

Glossary of Leather terms

ICS 01.040.59; 59.140.30

Committees responsible for this British Standard

This British Standard was published under the direction of the Textile Products and Leather Standards Committee TLM/-. Its preparation was entrusted to Technical Committee TLM/22 upon which the following bodies were represented:

- British Footwear Manufacturers Federation
- British Leather Federation
- Institute of Trading Standards Administration
- Leather Institute
- Satra Footwear Technology Centre
- Society of Leather Technologists and Chemists

This British Standard, having been prepared under the direction of the Textile Products and Leather Standards Committee, was published under the authority of the Board of BSI and comes into effect on 28 February 1983

© The British Standards Institution 2013
Published by BSI Standards Limited 2013

First published September 1956
First revision April 1972
Second revision February 1983

The following BSI references relate to the work on this standard:
Committee reference TLM/22
Drafts for comment
80/35612 DC,
12/30270883 DC

ISBN 978 0 580 83545 2

Amendments issued since publication

Amd. No.	Date	Comments
A1	February 2013	See Foreword.
C1	July 2013	Reinstatement of missing number and term for definition 6

Contents

	Page
Committees responsible	Inside front cover
Foreword	ii
1 Scope	1
2 Terms and definitions	1
Figure 1 — Back	23
Figure 2 — Parts of a cattle hide	23
Figure 3 — Parts of a horse hide	24
Figure 4 — Parts of a bend	25
Figure 5 — Half back	25
Figure 6 — Side	25
Publications referred to	26

Foreword

This British Standard is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution.

BS 2780:1983+A1:2013 supersedes BS 2780:1983, which is withdrawn.

Text introduced or altered by Amendment No. 1 is indicated in the text by tags **A1** **A1**. Minor editorial changes are not tagged.

This British Standard, having been prepared under the direction of the Textile Products and Leather Standards Committee, supersedes BS 2780:1972 which is withdrawn.

The first edition of BS 2780, which was prepared by the Leather Descriptions Council and approved by the Leather Industry Standards Committee, was published in 1956. In 1972 a revised edition was published which amended the definitions, where appropriate, to conform with those given in the International Glossary of Leather Terms published by the International Council of Tanners in 1968. A second edition of the International Glossary of Leather Terms was published in 1975 and the definitions in this revised edition of BS 2780 conform, where appropriate, to this second edition together with the amendments to it that have been approved in the interim period.

The scope of this glossary is governed by the following principles.

- a) Certain terms having somewhat more restricted meanings for retailers than for tanners require multiple descriptions.
- b) Terms the meaning of which are self-evident, e.g. football leather and upholstery leather, are omitted unless there is an alternative meaning, e.g. seal leather, or other special reason for their inclusion.
- c) Processing terms are not included unless they help to clarify the definition of a type of leather.

As a matter of principle, leather should not be described, without suitable qualification, by the name of an animal unless it is made from the whole hide or skin of that animal or its top split (see below). A number of descriptions that pre-date the publication of the first edition of this glossary in 1956 are in common use and are well understood by the public, e.g. chamois leather. These exceptions are, because of their de facto use, included in the glossary.

A further principle is that if leather made from the hide or skin of one animal is made to look like the hide or skin of a different animal, the name of this second animal may only be used to describe the leather if the name of the hide or skin actually used is also clearly stated. This is done by using the name of the animal imitated as an adjective and the name of the actual hide or skin as a substantive, e.g. sheep leather that has been finished to look like peccary may be termed “peccary grain sheep” but not “peccary” alone.

A final principle is that where a definition refers to a section or portion of a raw hide or skin, such as belly, grain and split, and also to the leather made therefrom, the leather may either be made from the previously sectioned raw hide or skin, or cut or split from the tanned whole hide or skin. For example, “butt leather” may be made either by tanning a raw butt or by cutting it from the tanned whole side. Similarly, “split leather” may be made either by tanning a raw split or by splitting it from a tanned hide. Furthermore, leather made from a flesh or middle split should not, without qualification, be described by the name of the animal, e.g. “crocodile leather” refers to that layer containing the original grain. Other layers should be described as “crocodile split”.

Certain species of animal may from time to time be included in the Endangered Species list under the Washington Convention, and the sale of products made from them may be prohibited or restricted, or they may need to be specially identified, e.g. seal leather. In general, the glossary does not specially identify these materials, unless there are alternative meanings that do not require special identification, e.g. seal leather.

