

LEATHER BODY BELTS AND SAFETY STRAPS CARE AND MAINTENANCE

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2.05 Visual Inspection of Safety Straps and Body Belts: The important conditions to observe when inspecting a leather safety strap and/or leather body belt are:

a. Cracks, cuts or nicks (particularly cuts or tears on the edges of the straps) that would tend to cause the leather to tear or that might affect the strength of the straps.

CAUTION: No extra holes should be punched into the tongue of the body belt or safety strap.

b. Broken or rotted threads in the stitching.

c. Broken or defective buckle.

d. Broken or badly worn steel guard on ends of a safety strap.

e. Broken wrench keeper on a body belt.

f. Loose or broken rivets on leather tool holster.

g. Loose or broken rivets, particularly those in the loops holding the D rings.

h. Broken or rotted threads in the stitching of the loops holding the D rings.

i. Metal, such as rivets, exposed on body side of belt.

j. Poor action of keeper on the snap hook. (The keeper should work freely without excessive side play and should close securely under the spring tension.)

k. Hard or dry leather. (If all the strap requires is oiling, the leather should be treated as instructed in paragraph 3.04.)

l. Burnt leather (see paragraph 2.06).

m. Leather worn thin. If none of the above conditions exist in the strap, it may be used until it is worn to a thickness of not less than 1/8 inch in any portion. Figure 1 indicates a method of measuring the thickness of leather.

n. Modifications of belt or strap such as the addition of wire hooks.

2.06 Leather with hard spots, a curved set, or a burnt streak across the face may have become burnt or cooked by being subjected to excessive heat. This may have occurred as a result of:

a. Placing the belt against or near hot steam pipes, radiators, or heaters.

1. GENERAL

1.01 This practice is reissued to provide additional information on the inspection of body belts and safety straps. It also provides information on maintenance, storing, testing and fitting. **Remove from the file and destroy all copies of CTSP 405-601-601, Issue 1, 1971.**

1.02 The portions of this practice enclosed in brackets [] indicate additions and/or revisions.

1.03 Refer to CTSP 405-601-303 for the description, use and maintenance of fabric body belts and safety straps.

1.04 In accordance with the Company's established procedure, all body belts or safety straps that have major defects will be **tagged defective**, withdrawn from service immediately, and returned to the storeroom. To prevent reissue or reuse, defective belts and/or straps must be destroyed.

2. INSPECTION

2.01 It is the responsibility of each employee to determine that his body belt and safety strap are in good condition at all times.

2.02 When a body belt and/or safety strap are received, they should be inspected carefully by the employee. At least once each day thereafter, the belt and strap should be examined for any defects that may have developed.

2.03 The employee's immediate supervisor will inspect all safety straps and body belts monthly.

2.04 Visually examine the safety strap and body belt. If any of the conditions in paragraph 2.05 exist, or if the condition of the strap or belt indicates a safety hazard, it should be exchanged immediately (see paragraph 1.04).

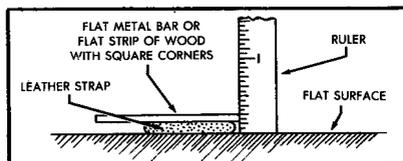


FIGURE 1. Method of Measuring Thickness of Leather

- b. Placing the belt near a pot of hot solder, hot soldering copper, or a splicer's furnace.
- c. Standing near a fire with the safety strap suspended from the body belt.

NOTE: Burn marks, hard spots, crystallized or brittle leather, or a curved set to the belt, are visual indications that a body belt has been subjected to excessive heat.

