

AHFA Joint Industry Leather Standards & Guidelines Committee Meeting

Myrtle Beach Wednesday May 11th, 2011

Meeting called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Bill Perdue- AHFA, Juan Diego Casaretto – Zenda Leather, and Pat Lott – La-Z-Boy. The meeting arrangements were reviewed.

A signup sheet was distributed to the Membership.

The meeting minutes were reviewed by the membership. The motion to accept the minutes as is was made by Joel Beckom with Euroleather and 2nd by Bill Reichel with Flex Steele.

The AHFA needs to review the by-laws to allow for electronic meetings and balloting by the membership and we need to make sure that we can vote on the changes to standards electronically.

We are looking for ideas for plant tours to plan for the May Meetings.

The November meeting will be an electronic meeting. Watch for a Go To Meeting invitation from the AHFA for the November Meeting. The Membership were advised by Bill Perdue to watch their spam filters so that the electronic invitation does not get caught up in the filter.

Bill Perdue – Eco 3 Home update – Hooker Furniture, Hickory Chair, Flex Steele, Thomasville, La-Z-Boy, are all in the Eco 3 Program. There are no numeric standards that are required for this program. The companies run their programs and Bill Perdue guides the board of examiners to help them to manage the program.

- The underlying premise of sustainability is using resources responsibly to allow for the use of these same resources in the future by future generations.
- Every facility has unique requirements that will need to be developed or modified to meet the requirements of the EFEC, SBD, and the Product Registration under Eco 3 Home.
- Focus was made to green the Furniture Manufacturing Plant (EFEC) before they went to registering product for Eco 3 Home for the actual Furniture.
- EFEC companies become better environmental stewards in the communities in which they operate. Even smaller companies are returning 90 to \$100,000 dollars in reducing energy and water consumption, reduced waste and increased recycling. Reducing peak demand for electricity is a key to reducing energy costs.
- Bassett's plant has an EFEC Tree now where employees EFEC suggestions that are implemented are posted to this tree to recognize employees for their suggestions.
- The scope of EFEC is expanding internationally. AHFA is working with the Craft master plants in China and La-Z-Boy's new plant in Saltillo Mexico.

- SBD takes EFEC’s culture of environmental stewardship and expands it to the Global Supply Chain. Typically it takes about 8 months to get through EFEC. The “Mini check list” is critical to help suppliers identify opportunities for improvement. This is one of the few programs in existence that requires both domestic and global supply chains to be included in the Sustainable by Design Requirements.
- Kincaid is shipping Furniture that was certified to the Eco 3 Home standards in October 2010 and April 2011 to the dealers and consumers now. There are 110 items registered in Eco 3 Home at Kincaid.
- The last mile of the Eco 3 Home Journey is Product Registration. This requires registration of each piece of Furniture meets safety and health requirements with significant attention being paid to the environmental practices of the Furniture Production Plant.
- All facilities must be EFEC certified before you can be Eco 3 Home certified.
- There is a product registration checklist that the company must sign off on for each furniture article to be registered. Checklist: Safety, Health, Environment:
 - Environment is Environmental Management, Environmental Inventory, (Tier 1 and 2 are required) Product Inventory
 - Companies must be concerned about steel alloys that are made out of re-cycled steel since there is not equal distribution within the steel component and one area may pass on the XRF Analyzer and another spot will fail.
- The Shelton Group from Nashville TN was hired to develop the hang tag and develop the Marketing Program behind Eco 3 Home. The program was developed using extensive consumer research to come up with the Hang Tag and the marketing of Eco 3 Home, AHFA’s Safety, Health, and Environmental Program.
- Echo3.com is the consumer web site that the consumer can review all requirements of the program.
- Good guy is a consumer web site that allows consumers to rate products on environmental compliance.
- Dr. Cory, Director of the Leather Research Lab in Cincinnati Ohio emphasized that it is important to get Eco 3 Home launched before the Leather Working Group begins trying to impact the upholstered Leather Furniture Industry. The Leather Working Group does not have a complete program that includes registering each Furniture Product like the Eco3 Program. The Leather Working Group is also not consumer focused as the AHFA Eco3 Home Program is.
- AHFA has a product safety requirement on their web site.

