



**International  
Standard**

**ISO  
3379**

**IULTCS  
IUP 9**

**Leather — Determination of  
distension and strength of surface  
(ball burst method)**

*Cuir — Détermination de l'extension et de la résistance à la  
traction de la surface (méthode de la bille)*

**Third edition  
2024-10**

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

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For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

IULTCS, originally formed in 1897, is a world-wide organization of professional leather societies to further the advancement of leather science and technology. IULTCS has three Commissions, which are responsible for establishing international methods for the sampling and testing of leather. ISO recognizes IULTCS as an international standardizing body for the preparation of test methods for leather.

This document was prepared by the Physical Test Commission of the International Union of Leather Technologists and Chemists Societies (IUP Commission, IULTCS) in collaboration with the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Technical Committee CEN/TC 289, *Leather*, in accordance with the Agreement on technical cooperation between ISO and CEN (Vienna Agreement).

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 3379:2015), which has been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

- the terminology and references are modified to be in line with ISO 2418:2023;
- [Clause 6](#) has been re-arranged to make it easier to follow.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

# Leather — Determination of distension and strength of surface (ball burst method)

## 1 Scope

This document specifies a test method for the determination of distension and strength of the leather grain or finished surface. This method is applicable to all flexible leathers and it is particularly suitable to determine the lastability of leathers for footwear uppers.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 2418, *Leather — Chemical, physical, mechanical and fastness tests — Position and preparation of specimens for testing*

ISO 2419, *Leather — Physical and mechanical tests — Specimen and test piece conditioning*

ISO 2589, *Leather — Physical and mechanical tests — Determination of thickness*

ISO 15115, *Leather — Vocabulary*

EN 15987, *Leather — Terminology — Key definitions for the leather trade*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 15115, EN 15987 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1

#### **wearing surface**

exposed or visible face of the leather when used in its intended application

Note 1 to entry: The wearing surface is usually the grain side of leather, however, the wearing surface of some leathers may be otherwise dressed or finished, e.g. patent leather.

### 3.2

#### **reverse side**

opposite side to the *wearing surface* (3.1)

Note 1 to entry: The reverse side is usually the flesh side of leather.

### 3.3

#### **crack**

small surface splits or tears less than approximately 0,5 mm

### 3.4

#### **burst**

complete rupture of the full thickness of the test piece

### 3.5

#### **lastability**

ability of a material to be stretched simultaneously in all directions (distended) without being damaged

## 4 Principle

A circular test piece is clamped around its edge and is gradually distended by forcing a steel metal ball, attached to the end of a plunger, against the centre of the test piece on the reverse side. At certain distension, measured in terms of distance travelled by the plunger, cracks appear on the wearing surface of the test piece or it sustains other permanent physical damage; this distension is recorded as the cracking point or first damage. At a higher distension, the material usually bursts and this distension may also be recorded.

## 5 Apparatus and material

**5.1 Test machine**, incorporating the following (see [Figure 1](#)).

NOTE Source of apparatus is provided in [Annex A](#).

**5.1.1 Clamp**, for holding securely the test piece around its edge, leaving a central circular aperture of diameter  $25,0 \text{ mm} \pm 0,5 \text{ mm}$ . The design of the clamping system of the machine shall ensure that the test piece does not slip during the test and shall neither stretch nor compress the central area of the test piece as it is clamped.

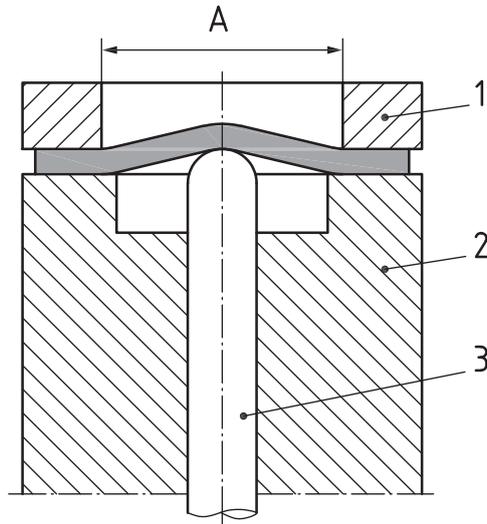
NOTE To ensure that the test piece does not slip in the clamp during the test, it can be necessary to add some interlocking profile, serrations, or other mechanical intervention to the face of the top and bottom clamps.

**5.1.2 Moveable plunger**, with a hemispherical end, nominal diameter  $6,25 \text{ mm} \pm 0,05 \text{ mm}$ .

**5.1.3 Means of moving the plunger**, without rotation, against the centre of the test piece and in a direction normal to the plane occupied by the test piece when it is clamped, at a speed of  $0,20 \text{ mm/s} \pm 0,05 \text{ mm/s}$ .

