



# GELCOAT SURFACES

## Care and Maintenance

### Protecting Your Gelcoat Surfaces

Periodic preventative maintenance and good storage habits will keep your fiberglass product looking like new. This sheet contains a few important suggestions that will help you keep your gelcoat surface in the best possible condition.

 After each use, rinse the gelcoat surface with fresh water. If a boat has been used in brackish or salt water, a mild soap should be used in the wash-down.

 Cover your product between uses with a cover such as a tarpaulin to protect the finish from direct sun. Do not cover with anything that will not allow moisture to evaporate. Some products such as sheet plastic trap moisture against the gelcoat surface.

 Before storing, remove loose items (swim suits, boat cushions, towels, etc.) which may come in contact with the gelcoat surfaces. Discoloration and mildew could form if water is trapped between these items and the gelcoat surface.

### Protection for gelcoat finish.

Waxing is recommended two to four times a year. If you are in a climate where you use your product year-round, wax every three months. If you have a seasonal use, wax at the beginning and end of the use period.

Waxing helps protect your gelcoat surface from normal, common elements. Use a wax recommended for gelcoat fiberglass finishes. TAP recommends using 3-M Liquid Wax #9026 or Mirror Glaze Boat Cleaner Wax #50. Do not wax in direct sunlight. Before using one of these waxes, check the label and closely follow the manufacturer's recommendations for application.

### Occurrence of color fading or yellowing.

Darker colors are more prone to fading because they absorb more of the sun's ultraviolet rays and retain heat. Whites and off-whites may discolor or yellow with direct exposure to sunlight.

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If your gelcoat finish has started to fade or discolor, and waxing will not restore the original finish, compounding by hand with 3-M's Fiberglass Restorer and 3-M's Wax #9005 will remove oxidation and chalking. Its blend of waxes will restore shine and retard UV damage.

Compounding with Mirror Glaze Machine Cleaner #1, applied with a low speed buffer will make quick work of large areas.

Never place a buffer in such a manner as to let the buffing pad touch the ground. The pad will pick up dirt which can cause deep scratches in the gelcoat finish.

After machine compounding, wash the surface using clean water and then dry. Apply a good coat of wax. Do not apply compound or wax in direct sunlight.

### Removal of minor scratches.

If you have light surface scratches and compounding will not remove them, wet sanding may be necessary.

To wet sand, first clean the area with soap and water.

Sand with 500 grit wet/dry sandpaper. You should also use a sanding block.

When sanding, keep the surface wet and try to keep the area free of dirt and dust. On vertical surfaces, pressing a wet sponge above the sanding area will keep the surface wet.

Always keep the sanding block flat on the surface. Never use the edge or corner as this will result in making scratches that compound will not remove.

After wet sanding has been completed polish the sanded area with 3-M Fiberglass Restorer #9005 or for larger areas, use Mirror Glaze Machine Cleaner #1 with a low speed buffer. Do not use hand rubbing compound with a low speed machine buffer.

Several applications of compound may have to be applied before all the scratches are removed. After compounding is completed, wash the surface using clean water and then dry. Apply 3-M #9026 Liquid Wax. Do not apply compound or wax in direct sunlight.

### Removing stains from gelcoat.

Stains may be removed by any number of Fiberglass and Plastic Cleaners. Deep stains may require the removal of some of the surface of the gelcoat by compounding or sanding. Always start by using the least amount of abrasive to do the job. After the stain is removed, wash the surface using clean water and then dry. Apply a good coat of wax. Do not apply compound or wax in direct sunlight.