It is essential that manufactured articles made from leather in conjunction with other materials are labelled as prescribed by the relevant legislation or British Standard.

Where a reference is given in *italics*, it is to a synonymous term.

A British Standard does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users of British Standards are responsible for their correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, an inside front cover, pages i to iv, pages 1 to 24, an inside back cover and a back cover.

This standard has been updated (see copyright date) and may have had amendments incorporated. This will be indicated in the amendment table on the inside front cover.

1 Scope

This glossary defines terms that are of interest to tanners or to their customers or to the general public.

NOTE The title of the publication referred to in this standard is given on the inside back cover.

2 Terms and definitions

No.	Term	Definition
1	aldehyde leather	Washable leather, which in its natural state is white/cream, prepared usually from sheepskin or lambskin splits or degrains and tanned with an aldehyde. NOTE See 82, 106 and 124.
2	alum tanned	Leather tanned either solely with aluminium salts or with aluminium salts together with quite small amounts of some other tanning agent used merely to assist the alum tanning process, and not in sufficient amount to alter the essential alum-tanned character of the leather.
3	alum tawed	A product made from hides and skins by the process of tawing (see 286). NOTE The product should be distinguished from alum-tanned leather.
4	aniline dyed	Leather that has been dyed by immersion in a dyebath and has not received any coating of pigmented finish.
5	aniline finished	A natural or dyed leather finished by application of a coherent surface coating, clear or coloured with dye. NOTE See also 206.
6	aniline stained	Leather that has been stained A1 , with a dye, A1 by brushing, padding or spraying and has not received any coating of pigmented finish.
7	antelope	a) Skins from the antelope family and the leather made therefrom. b) Usually a fine, soft leather with a velvety, lustrous nap, made from antelope or gazelle skin sueded on the flesh side or sometimes, in the case of antelope, frized on the grain side.
8	antique grain	A surface pattern of markings or creases, usually irregular, in which the hollows are often given a contrasting colour to produce a two-tone or two-colour effect. The creases are produced by embossing, boarding or other similar means.
9	baby calf	Calfskin leather made from small, lightweight skins with a smooth or finely boarded grain surface, free from any artificial surface pattern. The finish is more or less glossy.
10	back	a) The main portion of a hide obtained by cutting off the two bellies. NOTE See Figure 1. b) Leather made from a).
11	bag hide	Flexible leather generally embossed with a grain pattern; made from cattle hide, usually vegetable tanned, split to a suitable thickness and sometimes hand or machine boarded.
12	bark tanned	Leather vegetable tanned mainly by means of the tannins contained in the barks of trees, the leather in process coming in contact with the raw bark.
13	basil full sheep	Vegetable-tanned leather from the unsplit pelt of the sheep, usually of the woolled type. NOTE See also 110 and 229.

No.	Term	Definition
14	beaver lamb	Sheepskin or lambskin with short fine wool that has been dressed with the wool on, dyed and finished by a process giving a weather-resistant straightness and brightness to the wool. NOTE See 114 and 243.
15	bellows hide	Curried, flexible and airtight leather made from split hide.
16	bellows leather	Leather that is either light-proof or airtight for fire, organ, camera bellows, etc. NOTE Some countries distinguish between light-proof and airtight types; others use the same term (see 15 and 211).
17	belly	a) Part of the hide covering the underside and the upper part of the legs of the animal. NOTE See Figure 2. b) Leather made from a).
18	belly grain	The tanned outer (hair or grain) layer split from a belly.
19	belly middle	The middle part of a cattle hide belly. NOTE See Figure 2.
20	belt leather	Leather used for waist belts as distinct from transmission belting.
21	belting butt	The butt portion of selected cattle hide that has been specially tanned, curried and dressed to produce strong, flexible leather with minimum stretch, suitable for the manufacture of transmission belting.
22	belting lace back	Back about 2.5 mm thick, vegetable, chrome or oil tanned, heavily dressed with animal and/or fish oils and greases, suitable for cutting into strips for the purpose of joining transmission belting. NOTE The oil-treated back is generally known as "helvetia leather" (see 142).
23	bend	Half of a cattle-hide butt obtained by dividing it along the line of the backbone (see Figure 2).
24	binder leather	<i>North America. See 283.</i>
25	boarded leather	Leather that has been softened, and the surface of which has been lightly creased to give a distinctive grain pattern by folding grain to grain and then working the fold across the leather to and fro by hand in any one or more directions, or by means of a boarding machine. NOTE See 29, 30, 179, 309 and 310.
26	 bonded leather fibre	See 162. 
27	bottom leather	Leather used for the bottoming of footwear, i.e. outer sole leather, insoles and welting. NOTE 1 For types of bottom leather defined in this glossary, see 102, 159, 175 and 302. NOTE 2 For types of outer sole leather, see 89, 101, 151, 164, 165, 170, 186 and 223.
28	bovine leather	Leather made from the hide or skin of a bovine animal; usually applied to the hide of an ox or cow.
29	box calf	Chrome calf leather, traditionally black and boarded. NOTE See also 309.
30	box side	Leather, usually chrome or combination tanned, made from cattle-hide sides, smooth or boarded, traditionally black. NOTE See also 310.