Chem Serve Presentation / See Power Point Presentation

- Based on 16 CFR 1500.91 Leather is exempt from lead content testing providing the leather has not been treated or adulterated with materials that would result in the addition of lead.
- CPSIA Regulation – Sec 101 Lead Paint Rule, Section 102 Mandatory third party testing for certain children’s products.
- See Chem Serve presentation for CPSC Testing Methodology. There are only 2 or 3 testing labs certified now in the USA that can meet the CPSC testing methodology.
- Phthalates in vinyl products can be an issue that the Furniture Manufacturer must comply with.
- Must have very defined record keeping that documents the testing activity and results.
- CPSC enforcement actions can include:
 - Consumer complaint
 - Pulling a product off of the Furniture Dealer floor to test
 - CPSC Agents working at the U.S. port taking XRF Analyzer Measurements
 - Review of records that are required for the Certificate of Compliance (lack of records) (CPSIA Requirements)
 - Every leather color must be tested and certified for compliance and you must prove that the leather is purchased from this certified leather supplier.
- The CPSC has hired allot of new enforcement officers and they are sending them out to companies to conduct CPSIA compliance audits. This is a way to train these new enforcement officers.
- Allot of this will come down to: “Reasonable Testing Program”
- You have to write into your contracts that the supplier must notify you in writing that if they make any changes to the product without notifying you and without conducting compliance testing that they will be held accountable for any issues resulting in Lead being found in the furniture components.
- Walmart and Disney are now requiring their suppliers before being considered as a Supplier to conduct testing certification and compliance documents before they will review their products.
- James Chester CEO of Assured Products Group – Assured products group is working with AHFA to develop software to support CPSC Compliance Requirements. There is a Webinar that is coming up that will present the information. There is a potential that companies products could

be listed in the data base as certified after testing. The testing data could be populated by the testing lab.

- YKK Zipper has agreed to conduct testing and provide certification to the Apparel Industry with certification of compliance data.
- Chem Serve is the testing facility that Kincaid has used to conduct lead in coatings testing. They have sent the information to Jay to give them an alternate source for testing.
- Dr. Cory with the Leather Research Lab gave a re-cap of the Leather Lead Testing process that was conducted 4 years ago in conjunction with the AHFA and participating Furniture companies. During that study, there were 33% of the upholstery leathers that had excessive amounts of Lead in the leather finishes. The colors that were found to have excessive amounts of lead in them were yellows and reds. All leather's contain dyes which penetrate the leather. Painted leather contain pigments and pigments can be scrapped off that fall within the lead in paints law. The leather research lab has never found pigments in the substrate of the leather.
- The AHFA had Mary Toro from the CPSC present to the membership 4 years ago on the Lead Law requirements and during that time the CPSC stated that the 1303 lead in paint law did not apply to upholstery leather.
- Mary Martha comment – The lead law does not include printing inks or materials that become part of the substrate. Mary Martha believes that the lead in paints standard could now be an issue for the AHFA Joint Industry Leather Standards and Guidelines committee and that additional research now needs to be conducted.
- It was recommended by the Leather Committee Membership that another round of leather testing needs to be conducted and that we need build consensus around terminology for Lead in Leather:
 - Are pigmented and painted leather technically the same product?
 - There is no pigment in the dye. There is pigment that is applied to the surface of the leather. Does this pigment become permanently affixed to the leather during the finishing process?
- The AHFA Joint Industry Leather Standards Meeting needs to consider then adding this lead testing specification to the Joint Industry testing standards.

Bill Perdue will work with Mary Martha on developing and vetting the Lead Leather Testing specification issue and then schedule a meeting with Mary Toro at the CPSC on the current lead in paints standard.

Ann Laidlaw – X-Rite Color Tolerances in Black and White – See Power Point Presentation

CA117 Testing of Upholstery Leather / Dr. Nicholas Cory / Leather Research Lab / Cincinnati Ohio

- Different types of Flame Tests:
- 16 CFR Part 1610 - 45 Degree – Furniture – Heat at 105 degrees Centigrade for 30 minutes, Cool in desiccators, Mount at 45 degrees, butane flame, 1 second. This test was adopted by the State of California as CA117.
 - Sections A – D deal with different types of filling materials.
 - Section E is the Upholstery Fabrics, Dept of Commerce Standard 191-53
 - 3 Classes, 1 Normal – 3.5 seconds or longer for the flame to spread, 2 Intermediate, 3 Rapid and Intense. You must meet a class 1 rating.
 - Upholstery leather has always passed Class 1 testing and is currently exempt from today's burn testing requirements.
- Cigarette Test – UFAC 1990 this is the test that upholstery leather meet's today. Again, leather is exempt from being tested for this standard since all upholstery grade leather has always passed this test.
- NFPA 260 – National Fire Protection Association Testing Standards for Flammability is similar to the UFAC 1990 test and all upholstery grade leathers passes this requirement.
- Flammability treatments for Aviation leather cause problems with the PH level of the leather and can cause the chromium in the leather to bleed out.
- The amount of Chromium in the leather will impact the way the leather burns.
- The odor in leather furniture issues are being created by the flammable finishes used in leather and are usually produced in Asia.
- Using vegetable retaning agents assist tanners in passing flammability Tests.

