



# Boat Cleaning 101

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# We'll Cover:

- Types of boat materials
- Reference material
- Washing
- Polishing
- Wax
- What to look for when employing a boat cleaning company
- Q & A



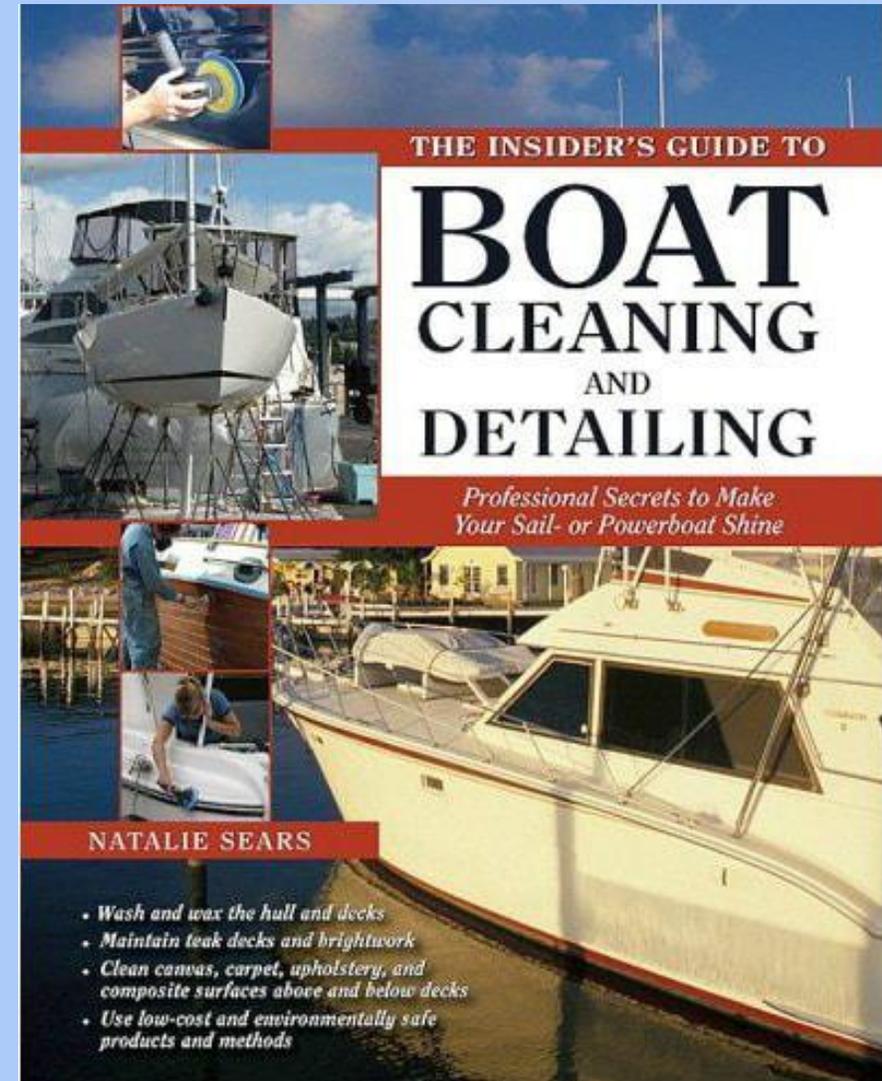
# Types of materials - requiring cleaning

- Fibreglass
- Aluminum
- Stainless Steel
- Paint
- Plastic/Vinyl/PVC/Hypalon
- Window material - Roll Vinyl, Stratoglass, etc.
- Teak

