

Complete Stripping/Re-glassing



Photo #1

Even though wood/epoxy boats are strong, durable and resistant to damage, after years of use or serious damage, it may be necessary to completely strip the boat of the old glass and epoxy. This is a major undertaking in effort, but does not take that much time, providing you have the right tools.

If you built the boat yourself, you should have enough knowledge to do the repairs yourself.

If you did not, then a few simple tools and materials will do the job.

Materials/Tools

You can purchase small repair kits from many retail outlets or marine supply stores. They usually contain small packets of resin and hardener, stir sticks, and some form of filler. Other materials will be required. They include:

- Protective mask – dust and organic vapor
- Sandpaper
- Protective gloves
- Scrapers (photo #1)
- Industrial heat gun
- Paint scrapers/Putty knife
- Utility knife
- Orbital sander
- Pliers

Stripping

Many people have attempted to remove old fiberglass by sanding alone. It can be done, but make a lot of dust and takes many hours to sand completely through the glass. The easier way is to melt it off with a heat gun.

This is job for outside. Put on a dust mask with organic vapor protective filters. There will be vapors from the heated epoxy.

To strip the wood of fiberglass and all resin, scrape through the glass in a few small areas about the size of your hand. Begin to apply high heat to the area, constantly moving the heat gun over the area so you do not scorch the glass or wood. As you apply the heat, use the paint scraper to try and gently lift the edge of the glass. As the epoxy heats up, in essence it softens the plastic. You may notice the weave of



Photo #2



Photo #3



Photo #4



Photo #5

the glass as it reaches the right temperature. Once you can get a putty knife or paint scraper under the edge of the glass, move the heat gun forward of the lifted glass and continue to heat the surrounding area and lifting with the putty knife. **(Photo #2)** Do not force the glass up or try to grab and edge and tear it off without the heat. You run the risk of tearing wood from your boat. Once you have a large area lifted, you can grab the raised glass with a pair of pliers and continue to heat the glass with the heat gun. Apply a mild amount of lifting pressure with the pliers while continuing to heat the boat. When the epoxy is heated enough the glass will lift.

Be patient with the heat and lifting of glass.

It is unlikely that you will get the whole thing off in one piece. As you lift large pieces, cut them away with your utility knife. **(Photo #3)**

There will be epoxy still in the wood. **(Photos #4 & 5)** You will have to sand this off completely to bare wood in preparation for new glass and resin. If you do not completely strip the old resins and glass, your boat will likely look blotchy when you redo the fiberglass.

With all the old glass and most of the resin lifted, you can begin to sand the boat in preparation for glassing. If you dare, you can start with a belt sander and then move to your orbital sander with increasingly finer sandpaper. Going as fine as 120 grit sandpaper should do it.

To fiberglass the boat, see notes on fiberglassing on our web site.