



The Cleaning Basics 101 Series:

LEATHER

And

HIDE CARE

By Cleaning Industry author Mark Exner

An IICRC Approved Publication

About the Author



Mark Exner began his long career in the cleaning industry at the ripe old age of nineteen back in 1974, taking his employment in a hospital housekeeping department for \$2.75 per hour. After achieving a college degree in Administration of Justice, he was unable to secure a job opening in law enforcement. Mark continued to clean and eventually started a cleaning company. Many years passed, and he decided to take a course on cleaning carpets and quickly learned the value of a formal education in cleaning. He soon realized if the information could help him that much, he would like to instruct and inspire others as well. Today Mark instructs classes in both IICRC's commercial and residential carpet, and fabric, ISSA's CMI Train the Trainer and Certified Custodial Cleaning Technician. Mark also offers continuing education credit classes (CEC's), as well as online courses and seminars. Mark's warm and simple approach has inspired many, and his deep respect of his students has set a good example for the industry.

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Dedication

TBD

About the ISSA, CMI & The IICRC

ISSA's 95 years of experience can mean success for your future. ISSA has alliances with more than 75 local, regional, and national associations as well as industry, government, and other leading corporate and community entities around the world. Cleaning Management Institute, (CMI) is ISSA's education arm. Cleaning Management Magazine, Cleanfax Magazine, well as the ISSA website provide lots of support opportunities. Contact them at www.ISSA.com

The Institute of Inspection Cleaning Restoration & Certification (IICRC) is the cleaning and restoration industries' standards body. They may be contacted at www.IICRC.org

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LEATHER CARE & CLEANING BASICS

MODULE 1 THE BASIC CHARACTERISTICS



Background and Opportunities

Begin by asking yourself the “core” questions before beginning each job...

- *What are you cleaning? You must know what kind of leather you are cleaning.*
- *How will you clean it?*
- *What results can you expect? Will the customer be satisfied? Will you?*
- *How will it affect your pricing? Can / should you bid against replacement?*

Where you will find leather...

1. Furniture stores specializing in leather furniture
2. Furniture stores that carry cloth furniture as well as leather
3. Office furniture
4. Vehicle interiors
5. Homes
6. Restaurants, offices, places of worship,
7. Airlines, private aircraft, business aircraft
8. Watercraft
9. Common items such as belts, shoes, coats, jackets, baseballs, footballs, etc.

Leather as a Revenue Stream

- Forty percent of today's furniture is leather, vinyl, or a type of faux leather.
- Leather is growing in popularity. Properly used and maintained, it will greatly outlast most cloth fabrics. Since it must be maintained it also makes a continuous stream of income.
- Leather is an investment; and must be maintained to avoid damage. Leather stores do not tell the purchaser. cus
- Leather cleaning is very profitable with little competition.
- Cleaning and profitability of leather VS cloth fabrics.

Leather's Required Maintenance

- Leather is a skin; and is subject to damage if not maintained. This is good news for the Leather Technician. You will also maintain or increase the value of the leather.
- Failure to properly maintain the leather may result in a dried skin that is damaged, often past the point of repair. If not properly maintained, it is more subject to peeling, cracking, and splitting – as well as stains from body oils and spills.

Here are some examples of leather not properly maintained:



1. Scratches and soils from pets



2. No cleaning or maintenance



With no replenishing of oils, (cleaning and proper maintenance) the result is too dry, and it is cracked and peeling. This condition has rendered the leather unrepairable. This peeling is like dried, cracked, flaked skin from sunburn. Leather is a skin; a bio-degradable waste product. It is truly a green product, a recycled waste into something useful and often a thing of beauty. There are different quality leathers, and leather made be transformed into many different styles, colors, and textures. Leather is the most used single fabric in the world for furniture, even more popular than cotton.

Three Types of Leather

Leather skins come from many sources. Here are some examples:



Finished / Protected



Suede (this sample is a pig skin)

After the tanning process, all skins will end up in one of three general categories:

1. Protected (also known as painted, finished, or semi-aniline)
2. Aniline (also known as unprotected, naked, pure, or natural)

3. **Nubuck** (& suede) Remember the word **PAN**. It is essential in the care of leather. Each type of the three requires a different method or type of care. They also may be generally categorized into three types: aniline, semi-aniline and pigmented.

Full Grain – the most expensive and highest grade of leather where the hides are used with the skin surface as is, showing the grain and marks accumulated by the animal. This is the prime of the skin offerings on the animal. The full grain is the strongest and most desired, although the most expensive. This is leather in its most natural form with its surface left untouched by sanding or buffing. However, full grain leather can be embossed or dyed without damaging the natural fibers. As only around 15% of all hides are suitable for use as full grain leather, this type is expensive and is used only for the highest quality leather finishes or sanded to eliminate or lessen the marks and imperfections. After this stage they are dyed.

Top Grain – the next best grade of leather after full grain, these are hides that have their skin surface either buffed or not.

Splits – a lower grade and less expensive leather where hides are split into two or more thicknesses and the flesh (suede) side, rather than the skin portion, is buffed and made into a new piece of finished leather with the techniques mentioned above. These hides tend to be weaker (they are thinner) than full grain and top grain.

P.A.N. Protected, Aniline & Nubuck

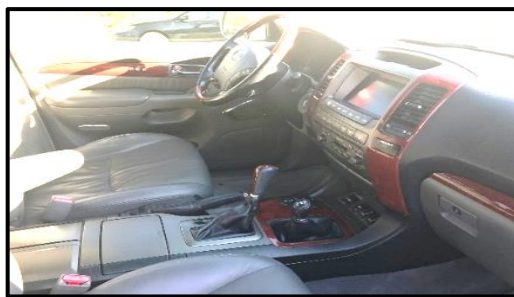
1. PROTECTED

Also known as: Finished, Painted, Semi Aniline, Pigmented.

Pigmented (protected) leather is the most durable but is less natural in appearance, having a polymer coating.



Most leather furniture



Vehicle interiors

Protected leather is the most popular leather made today. It is estimated to be up to 85% of the leather today. It is best described as aniline leather (no oil or wax coating) with a permanent plastic coating on top. This allows a vinyl type of water and soil resistance. It has been sealed so it does not absorb water or scratch. While at times for the uniformed it may look and feel like vinyl, it will have a nice leather scent. Finished leather is used in many applications besides furniture. It is used in airline seating, watercraft seating, office seating, purses, shoes, bags, sports equipment, and many other items.

Protected leather is top-grain leather that has been coated with a clear top layer or pigment. Pigments give the leather a shiny, even top color, making the leather have a less natural appearance. Leather is pigmented to provide durability and to hide natural blemishes. It is easy to maintain and has maximum resistance to stains, wear, and fading. Pigmented leather is typically found in furniture and auto upholstery. Pigmented leather is top-grain leather that has been coated with a clear top layer or pigment. Pigments give the leather a shiny, even top color, making the leather have a less natural appearance. Leather is pigmented to provide durability and to hide natural blemishes. It is easy to maintain and has maximum resistance to stains, wear, and fading. Pigmented leather is typically found in furniture and auto upholstery.