# REFERENCE MATERIAL

# Recommended Books

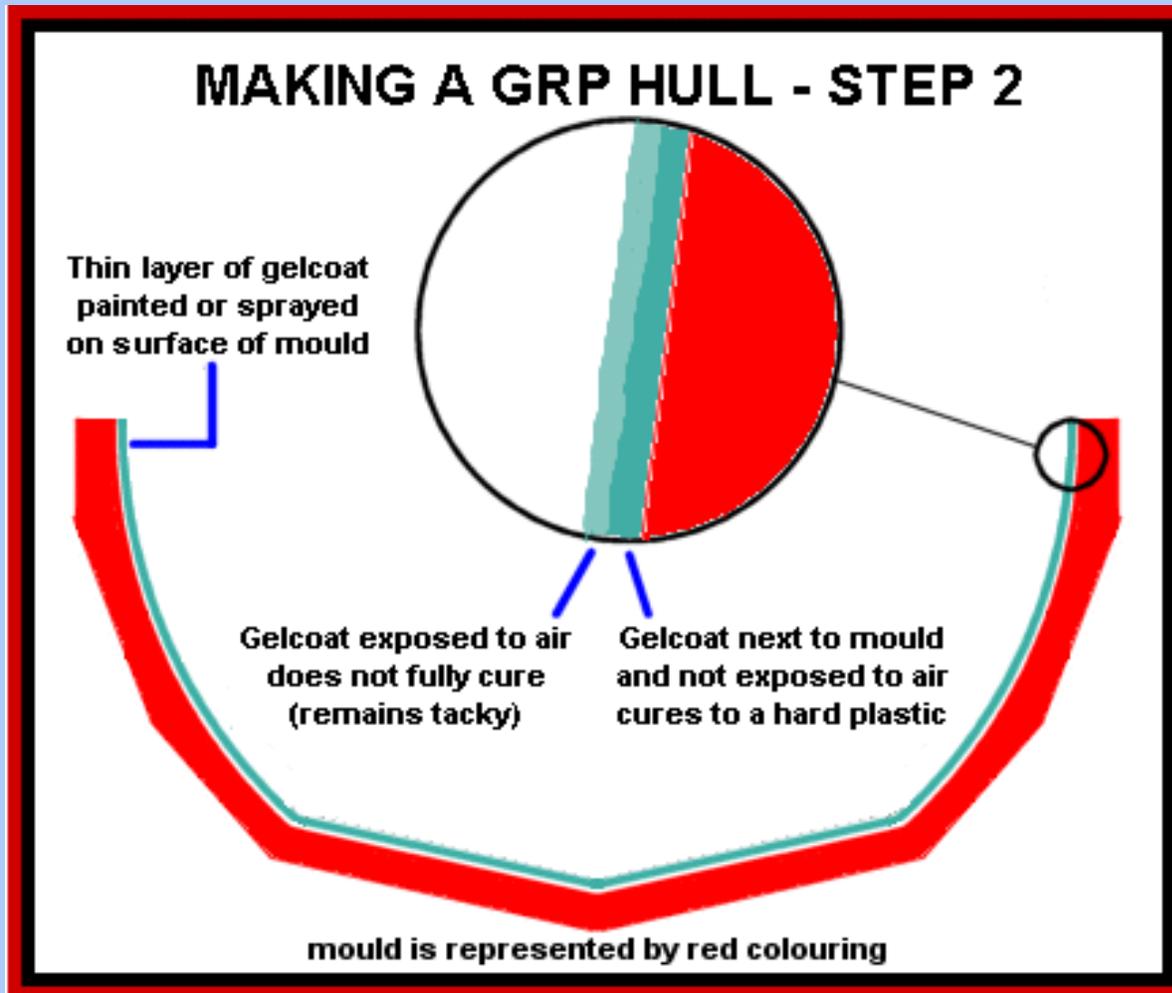
- Natalie Sears: The Insider's Guide to Boat Cleaning and Detailing: Professional Secrets to Make Your Sail-or Powerboat Beautiful
  - (Natalie owns and operates Deckhand Detailing, serving the greater Seattle area)
- @ Amazon.ca
  - Kindle Edition \$17.37
  - Paperback \$26.70