Potential New Leather Testing Standards Presented by Dr. Nicholas Cory from the Leather Research Lab:

Current AHFA Leather Standards for Testing Include / See Power Point Presentation

- Current Tests:
 - Veslic Rub Fastness Tests – Felt Pad Dry, Felt Pad Wet, Felt Pad Perspiration
 - Colour Fastness to Light
 - Finish Adhesion
 - Flexing endurance
 - Tear Strength

Recommended New Leather Standards Testing for the AHFA Joint Industry Standards Committee / Dr. Nicholas Cory / Leather Research Lab Cincinnati Ohio:

- Recommending that we perform pH and delta pH, cold crack resistance of finish, colour fastness to water spotting. (ISO has adopted these test methods as well)
 - ISO/FDIS 16131 International Standard is now in final version for acceptance. ISO has taken the European Standard and Rubber Stamped it.
- PH (ISO 4045) / Important for Skin Irritation, Hydrolysis Analysis, and Warranty claims. (Make sure the leather is not too acidic. (Assists in the determination of why the finish rubbed off prematurely in consumers homes) Measure the pH level of the hidden area of a sample returned and compare it to the failed area and can tell if the product was improperly cleaned) Having the original tannery data for a production lot and then comparing it to the field failure sample will provide a very good summary on the reason for the failure)
- Water Spotting (ISO 15700) – Pass level is grey scale level 3. This is a very crude test and they recommend the Water Spotting test developed by (3M)
- The Leather Research Lab does not recommend using any leather cleaner or conditioner since all leathers have various different chemical makeup and they will react differently to leather cleaners. There is no single cleaner that works on all leathers.
- Oil Repellency (AATCC 118) This test is to address the amount of oil and grease that a leather can resist. Audi uses a grade 4 for their standard for this test. (Need companies to submit warranty samples to LRL for the assessment of this standard.
- Cold Crack Resistance (ASTM D1912)
- Currently Mary Martha indicates that leather is exempt from Flammability testing by the CPSC. Mary has received indications that leather will continue to be exempt.

Task Group – Oil Repellency AATCC118 / Bob Wilson Chair, Juan Diego, Dr. Cory, Pat Lott with La-Z-Boy will submit leather samples for testing.

The Leather Committee agreed to go to ballot on pH ISO 4045 and the 3M Water Spotting Test. Pat to work with Dr. Cory on this to develop the wording for the ballot.

Administrative change – Take out the Flammability statement in the Leather Information Booklet. Gail Stricklan will work on this.

New Business:

Joel Beckom brought up the International Council of Tanners statement of tolerances: A tolerance of +/- 2% (on the whole parcel and not on individual hides or skins) is accepted. Also accepted is a tolerance of +/- 3% for softer, stretchier leathers, such as gloving and clothing leathers, light-weight suede's, chamois

leathers, bellies, and upholstery leathers. The discussions from the Furniture Companies have indicated that they normally see a hide shrinkage and also that there is a lot of variation in operators and machines. Current leather measuring machine variation will be put on the agenda for the November Meeting. We need to have more input on this issue during the web conference meeting. Companies need to submit actual measuring machine variation data for the next meeting.

Juan Diego is going to put together recommendations for improvement in the standards wording and more improvements made in recommendations on calibration of equipment, procedures, etc.

The Bonded Leather statement did not get added to the Leather Information Booklet. This needs to get developed, balloted, and this needs to get placed in a separate section of the AHFA Joint Industry Web Site. Look at the International Council of Tanners Statement. They are also working on a new definition of Bonded Leather that we need to review.

We need to update the participants for the leather booklet as well. (Assigned to Bill Perdue)

Discussions were conducted regarding a hybrid meeting where they set up the AHFA Conference Room in High Point and also have participants on the go to meeting web conference.

The Leather group needs to add the Pigmented, Semi Aniline, and Aniline specifications to the specifications document.

Bill Perdue spoke about the identity, (name) for the Leather Standards Meeting. Bill has asked for a name change suggestion from all Members. Recommendation is made to have a more aggressive agenda, bio's on the People Speaking, Presentations on the Leather Industry and trends, updates on companies experience with Eco 3 Home, SBD, recommend that the AHFA make the committee more visible in the Furniture Factories. Juan Diego recommends that we have a meeting in Hickory.

Bill Perdue will add the meeting information to AHFA News Letters and we will want to give each group its own name and its own identity. (Fabric Standards Committee versus Leather Standards Committee) We also need to develop a new Mission Statement for each group.

Homework assignment:

- Proposed name change for the Leather Standards Committee
- Mission Statement for each group – Why do we meet, what is our goal, etc?

The May meeting will be in Hickory at Baker Furniture. 1859 will do the catering for this event.

The Leather Standards Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.