similar to the american alligator which cannot be killed legally and, therefore, is not used by the United States industry.

**alligator-grained leather**—leather of various types, such as calf, sheep or cattlehide embossed to resemble the grain of alligator hide.

**alum leather**—leather produced by alum tannage, usually in combination with other substances. Before the invention of chrome-tanning this was the principal method of tanning with mineral agents.

**aniline dyed leather**—leather which has been colored by transparent dyes as distinguished from leather treated by pigments or other opaque material.

**aniline finish**—a clear finish with little or no pigmentation.

**antelope finish suede**—applied to lambskin, goatskin, or calfskin, sueded and finished to resemble antelope.

**antelope leather**—a fine, soft leather made from an antelope skin, velvety in texture and sheen, sueded on the flesh side. This leather is so rare, that for practical purposes, it is virtually nonexistent.

**apron leathers**—any one of several varieties of leather used in connection with textile machinery and blacksmith aprons. Comber and Gill Box apron leather is soft, mellow, tough leather, tanned from steerhides, heavily stuffed and boarded or otherwise softened. Rub Roll apron leather is a flexible but firm, dry, strong leather.

**aspergillus niger**—one of the most common mold growths found on vegetable tanning vats and on leather, usually greenish or blackish in color.

**automobile leather**—see **upholstery leather**.

**back**—a crop with the head trimmed off behind the horn holes. (OZUP in Fig. 1.)

**bactericide**—a chemical that kills bacteria.

**bag leather**—a general term for leathers used in traveling bags and suitcases. It does not include the light leathers employed for women's fancy handbags. The staple material for bag and case leather at present is leather made from the hides of animals of the bovine species, but heavy sealskins and goatskins are also used.

**bark tannage**—leather tanned by use of vegetable tannins found in barks, wood, and other plant derivatives, as distinguished from mineral tannages.

**barkometer**—a hydrometer used for determining the specific gravity of tanning solutions. A specific gravity of 1.000 is equivalent of 0 deg barkometer (Bk), and each additional degree Bk is equivalent to an increase of 0.001 in specific gravity.

**baseball leather**—leather used for covers of baseballs. The better grades of balls have covers of alum-tanned horsehide front leather. Some cheaper grades are made of kip and sheepskins.

<sup>1</sup> This terminology is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D31 on Leather and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D31.91 on Terminology.

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<sup>2</sup> These definitions have been developed in cooperation with the American Leather Chemists Assn. (Definitions of Terms X1-1961).

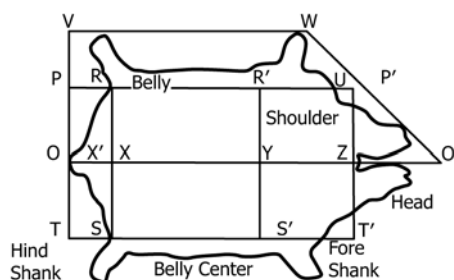


FIG. 1 Hide, Showing Various Cuts

**basicity**—basicity is a ratio. In any chromic salt solution, the electrovalence of the chromium (+3) is satisfied by the ratio of hydroxyl ions and acid ions. The extent to which this electrovalence ratio is satisfied by the hydroxyl ions, expressed as a percentage, is the basicity. The basicity of a chrome tanning liquid is closely related to the tanning behavior of the solution.

**basil**—uncolored vegetable-tanned sheepskin and lambskin.

**bate**—to treat unhaired hides or skins with a warm aqueous solution of an enzyme in order to remove certain undesirable nitrogenous constituents.

**beam**—a convex wooden slab sloping downward from about waist height over which a hide is placed for trimming off excess flesh and ragged edges and scudding by hand.

**belly**—that part of the hide below the belly line. (VWPP in Fig. 1.) For steerhide leather, the belly line (RU) passes through a point at or above the top of the rear break. For cowhide leather, the belly line passes through a point at or above the top of the front break and a point not more than 2½ in. (64 mm) below the top of the rear break.

**belting butt**—a double back with the tail cut off at the butt line. (RUT'S in Fig. 1.)

**belting butt bend**—a double bend with the tail cut off at the butt line. (RR'S'S in Fig. 1.)

**bend**—a back with the shoulder cut off at right angles to the backbone line at the break of the fore flank. (OYR'P in Fig. 1.)

**biff**—to beat a salted hide that has been placed on a rack, in order to shake loose salt from the hair.

**biocide**—a chemical that destroys microorganisms (for example, bacteria, fungi) that can be detrimental to hides, wet blue, wet white, and leather.

**bison**—leather made from hides of the American Bison, commonly referred to as the North American Buffalo, and not from the domesticated Asian or Eastern Water Buffalo.

**bisulfiting**—the treatment of hot solutions of vegetable tanning extracts with sodium bisulfite in order to increase their solubility and rate of take-up by hides.

**bleaching**—

(1) the process of removing oxidized tannins and insoluble materials from the surface layers of leather, in order to prevent crackiness of the grain. It is performed by dipping the leather in a weak alkaline solution to render the tannin readily soluble, dipping in water, neutralizing in weak acid solution and washing.

(2) the process of lightening the color of chrome leather by treating with synthetic tannins or precipitating white pigment in the surface of the leather.

**bleeding**—the transfer of materials exuded from leather to other materials that come in contact with it.

**blocking**—the adhesion between touching layers of leather such as occurs under moderate pressures during storage or use.

**bloom**—a light-colored deposit of ellagic acid appearing on the grain surface of leather tanned with certain pyrogallotannins, such as myrabolans, valonia, and dividivi. The appearance may be objectionable for some purposes, but bloom does not significantly affect the other physical properties of the leather.

**blue**—usually in the phrase “in the blue,” applied to hides or skins that have been chrome-tanned but not dyed nor fat-liquored. Also referred to as *blue stock*.

**blushing**—dulling or mottling of the finish of the leather resulting from condensed moisture during the drying of the finish. Also referred to as lacquer bloom.

**boarded leather**—leather on which a false or accentuated grain has been produced by folding the grain side and working the leather back and forth. Hand boarding is done with a curved cork board attached to the worker's arm and rolled over the folded skin.

**boardy**—adjective applied to stiff, inflexible leather.

**boil test**—testing a piece of Wet Blue to check if there is area shrinkage after the specimen is submersed in boiling water for 3 min. This is an indication of the degree of tannage.

**bonded leather**—a single homogenous sheet consisting of adhesives, resins or similar bonding agents combined with a minimum of 50 % by weight of leather fragments and fibers.

**box calf or sides**—sides or skins finished by folding with the grain side in and rubbing the flesh side with a cork-surfaced instrument known as a hand board. Machinery is now also used. The effect is sometimes imitated by embossing. Also called “box” or “willow” finish.

**break**—

(1) *heavy leather*—the places, in the areas where the fore shank and hind shank join the body of the hide, where the texture of the leather changes quite sharply from the firm, close weave of the bend to a loose, open texture.

(2) *shoe upper leather*—the superficial wrinkling formed when the leather is bent, grain inward. Adjectives commonly used to describe this characteristic are “tight,” “fine,” “loose,” “coarse,” and “pipy,” or “flanky.”