# Recommended Web Resources

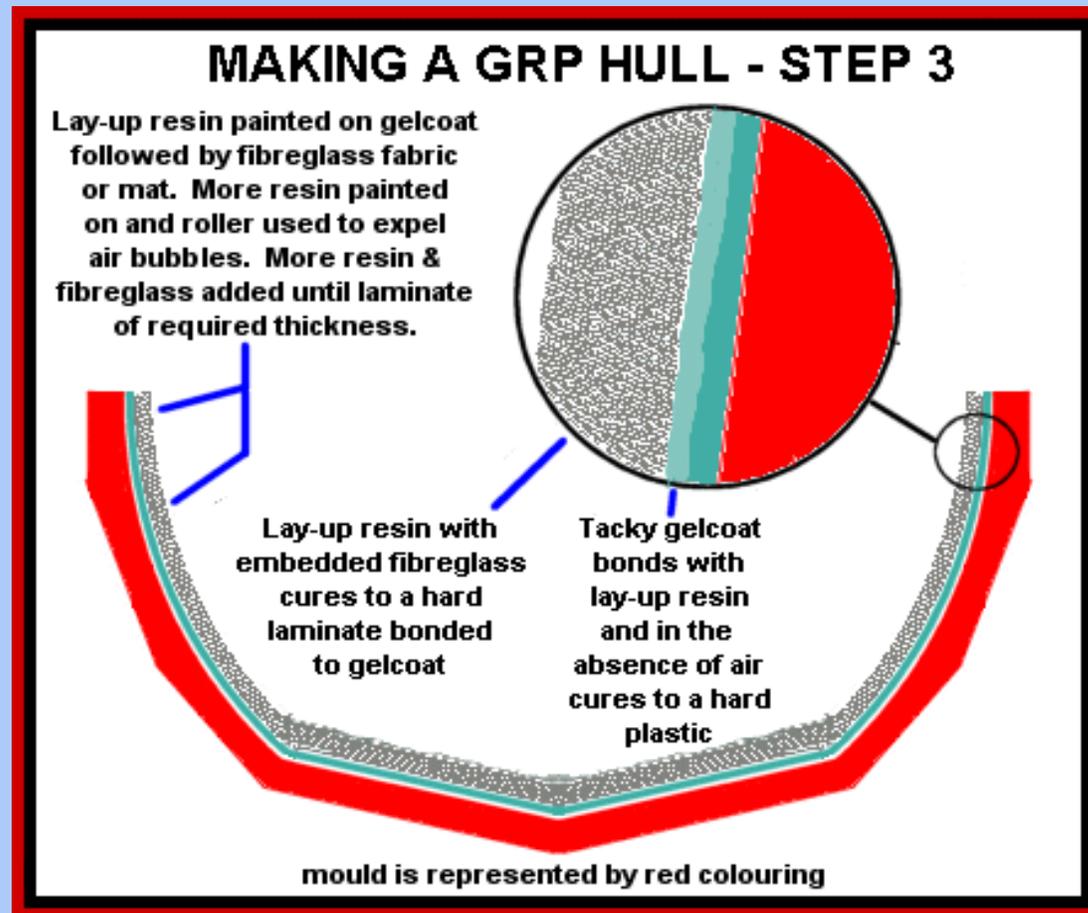
- 3M: [http://solutions.3m.co.uk/wps/portal/3M/en\\_GB/MarineSolutions/MarineSupplies/ApplicationProcesses/CleaningAndRestoration/](http://solutions.3m.co.uk/wps/portal/3M/en_GB/MarineSolutions/MarineSupplies/ApplicationProcesses/CleaningAndRestoration/)
- Shurhold: <https://shurhold.com/articles/marine/>
- Deckhand Detailing: <https://www.deckhanddetailing.com/articles>
- Aurora Boat Care Products: <https://www.auroramarine.com/store/products-inflatable/>

# Gelcoat - often just 0.5mm thick



**GRP** - Glassfibre Reinforced Plastic - glass strands

**FRP** - Fibre Reinforced Plastic - Kevlar, carbon fibre, etc.



# The gelcoat surface

- The very thin gelcoat gives a fibreglass boat its glossy finish but has to put up with all the knocks of everyday marine life, as well as the ravages of time and the elements.
- This slightly porous surface is stained by minerals and pollutants in the water, air borne pollution, fuel spillages and general wear and tear, much of which penetrates the surface.
- Gelcoat becomes dull and faded from weathering and the effects of the sun's rays - this is oxidation

# Gelcoat is easily damaged

- Regularly and/or harshly compounded gelcoat will be abraded and worn away



# Oxidation

- Oxidation is caused by a combination of exposure to the elements and age.
- Oxygen and water react on the surface to break down the top layer which then allows harsh UV rays to cause further damage.
- As gelcoat ages, it becomes porous, and the more porous it becomes, the more easily it stains, the worse it looks, and the harder it is to clean.
- Shows as a dull chalky, weathered, discoloured, faded surface