No.	Term	Definition
31	bridle leather	A strong, flexible type of harness leather of reasonably uniform thickness with a plain finish and a close-shaved flesh; made from ox or cow hide, vegetable tanned and curried.
32	brushed pigskin	Pigskin leather whose wearing surface has been finished with a velvet-like nap on the grain side.
33	buck	a) <i>In the strict sense. See 34.</i> b) A suede leather tanned and finished in the same way as real buckskin, but not made from deerskin. NOTE A suede shoe upper leather, usually chrome tanned, made from cattle hide finished on the buffed grain side is sometimes incorrectly referred to as "buck". The correct term is "nubuck" (see 184).
34	buckskin	Suede leather made from deerskin from which the grain has been removed, usually by frizing. It is generally tanned with fish oil or formaldehyde or a combination of both, and may be finished on the flesh or the frized grain side.
35	buff leather	White or cream-coloured, flexible, dry feeling, oil-tanned cattle-hide leather with a velvet-like nap on the grain side.
36	buffalo	Leather made from the hide of buffalo cattle.
37	buffalo calf	a) The skin of a young or immature buffalo. b) Leather made from a).
38	buffed leather	Leather from which some of the grain has been removed by an abrasive or bladed cylinder or, less generally, by a hand tool. NOTE In the case of upholstery leather, the buffing process is invariably carried out by machine though it is sometimes incorrectly described as hand buffed (see 66, 169 and 263).
39	buffing	a) The process of removing some of the grain layer by abrasion. NOTE See 38. b) Removal of the flesh side of the leather by mechanical abrasion to produce a suede effect, or to reduce the substance. NOTE Similar to "fluffing" (see 103) and now in more common use. c) <i>North America.</i> The thin grain layer of leather removed from a cattle hide by the splitting machine.
40	butt	The part of the hide after the bellies and shoulders have been removed. NOTE See Figure 2.
41	butt split	The under layers split from the butt of a cattle hide. NOTE See 176.
42	cabretta	a) <i>Strictly.</i> Skins of Latin American hair sheep, and leather made therefrom. b) Skins of similar hair sheep from other regions, e.g. East and West Africa, and leathers made therefrom. The leather may be finished on the flesh side for suede or on the grain side, which is fine and smooth, resembling that of kid. NOTE The term is in more common use in North America than in the UK.

