Leatherwork

Activity scope
This document relates to student participation in Leatherwork as a curriculum activity. Leatherwork refers to dealing with the stamping, cutting, stitching, dyeing, moulding, burning and punching of leather.

Minimum activity-specific qualifications for supervisors

**Low risk level (stamping, moulding or punching of leather, using stamping tools on either natural leather or pre-dyed leather):**
- An adult leader with experience in leatherwork and the use of the relevant equipment and knowledge of its potential hazards.

**Medium risk level (dyeing, stitching, burning and cutting of leather):**
- An adult leader with Competence (demonstrated ability) in leatherwork and the use of the relevant equipment and knowledge of its potential hazards.

Minimum activity-specific equipment/facilities
- Eyewash facilities should be available when solvents and toxic pigments are used.
- Leather activities should be conducted in a well-ventilated area, with appropriate work space available.
- The floor should not be highly polished or slippery.
- Appropriate clean-up equipment (broom, dustpan and brush) is available.
- Appropriate footwear and protective equipment, such as rubber gloves and safety glasses when working with dye solutions and solvents. Heat-protection gloves should be worn when working with heat equipment and hot materials.
- Liquid dyes with an ethyl-alcohol base are safer than powder dyes. As an alternative, water-based leather dyes may be used. For non-functional work, pigmented airbrush inks are suitable.
- When sanding leather, eye protection and good ventilation is required. The use of a respirator is also recommended.
- Ear plugs should be used when hammering leather as the noise from hammering exceeds the acceptable decibel level.
- Consider having cotton gloves available to wear under the latex gloves for those students who have allergies to either latex or the glove powder.

Activity-specific hazards/risk and suggested control measures
- Provide training and instruction in safe handling of equipment.
- Do not heat or cool materials quickly.
- Ensure that leather to be heated is not chrome-tanned, as poisonous fumes will result.
- When applying heat to leather using a propane torch, the leather must be placed on a heat-resistant material and water should be kept close at hand to extinguish any ignited leather.
- Chemicals and dyes should be labelled and stored in appropriate unbreakable sealed containers.
- Solvent-based dyes and lacquers may be flammable. They should not be used in areas near naked flames or hot objects.
- Take the following safety precautions when contact adhesive is used:
  - use with great care and in a well-ventilated area
  - store in a flammables storage cupboard away from student contact
  - use disposable applicator (to avoid the use of a solvent to clean brushes)
• use only when a particularly strong bond is required. Water-based contact adhesive is safer.
• avoid contact with heat, sparks and all sources of ignition.

- Keep all cutting tools sharp and well maintained.
- Ensure that carving tools are directed away from the body, and that hands are clear of the cutting edge of tools, with the free hand being kept behind the tool.
- Give constant attention to the dangers of using propane torches, scissors, cutting knives and hammers, and of inhalation of adhesive fumes in a leather-work area.
- Use guides of adequate thickness to prevent cutters and bevellers jumping.
- Note that an ignited propane torch should be restricted to a particular work area and should not be moved under any circumstances.
- Ensure that hands are washed at the end of the activity and no food or drink is consumed in the area.
- Ensure Electrical Safety Guidelines.
- Ensure Chemical Hazards guideline and Guidance Notes are adhered to.
- Ensure that adequate space is available for students to work safely with hammers, mallets and other relevant equipment.
- Establish safety zones so that students involved in potentially hazardous processes (i.e. mechanically stitching, cutting and dyeing leather) have an adequate work area that other students not involved in the process will not enter.
- Carry out all leather activities in a well-ventilated area, with appropriate work space available.
- Ensure that users carry out correct procedures for operation of propane torches in order to avoid the associated potential dangers.