# Painted boats

- Look for signs a boat is painted
  - gaps around fittings
  - scratches
  - peeling
  - too shiny for its age!
- Try to find out the type of paint - Awlgrip, Alexseal, Imron, Perfection, Brightside?
- Test every product on an inconspicuous area first
- Be very careful with any abrasives
- It is possible for a professional to carefully polish out scratches
- Be gentle!
- Use paint manufacturer's recommended care products such as Awlcare, Awlwash, etc.
- Wash down regularly with a gentle soap, rinse well and dry off

# What not to use/do!

# 10 deadly sins of boat cleaning - Pt. 1.

**#1 – Dish Soap:** Not as gentle as it seems, it can strip a boat's wax or degrade the waterproofing on marine fabrics.

**#2 – Windex:** Marine windows and mirrors are often made of plastic, not glass. Windex and other glass cleaners contain ammonia which is great for glass, but can cause plastic to yellow and crack.

**#3 – Magic Erasers (Mr. Clean et al):** Not very soft, they will leave scratches on a boat's fragile plastic surfaces and Isinglass windows. Use only on non-skid deck.

**#4 – Pledge:** Great on wood but not on clear vinyl like Isinglass. It contains solvents that remove the plasticizers from plastics - the material can become brittle and yellow.

**#5 – Hatches & Windows:** Before starting check they are closed, filling the interior of the boat with water is messy! Also check water and fuel filler caps are tightly closed.

# 10 deadly sins of boat cleaning - Pt.2.

**#6 – Soft Scrub/Bleach:** A harsh abrasive cleanser may remove scuffs and stains but it's too abrasive on gelcoat. Bleach-based products tend to discolor fabrics and break down their integrity.

**#7 – Boat products:** Use products specifically designed for boat surfaces (not cars) and the marine environment.

**#8 – Plan ahead:** Clean all the dirt, stains and marks away before you start polishing.

**#9 – Limited Storage:** Don't waste limited space onboard with a vast selection of cleaning products. Find one that works for each type of stain, and reduce costs at the same time.

**#10 – Procrastination and Neglect:** Dirt build-up can quickly damage your boat, and will reduce the value over time and make maintaining it harder. Keep it clean - a quick wash down after every trip will make a huge difference.

# Scotchbrite pads and magic erasers

- If you wouldn't use them on your car, don't use them on your gelcoat...
- There are better non-abrasive alternatives



There is no magic  
product that does it all!

# Many products claim they do... but

- Different stains require different products to remove them
  - Brown staining requires an acidic cleaner
  - Exhaust stains require a solvent
- Toilet bowl cleaner, muriatic acid, and wire wool damage gelcoat
- An abrasive cleaner which is too harsh, will scratch gelcoat
- Different surfaces require different products
  - a rust stain remover will often damage aluminum
- Polishes developed for the auto industry can't cope with the saltwater environment
- Products such as Poliglow and Vertglas leave a coating which unless renewed annually, will start to peel off and turn patchy - they have to be wet-sanded off!



# It sounds wonderful but...

- Nano-technology coatings sound sexy and look fantastic
- They are extremely expensive compared to polishes and waxes
  - starting at \$699 for a small car in Calgary...
- They have to be professionally applied, and maintained after 18-36 months
- They are only as good as the surface they are applied over
- And you still have to wash it every two weeks!



# How to clean

# How to clean:

- Make a plan!
- Start at the top
- Remove canvas covers and put to one side where they won't get dirtier.
- Read the label on the bottle(s) of products
- If the product labels says wet/rinse the boat first, do so, otherwise leave it dry - some products are neutralised by water, or diluted so much they don't work effectively