**5.1.4 Means of monitoring and recording distension** of the leather, or travel of the plunger from zero, in a direction normal to the plane occupied by the test piece with an accuracy of  $\pm 0,05 \text{ mm}$ .

**5.1.5 Means of monitoring and recording the force** on the plunger with an accuracy of  $\pm 10 \text{ N}$ .



**Key**

- 1 top clamp
- 2 bottom clamp
- 3 plunger with hemispherical end
- A aperture diameter (25,0 mm)

**Figure 1 — Clamp and plunger**

**5.2 Press knife**, as specified in ISO 2418, capable of cutting a circular test piece in one operation with suitable dimensions, to be firmly clamped in the test machine.

**5.3 Thickness gauge**, as specified in ISO 2589.

## 6 Specimen and test pieces preparation

**6.1** Select the specimen in accordance with ISO 2418.

**6.2** Condition the leather specimen and/or test pieces in accordance with ISO 2419.

**6.3** Using the press knife (5.2), cut at least three test pieces in accordance with ISO 2418.

Where there is a requirement for more than two hides or skins to be tested in one batch, then only one test piece needs to be taken from each hide or skin, provided that the overall total is not less than three test pieces.

**6.4** Measure the thickness of the test pieces in accordance with ISO 2589.

## 7 Procedure

**7.1** Ensure that the test machine is set with the central plunger retracted to zero or minimum distension. If it has a maximum force indicator, set it to zero.

NOTE "Zero" distension is set by placing a circular, rigid, and flat material in the apparatus in place of the test piece.

**7.2** Clamp the conditioned test piece into the test machine so that the ball-ended plunger acts on the reverse side of the test piece and the test piece is flat.

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**7.3** Increase the distension at a rate of 0,20 mm/s  $\pm$  0,05 mm/s and watch the grain or finished surface for the occurrence of a crack or first damage on the surface.

**7.4** When a crack or first damage occurs, record the distension in millimetre to the nearest 0,1 mm and the force in newton to the nearest 10 N. If burst is required, continue the distension with the minimum of delay.

Patent leather is a special case because, often, the grain of the leather cracks before the patent surface film. Particular care is therefore required when observing patent leather test pieces. Two indications of the grain cracking are a small shallow depression in the surface of the film above the crack and a momentary drop in the force on the plunger. If the patent film cracks, this shall also be regarded as a "grain crack" whether or not a crack in the grain is visible.

**NOTE** For some leathers, it is possible to determine grain or finish cracking of the wearing surface by analysing the force-displacement curve. When cracking occurs, there is a sudden decrease in the load, to be considered only as a confirmation of the visual assessment.

**7.5** If the test piece does not crack before bursting, report the values of distension and load at burst.

If the test piece does not burst when the maximum force or distension is reached, record the displacement and report the result as "more than maximum distension" or "more than maximum load" (e.g. > 15 mm or > 800 N).

**NOTE** If there is a pause during the distension of a test piece, relaxation of stresses in it occurs and the force reading tends to fall. Therefore, the test is ideally continuous with no delays, but, if necessary, any delay during distension between cracking and burst is less than 15 s.

**7.6** Retract the plunger, remove the test specimen, and inspect the marks left by the clamps on the wearing surface of the specimen. If there are signs of slippage having occurred during the test, for example, evident by blurring of clamping rings or of tearing of the clamped edges, reject the results and repeat the procedure [7.1](#) to [7.6](#) with a new specimen.

**7.7** Repeat [7.1](#) to [7.6](#) for other test pieces.

**7.8** Calculate the mean distension at crack in millimetre (mm), the mean force at crack in newton (N).

**7.9** Calculate the mean force at burst in newton (N) and the mean distension at burst in millimetre (mm).

## **8 Test report**

The test report shall include the following:

- a) reference to this document, i.e. ISO 3379:2024;
- b) full details for identification of the specimen, including any specific reference if known, and the thickness of the leather in millimetre (mm);
- c) mean distension at crack in millimetre (mm) to the nearest 0,1 mm; if the test piece does not crack before bursting, report the values of distension at burst (see [7.8](#));
- d) mean force at crack in newton (N) to the nearest 10 N; if the test piece does not crack before bursting, report the values of load at burst (see [7.8](#));
- e) mean distension at burst in millimetre (mm) to the nearest 0,1 mm, if required (see [7.9](#));
- f) mean force at burst in newton (N) to the nearest 10 N, if required (see [7.9](#));
- g) standard atmosphere used for conditioning and testing, as given in ISO 2419;
- h) any deviations from the method specified in this document;

- i) the date of the test.

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