

Test Procedure for Checking the Area Measurement of Chamois Revised

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Introduction. Chamois is a natural leather made from skins of sheep and lambs that have been oil- tanned. Chamois are irregularly shaped, which makes it difficult to measure the area of the skin. In 1964, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) issued an advisory opinion stating that using the word “chamois” on a product that is not made from oil tanned sheepskin is unlawful and deceptive. It is unlawful to use the name “Artificial Chamois,” “Pig Chamois,” “Synthetic Chamois,” or “Man-Made Chamois” because they are not made from oil tanned sheepskin. Chamois is typically labeled in uniform sizes in terms of square decimeters and square feet, and sized in increments of 2.32 dm² (1/4 ft²), 9.29 dm² (1 ft²), 11.61 dm² (1 1/4 ft²), and 13.93 dm² (1 1/2 ft²).

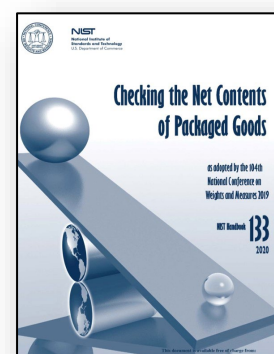


Image of Chamois Leather

Over the years the manufacturing and processing of chamois has changed. When the procedure was developed over 40 years ago moisture loss was a primary concern. With improvements in the distribution process (e.g., shorter shelf life), store environmental conditions, and tanning process, moisture loss is no longer the primary factor.

The current test procedure was adopted at the 2019 National Conference on Weights and Measures (NCWM) Annual Meeting and can be found in NIST Handbook 133 (2020 Edition), *Checking the Net Contents of Packaged Goods* (www.nist.gov/pml/weights-and-measures/publications/nist-handbooks/handbook-133).

Questions arose during a NIST OWM Handbook 133 training class on the test procedure led to a review, research, and analysis of the chamois test procedure. As part of this process, OWM sought the expertise and help of Hopkins Manufacturing Corporation (formerly Acme Sponge & Chamois Company) due to their leading role in the original development of the test procedure with NCWM in the 1970s. In addition, input was sought from eight companies that comprised of the majority of the chamois industry.



When water is applied to a chamois, as part of the hydration/conditioning process, the chamois reacts negatively causing the chamois to swell and pulling the fibers inward. This leads to shrinkage of the surface area, rather than the originally intended result of restoring area. As a result, the proposed test procedure adopted has removed the step.

In addition, several other changes also were made to clarify and improve the readability and usability of the procedure which includes:

- ◆ “Sample Conditioning” (which involves conditioning each sample with water before testing) will no longer be required during the Gravimetric Test Procedure. This means that a lab test is no longer necessary, and the test can be performed in the field.
- ◆ The Gravimetric Test Procedure was clarified to better explain the “ironing” process including the proper heat setting and technique for removing wrinkles.
- ◆ The “Audit Test Procedure” was revised to: a) clarify the sampling plan; b) improve the procedure for tracing the chamois on graph paper; c) explain how to calculate the area; and d) update the test equipment including the type of graph paper and ruler required.

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