

PFI Certifies Ledertech According to LEATHER STANDARD by OEKO-TEX®

In January 2017, OEKO-TEX launched LEATHER STANDARD by OEKO-TEX® as a new label for the leather and footwear sector. Meanwhile, leathers, hides, and leather products from 25 companies, including five German enterprises, already bear the new certificate. PFI has successfully certified the recycled leather fibre materials from Ledertech Deutschland GmbH, Bopfingen (see also interview with Wolfram Süß, Managing Director of Ledertech Deutschland). Thanks to the modular system adopted, the proven non-hazardous nature of the materials obviates the need for any duplicate testing by subsequent processors.

In the textile industry, STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® has been an international criterion for the past 25 years. Over 16,000 certificates issued per year testify to a uniform approach to safety from harmful substances.

The footwear industry also benefits from suppliers who can substantiate the proven non-hazardous nature of their sewing threads, buttons, rivets, shoelaces, as well as membrane and lining materials by presentation of a valid OEKO-TEX certificate.



The comprehensive set of criteria applicable both to STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® and to LEATHER STANDARD by OEKO-TEX® openly displayed on the www.oeko-tex.com website includes not only legal parameters ensuing from the German Consumer Goods Ordinance. In addition, both sets of criteria meet the demands of the US American Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) regarding lead and pay due attention to the requirements of REACH.

In the course of certification, leather products are examined, among other substances, for formaldehyde, heavy metals such as chromium(VI), chromium in other oxidation states, arsenic, lead and cadmium, pesticides, chlorinated phenols, phthalates, preservatives, PFOS, PFOA, as well as prohibited AZO and other dyes. In addition, product properties such as colour fastness are examined and odour tests are also performed.

In the case of products consisting of both leather and textiles, the leather components are tested according to the Leather Standard, and the textiles and non-textile materials according to Standard 100. The actual certification of the product, whether STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® or LEATHER STANDARD by OEKO-TEX®, will depend upon the principal materials of which it is made. In every case, however, the complete product is examined.

Articles of leather clothing and footwear may be made up of a wide range of materials. It is therefore all the more important that the safety from hazardous substances of all components is reliably tested according to the same criteria. And that is precisely what OEKO-TEX® certification assures.

Further information:

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Interview with Wolfram Süß, Managing Director of Ledertech Deutschland

As Managing Director of Ledertech Deutschland GmbH, you have succeeded in attaining LEATHER STANDARD by OEKO-TEX® certification for your recycled leather fibre materials. Congratulations! What was your motivation for this initiative?

In recent years we have been increasingly developing products that have come to attract the consumer's attention. We strongly believe that the customer should know that our recycled leather can hold its own with all other certified materials with regard to hazardous substances and that it represents a sound alternative when it comes to the use of sustainably produced materials. We see certification as an important instrument for conveying this message.

How can we picture the recycling process in your company?

A wide range of leather offcuts which can no longer be used in conventional leatherworking accumulate during leather production in tanneries, and also during the manufacture of leather goods. We acquire these leather offcuts on a global scale and sort them into appropriate fractions. Already at this early stage we ensure that only high-quality leathers are processed. The individual leather offcuts are mechanically comminuted in a subsequent process step. Chemical formulation to impart leather-like properties to the final product follows. Here too we largely employ natural renewable raw materials. Subsequent production on a Fourdrinier machine resembles the production of cardboard, with the machine having been specifically adapted to our needs. Almost unnoticed by the end user, leather recyclers have been making a significant contribution to environmental protection for about 100 years.

What are the uses of your product?

High-quality leather fibre material, such as that produced by our company, can be used in a wide variety of ways. In addition to practically all components of a shoe, including uppers, the material is suitable for



Wolfram Süß

making belts and bags and also finds uses in bookbinding and in the furniture industry. We also offer hardwearing materials for floor coverings. In recent years we have also developed very soft flexible materials which open up new applications when used in conjunction with innovative coating technologies.



Range of products produced for the footwear industry by Ledertech Deutschland GmbH