LEATHER BODY BELTS

DESCRIPTION AND MAINTENANCE

2. PRECAUTIONS

2.01 Body belts and safety straps must be worn when working aloft on:

(a) Poles (including stepped poles)

(b) Ladders placed on suspension strand

(c) Truck ladder platforms

(d) Ladder platforms

(e) Aerial platforms

(f) Pole platforms

(g) Aerial lift baskets

(h) Cable car.

2.02 When climbing or working aloft, never fasten an uncoiled handline directly to a belt or to tools hanging from a belt. Use either the B Handline Carrier (Section 081-720-111) or the method described in 2.03. Both of these methods allow the handline to pull free of the workman if it is caught on an obstruction or by a passing vehicle.

2.03 If the body belt is not equipped with a B Handline Carrier, an uncoiled handline can be safely carried aloft by forming the free end of the line into a bight and tucking the bight under the body belt.

2.04 Never punch extra holes in a body belt. If a belt does not fit properly, replace it with one of the correct size.

2.05 ***Never use the D-rings of a body belt for anything other than their intended purpose, engaging the snap hooks of the safety strap. Foreign objects attached to D-rings may prevent proper engagement of the snap hooks or give the wearer a false indication of snap hook engagement.***

2.06 Do not rely upon the feel or sound of a snap hook engaging. Always check visually for proper engagement of both snap hooks.

2.07 Do not use a body belt as a pike pole support when piking poles.

2.08 Body belts should never be stored with edged tools. When body belts, safety straps, and climbers are kept in the same container, the climbers should be fitted with gaff guards to prevent damage to the leather by the climber gaffs.

2.09 Never place or store body belts near sources of extreme heat such as:

(a) Steam pipes

(b) Radiators

(c) Heaters

(d) Solder pots

(e) Soldering coppers

(f) Furnaces.

3. DESCRIPTION

B BODY BELT

3.01 The B Body Belt (Fig. 1) is made of harness leather and is equipped with drop-forged, circular-type D-rings and buckle, a metal wrench keeper, a tape thong, and leather tool loops. The portion of the strap between the D-ring and the tool loop which is farthest from the wrench keeper will accommodate the holster. The belt is furnished in both a 3-inch and 4-inch width in six sizes ranging from 18 to 28 inches in 2-inch increments. The B Body Belt may be used as either a right-hand or left-hand belt as described in 3.04. Sizes are designated by a three-digit number such as 318 for a 3-inch wide belt in size 18. The size of the belt is the distance between D-rings measured in inches as shown in Fig. 1. The weight of the belt ranges from about 2-1/2 pounds for size 318 to about 3-1/4 pounds for size 428.

3.02 The circular-type D-ring minimizes the possibility of the safety strap snap hook riding back to the body belt, twisting, and bringing pressure to bear on the snap hook keeper. This feature appreciably reduces the possibility of accidental disengagement of the snap hook.

3.03 The B Body Belt equipped with the former standard D-rings is no longer supplied. However the use, care, and maintenance of these belts still in use in the field are the same as covered in Part 4 of this section.

3.04 Fig. 1 shows a RIGHT B Body Belt as supplied. The belt can be made into a LEFT belt by swinging the tape thong through 180 degrees on its rivet and inverting the belt so that the belt buckle is to the wearer's right. In such case, if an offset double holster is used, it should be the LEFT type.

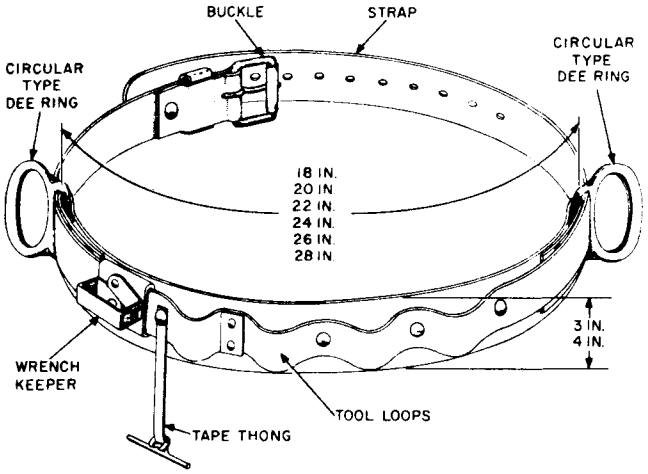

Fig. 1—B Body Belt (Right)

CUSHION BODY BELT

3.05 The Cushion Body Belt (Fig. 2) is intended for the use of workmen who require a cushion-type belt. The Cushion Body Belt is made of leather and is equipped with drop-forged, circular-type D-rings and buckle, a metal wrench keeper, a tool holster, a tape thong, and leather tool loops. The 5-inch wide body section is made of a single piece of leather, folded to form a cushion with rolled edges and no exposed inside rivets. The D-ring strap is free to slide over a range of about 4 inches. The belt is always put on with the buckle toward the wearer's left. Belts are furnished either as RIGHT or LEFT belts. A RIGHT belt is shown in Fig. 2. In a LEFT belt, the positions of the holster and wrench keeper are reversed. Belts are furnished equipped with either a single holster (for pliers) or an offset double holster with scissors pocket (for pliers, rule, and scissors). Screw-type rivets are used for fastening the holster and wrench keeper to the buckle strap, thus permitting replacement of these attachments as well as conversion of belts from RIGHT to LEFT and vice versa.