3. MAINTENANCE

3.01 Leather body belts should be cleaned and dressed at 3-month intervals. If a belt has been wet frequently from rain or perspiration, or has been in contact with wet paint, clean at shorter intervals. Leather body belts should be cleaned as follows:

- a. Remove surface dirt with a sponge dampened (not wet) with water. Do not use gasoline or petroleum products; they will cause the leather to become dry.
- b. Rinse the sponge in clear water and squeeze partly dry. Work up a thick lather using a neutral soap, such as castile or white toilet soap (free from alkali).
- c. Thoroughly wash the entire length of the belt with a lathered sponge to remove embedded dirt and perspiration, and wipe with a cloth to remove excessive moisture.
- d. Repeat step b. using a good grade of saddle soap.
- e. Work the saddle soap lather well into all parts of the belt and place it in the shade to dry.
- f. When the leather is almost dry, rub vigorously with a soft cloth.

3.02 Paint ingredients have a harmful effect on leather. Therefore, wet paint must be promptly removed from body belts with a dry cloth.

3.03 Creosote is not harmful to leather, but to avoid clothing stains it should be removed from the body belt as soon as possible.

3.04 Oiling: Treating the leather in body belts with saddle soap (paragraph 3.01) will normally keep the belt soft and pliable. However, to keep the leather from drying out and becoming brittle, leather body belts should be oiled approximately every 6 months as follows:

- a. Clean the leather with a neutral soap as instructed in paragraph 3.01 b. Oil applied to dry or dirty leather has a harmful effect on the leather.
- b. While the leather is still damp, use about 1/4 ounce (two teaspoonsful) of neat's-foot oil and apply the oil gradually with the hands, using long light strokes to work it into the leather. A light, even distribution of the oil is desired.
- c. After oiling, the belt should be set aside in a dry, shady place for about 24 hours to permit the leather to dry slowly. When the leather is dry, vigorously rub the belt with a soft cloth to remove excess oil.

NOTE: Do not use mineral oils or greases such as machine oil or vaseline. Leather should never look or feel greasy; this is an indication that too much oil is being used. Leather with too much oil will stretch and is likely to pick up sand or grit which may injure the leather.

4. STORING

NOTE: If a body belt with insufficient oil is received, it should be oiled as instructed in paragraph 3.04.

4.01 When not in use, body belts should be oiled at least once every 6 months. The belt should be oiled 3 months after it has been received for stock, and at intervals no longer than 6 months thereafter as long as it remains in stock.

4.02 Never store or place body belts near radiators, stoves, steam pipes, or in places where the leather would be subjected to excessive heat or dampness. Belts that have become wet should be oiled and then set aside in a dry, shady place and allowed to dry slowly.

5. BENDING TEST

5.01 The bending test should be made on body belts only when the leather is clean and well oiled. The leather should show no cracks other than slight surface cracks when the test is applied. If well defined cracks appear, the belt must not be used, but should be taken out of service.

5.02 Do not make the bending test if the temperature of the leather is below 32°F.; at low temperatures the leather may be damaged by bending it around the test mandrel.

5.03 The bending test should be made as follows:

a. Leather should be bent with the grain (smooth) side out, over a mandrel that is not less than 3/4 inch in diameter. (A 3/4-inch guy rod may be used.) In making this test, pull the leather taut, and wrap it halfway around the mandrel, keeping the leather under tension while the bend is being made. **Do not loop the leather first and then pull it over the mandrel.** This procedure brings the leather into firm contact with the mandrel while the bend is being made, and thus avoids bending the leather too sharply.

NOTE: Do not make the bend test at a buckle hole.

b. Body belts shall be subjected to the bending test at points where it is possible to bend them,

such as under the leather tool loops and at the tongue strap.

5.04 If a body belt is subjected to an excessively severe test, such as bending it too sharply (without a mandrel or over too small a mandrel) with the grain side out, the leather may crack because of the excessive strain placed on the grain layer.

6. FITTING BODY BELTS

6.01 The degree of comfort and satisfactory service an employee obtains from a body belt depends, to a large extent, on the location of the D-rings with respect to the prominent portions of the hip bones. Most workers prefer to have the D-rings located slightly in front of the prominent portions of the hip bones. To obtain a properly fitting belt, measure the distance across the back to the desired locations of the D-rings, and order a belt of the size that comes nearest to this dimension. See CTSP 490-025-110, paragraph 2.03.