



# UPHOLSTERY

## Leather Identification

### INTRODUCTION

It is critical to understand the type of leather before attempting to clean it. This understanding will help you anticipate results before you clean, and the products needed to complete the job. Anticipating the time involved in cleaning and the quantity of products used will allow you to price the job correctly. The three leather types are: Protected, Aniline, and Nubuck.

### DEFINITIONS

**Protected:** Also known as Finished, Semi Aniline, Everyday, Pigmented and Painted, these Leathers have combined the best aspects of a natural product and have utilized tannery technology to create a product that is more uniform in appearance and color.

**Aniline:** Also known as Natural, Pure, Naked and Unprotected, these are leathers that are colored with transparent dyestuff. This means you can see the actual surface grain markings. These leathers have very little or no protective treatments applied to them.

**Nubuck:** Also known as Chaps, Distressed, Bomber and Suede, Nubuck is an Aniline leather that has been brushed, sanded or scratched to create a velvet or pile feel or look to the grain side of leather. Suede is the flesh side of the hide and is of lower quality.

### PROCEDURE

- **STEP 1**  
Evaluate the leather visually. Protected leathers will have a consistent coloration due to pigmentation, while Aniline and Nubuck will have a varied hue. Any leather with a nap will be Nubuck or suede.
- **STEP 2**  
Feel the leather. The softer the leather, the more likely it is Aniline or Nubuck. The stiffer the leather, the more likely it is Protected.

- **STEP 3**  
Go to an inconspicuous place and scratch the leather with your fingernail. Aniline and Nubuck will scratch readily and the scratch will be a lighter color. Protected leather has a finish made of polyurethane resins. The only way this leather will go lighter is by scraping off the finish and the pigments.
- **STEP 4**  
In an inconspicuous place, rub **Strong Cleaner** into the leather. Aniline and Nubuck leather will darken as the cleaner is absorbed into the leather. The cleaner will not absorb into Protected leather.
- **STEP 5**  
This final test will determine the difference between Aniline and Nubuck. In an inconspicuous place, rub **Protection Cream** on the leather and dry with a **hair dryer**. Aniline leather will dry clear with no difference in texture. Nubuck leather will dry darker with a slight change in texture. **Protection Cream** mats down the nap of Nubuck causing the area to be darker.

### Chemicals Needed



**Strong Cleaner**  
**Type:** *Water-based leather cleaner*  
**Highlights:** *Water-based cleaner carried in a foam base to prevent overwetting while cleaning.*



**Protection Cream**  
**Type:** *Water-based leather protector*  
**Highlights:** *Protects against oil-water alcohol based stains and other soiling.*

### Accessories Needed



**Soft Cloth**  
**Description:** *Lint-free cloth*  
**Purpose:** *Used for applying all creams, finishes, colors, and some spotters.*



**Hair Dryer**  
**Description:** *Hot air dryer.*  
**Purpose:** *Aids in drying leather after cleaning, and curing protectors.*

**HELPFUL HINTS** – Many manufacturers are including a cleaning label under the cushions of the sofa to indicate the type of leather; Protected, Aniline and Nubuck.



**CAUTION** – Many leather care products on the market will ruin Aniline and Nubuck. Accurate identification of leather is critical to your success as a leather cleaner.



### Quick Guide

### PROCEDURE

- 1 Evaluate the leather visually.
- 2 Determine softness of leather by touch.
- 3 Scratch the leather with a fingernail in an inconspicuous place. Visible, lighter scratches are aniline or nubuck.
- 4 Rub Strong Cleaner into the leather in an inconspicuous place. Darkened leather indicates aniline or nubuck.
- 5 Apply Protection Cream in an inconspicuous place and dry with a hair dryer. Darkened leather indicates nubuck.

### PRODUCTS NEEDED

- Strong Cleaner
- Protection Cream
- Soft Cloth
- Hair Dryer



## Other Resources

Instruction Booklet for Leather Cleaning  
Leather Specialist Training Manual and Course  
Leather Cleaning and Repair Video  
Bridgepoint Website • [www.bridgepoint.com](http://www.bridgepoint.com)  
Customer Service • 1-800-794-7425