

FLEET EQUIPMENT®

Keep It Up-scale

Many fleets have moved to specifying up-scale interiors to include leather upholstery. Its extra cost makes it wise to maintain its good looks.

Creative Colors International, a company that repairs, reconditions and restores leather, vinyl, fabric, plastics and carpeting, offers some useful information for extending and enhancing the life of leather goods. To retain its beauty and other desirable qualities, leather requires frequent conditioning to replace the natural lubricants lost during normal use. With the proper care, leather can be protected from excessive dryness that can cause it to crack and from moisture that may cause it to swell or mildew.

Because unprotected leather is susceptible to spotting from water

and other liquids, a newly purchased leather item should be treated immediately to help prevent permanent stains from occurring. Be sure to use only the proper protection for your particular type of leather.

- The use of too much oil or wax can clog pores, causing leather to lose its ability to allow air in and moisture out. For the best protection, use a mild dishwashing soap. Ivory liquid dishwashing soap is an excellent way to keep your leather clean and looking new. One part Ivory to 10 parts water.
- Dairy products that spill on darker dyed leather will leave a spot. After cleaning, the oils in the dairy products will eventually rise back up to the surface. Try

and be careful with any dairy product next to your leather.

- Lighter colored leather needs to be cleaned often. Dirt, dust and clothing will leave traces on leather. Especially, black and dark-blue dyed jeans.
- Never use preparations made for smooth leather on suede or "rough cut" leather. Use only cleaners or preparations made specifically for suede.
- The best way to keep leather protected from the sun and other elements is to clean and condition on a regular basis, at least twice a year. The conditioner puts a protective layer on the surface, which will help protect from sun damage.

It's important that all leather goods, including truck seats, footwear, clothing, furniture and everything in between, receive proper care, which will enhance and extend the life of any leather good. •