No.	Term	Definition
43	calf	a) The skin obtained from a young or immature bovine animal, and not exceeding a certain mass. This mass is: 1) in the UK 16 kg, green weight NOTE Skins over 7 kg, green weight, from immature milk-fed animals are often termed “veal”. 2) in Denmark 12 kg, salted weight; 3) in France about 14 kg, salted weight; 4) in Germany 14 kg, salted weight; 5) in Italy about 14 kg, salted weight; NOTE Italian calfskins of all weights from calves that have eaten grass are called “erbaroli”. 6) in Spain 14 kg, green weight; 7) in Sweden 11 kg, salted weight (Scandinavian trim); NOTE Swedish calfskins up to 11 kg from calves that have eaten grass are called “grasskinn” (grassers); between a salted weight of 3.5 kg and 11 kg from calves that have been fed on milk only they are called “godskinn” (veals). 8) in USA about 7 kg, salted weight. NOTE See 37.
44	cape	b) Leather made from a) a) <i>Strictly</i>. A soft grain gloving or clothing leather made from South African hair sheepskin. b) Any similar leather made from hair sheepskin, other than from El-type vegetable-tanned hair sheepskin.
45	card clothing leather	Butt leather, vegetable (originally, oak bark) tanned, lightly curried and fairly flexible, for holding the steel wires that form the periphery of the cylinders on the carding machines used in the woollen industry.
46	carpincho	Grain gloving leather with a grain pattern somewhat like that of peccary, made from the skin of a water rodent indigenous to Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. NOTE This is one of the leathers commonly designated as “hogskin”.
47	case hide	Firm dressed leather, stained or otherwise coloured, generally having a smooth, more or less glossy surface finish, sometimes embossed with an artificial grain pattern. It is made from full-grain or buffed cattle hide, vegetable tanned, and is suitable for the manufacture of suitcases, attaché cases and similar leather goods.
48	cattle hide	The outer covering of a fully grown bovine animal.
49	chamois goat	Suede-finished, oil-tanned goatskin leather. NOTE See 50 a).
50	chamois leather	a) Leather made from the flesh split of sheepskin or lambskin, or from sheepskin or lambskin from which the grain has been removed by frizing, and tanned by processes involving the oxidation of marine oils in the skin, using either solely such oils (full-oil chamois) or A_1 pre-tanned with A_1 an aldehyde and then such oils (combination chamois). A_1 Text deleted. A_1 b) Leather made from the skin of the mountain antelope or chamois. NOTE Such leather is rare.

No.	Term	Definition
51	cheek	a) The portion of a cattle hide covering one side of the head. NOTE See Figure 2.
52	chevrette	b) Leather made from a). a) Leather made from the skin of a young goat that is being, or has recently been, weaned, or from the skin of an immature goat. b) <i>In the gloving trade</i> . Lightweight goatskin or heavy kid leather. c) <i>Traditionally</i> . Hatband leathers made from skivers (see 139). NOTE This usage arose because a former method of finishing was considered to impart a “goat finish” to the leather.
53	chrome-free leather	Hide or skin converted to leather by a tanning agent free of chromium salts, where the total content of chromium in the tanned leather is less than or equal to 0.1% (mass of chromium/total dry weight of unfinished leather). 
54	chrome re-tan	Leather that has been first chrome tanned throughout its thickness and subsequently further treated or tanned with vegetable and/or synthetic tanning agents and/or resin filling materials and/or mineral salts (see 61), these agents penetrating notably, but not necessarily completely, into the interior.
55	chrome tanned	Leather tanned either solely with chromium salts or with chromium salts together with quite small amounts of some other tanning agent used merely to assist the chrome tanning process, and not in sufficient amount to alter the essential chrome-tanned character of the leather.
56	cloak hide	Flexible leather, embossed with a grain pattern, made from vegetable-tanned split cattle hide of suitable thickness and curried to contain sufficient grease to render it suitable for saddlery and military equipment.
57	coach hide	Matt-finished, dyed, full-grain, boarded, vegetable-tanned leather made from cattle hide. The highest grades are simply aniline dyed; others may bear a small quantity of pigment but not so much as to conceal the natural characteristics of the hide. NOTE In spite of the use of the word “coach” this leather is normally used for leather goods, such as handbags and travel goods.
58	coated leather	A product where the surface coating applied to the leather substrate does not exceed one-third of the total thickness of the product, but is in excess of 0.15 mm. NOTE If the surface appearance is shiny, the term “patent coated leather” is permissible (see 194).
59	collar back	Harness leather (see 138), in the form of a back of good selection, having a thickness of 4 mm to 5 mm and usually vegetable tanned and curried.
60	combination oil	A tannage in which the skin is tanned with formaldehyde or other suitable aldehyde and also treated by the oil process. NOTE See 50.
61	combination tanned	Leather tanned by two or more tanning agents, e.g. chrome followed by vegetable (chrome re-tan), vegetable followed by chrome (semi-chrome) or formaldehyde followed by oil (combination).
62	combing leather	Strong, resilient, curried butt leather, free from permanent stretch, made into endless belts and used on machines for combing wool. It is chrome tanned (green) or combination tanned (brown).