3.06 The Cushion Body Belt equipped with the former standard D-rings is no longer supplied. However the use, care, and maintenance of these belts still in use in the field are the same as covered in Part 4 of this section.

3.07 The Cushion Body Belt is available in seven sizes designated D-18, D-20, D-22, D-24, D-26, D-28, and D-30. The size of the belt is the distance between D-rings measured in inches as shown in Fig. 1. The weight of the belt ranges from about 4-1/2 pounds for the D-18 size to about 6 pounds for the D-30 size.

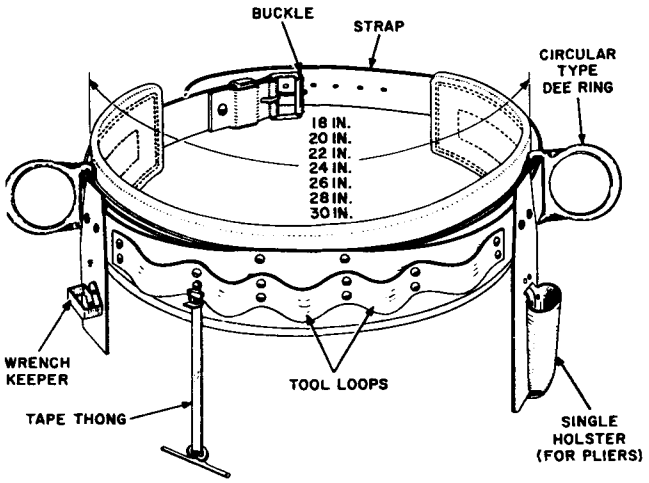

Fig. 2—Cushion Body Belt

4. MAINTENANCE

CLEANING

4.01 Leather body belts should be cleaned and dressed at three-month intervals or more often if the belt has frequently been wet from rain or perspiration, or has been in contact with wet paint.

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

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

4.04 Leather body belts may be cleaned as follows:

(a) Remove surface dirt with a sponge dampened, but not wet, with water. Do not use gasoline or petroleum products because 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 the lathered sponge to remove embedded dirt and perspiration, and wipe with a cloth to remove excessive moisture.

(d) Repeat (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 has practically dried, rub vigorously with a soft cloth.

OILING

4.05 Treating the leather in body belts with saddle soap (4.04) 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 six months as follows:

(a) Clean the leather with a neutral soap as described in 4.04, (a), (b),and (c). Oil applied to dry or dirty leather has a harmful effect on the leather.

(b) While the leather is still damp, use on each belt 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 in order to permit the leather to dry slowly. Then rub vigorously 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 as 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.

STORING

4.06 Leather body belts not in use should be treated as follows:

(a) If a body belt is received with insufficient oil, it should be oiled as described in 4.05.

(b) When not in use body belts should be oiled at least once every six months. The belt should be oiled three months after it has been received for stock and at intervals not longer than six months thereafter as long as it remains in stock.

(c) 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. Either of these conditions is likely to impair the strength of the leather. Belts that have become wet should be oiled and then set aside in a dry, shady place and allowed to dry slowly.

5. INSPECTION

5.01 Each workman must be responsible for the condition of his body belt. Body belts should be inspected upon receipt and at least once a week thereafter to ensure that the belt is in a safe condition.

5.02 Supervisors should make periodic inspections of body belts to make certain the belts are being properly maintained and are in safe condition.

5.03 Body belts that do not pass either the visual inspection (5.04) or the bending test (5.05) must be exchanged at once for a belt in good condition. ***If there is any doubt whatsoever of the safe condition of a body belt, it should be removed from service.***

VISUAL INSPECTION

5.04 If any of the following conditions exist, a belt must be replaced in accordance with 5.03:

(a) Broken steel reinforcement plates holding D-rings.

(b) Leather of loop over reinforcing plates worn or crushed by the D-ring at the edges sufficiently to affect its strength or to cause the leather to tear.

(c) Loose or broken rivets (particularly those in the loops holding the D-rings).

(d) Broken or rotted threads in the stitching of the loops holding the D-rings.

(e) Cracks, cuts, etc, that would tend to cause the leather to tear or would be likely to affect the strength of the belt.

(f) Leather hard and dry. (If the leather requires only oil, it should be treated as outlined in 4.05.)

(g) Broken wrench keeper.

(h) Broken or defective buckle.

(i) Burnt leather. (See Note.)

Note: Visual indications that a body belt has been subjected to excessive heat are: burn marks, hard spots, crystallized or brittle leather, a curved set to the belt, or an indistinct portion of the ironed crease along the belt edge.

BENDING TEST

5.05 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. The test should not be made if the temperature of the leather is below 32°F since at low temperatures the leather may be damaged by bending it around the test mandrel. 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. 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. ***Do not loop the leather first and then pull it over the mandrel. 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.

5.06 If leather of the thickness used in Bell System standard body belts 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, even good 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 a workman 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 workmen 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.