

Criteria for allergy-friendly leather and leather products

BACKGROUND

In addition to nickel and perfumes, chromate is one of the most significant contact allergens. Leather goods are a major source of chromate sensitization.

During leather processing, various tanning agents are used in order to ensure sufficient durability. Today, chromium (III) salts are primarily used. If the production process is impure, chromate (also known as chromium (VI)), a chemical variation, can be produced. Chromate can penetrate the skin more easily, especially when the natural protective layer has been damaged by small injuries or rough patches. In people with sensitive skin, irritations or contact allergy reactions can be triggered. Constant contact with chromate can promote the development of a chromate allergy.

The ECARF Seal of Quality certifies leather that has been proven free of chromate.

1. CRITERIA

1.1. Necessary Product Features and Measurements

- **Hexavalent chromium VI (Cr VI)** - Levels in leather goods worn against the skin, including shoes, must be below the detection limit.
- Modern measuring methods must be used with an analytical **detection limit of 3 mg/kg** leather (based on DIN EN ISO 17075:2008-02).
- **Total chrome** (total Cr) may not exceed the upper limit of 40 mg/kg.
- The **formaldehyde** level must remain under 50 mg/kg.
- Contamination with **dimethyl fumarate** must remain under 0.1 mg/kg.
- **p-Phenyldiamine** and **p-Aminoazobenzene** (dyes) must remain under the detection limit.
- Leather goods worn against the skin may not have any metal parts containing **nickel** or **cobalt**.
- Elastic fabrics worn against the skin may not contain **latex**.

2. QUALITY CONTROL AND COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT

The manufacturer has established a functional system of quality control that responds effectively to consumer complaints. The system ensures the following:

- The manufacturer's contact details, such as the address, telephone number and/or email address, are clearly visible on the product packaging;
- Consumer complaints are handled and followed up in an appropriate manner by qualified and experienced personnel of the manufacturer;
- The assessment of consumer complaints and, if applicable, any inferred areas of improvement are reapplied to product quality and safety. The manufacturer agrees to make this data available to ECARF on an ongoing basis.