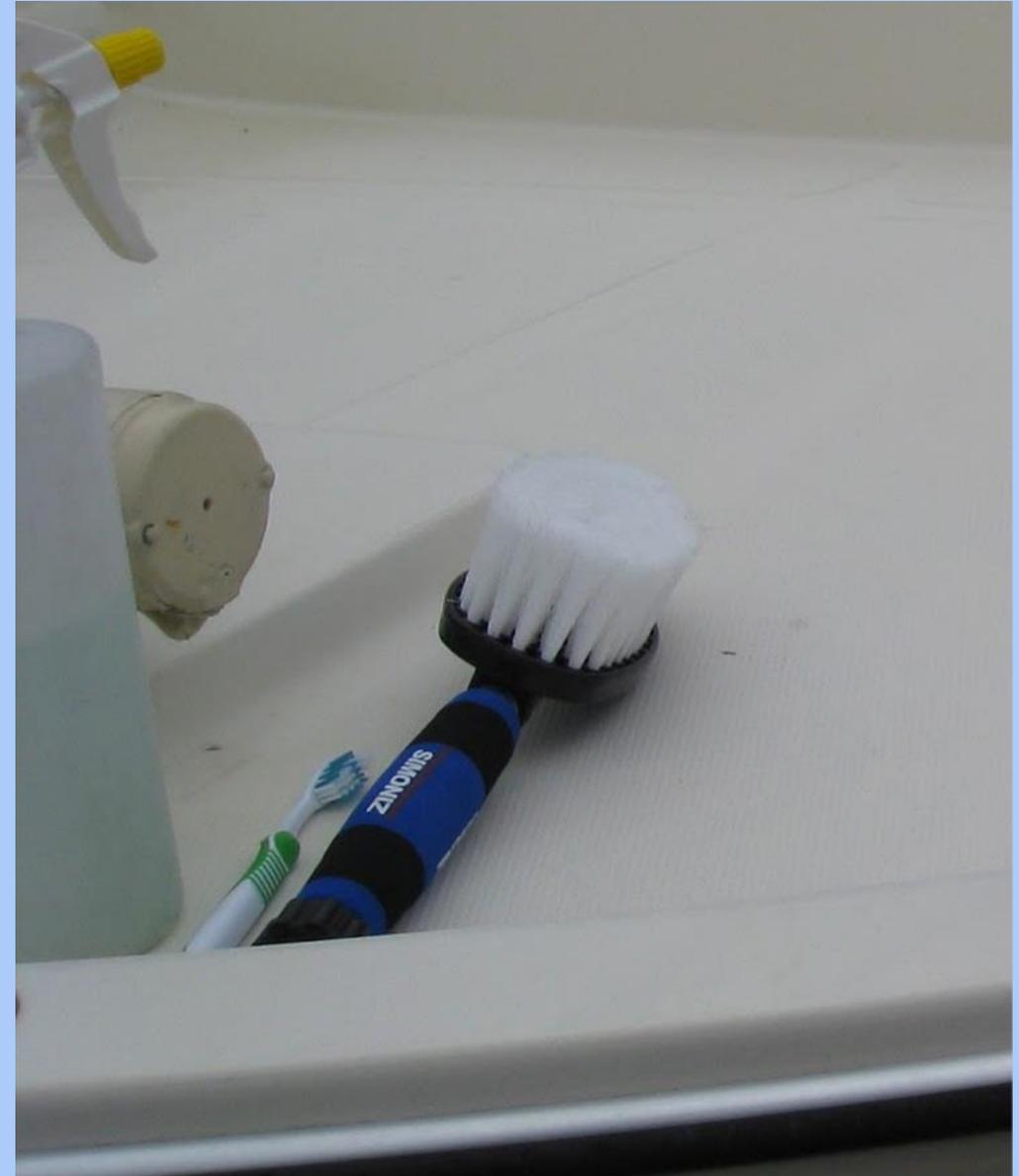
# How to clean:

- Have your hose and nozzle ready, with the water turned on
- Avoid spraying water over electronics.
- In extreme cases, you may want to start with a gentle pressure wash. Beware of too much pressure which can rip off decals and caulking



# How to clean:

- Use a boat soap or specialist cleaner to scrub down the whole boat
- Use a **soft** brush and a toothbrush for tight corners, around fittings, into corners and in seams and joints.
- DON'T RINSE the soap off immediately - GIVE THE SUDS TIME TO WORK
- Clean away algae and slime to find the stains underneath
- To remove stains, spray a cleaning product onto the boat surfaces and scrub over the sprayed area.



# How to clean:

- Open all lockers and clean around the lip – if it's empty clean inside it too.
- Make sure you hose all the dirt and suds off. Don't allow it to dry out otherwise you'll have to scrub it whilst rinsing.
- If there is any weed immediately above the waterline, remove this with the help of the toothbrush.
- Sliding windows have channels which accumulate dirt and debris. Hose this out as you clean, otherwise it will only wash or drip out later - keep hosing until all the particles are gone



# Stain removal

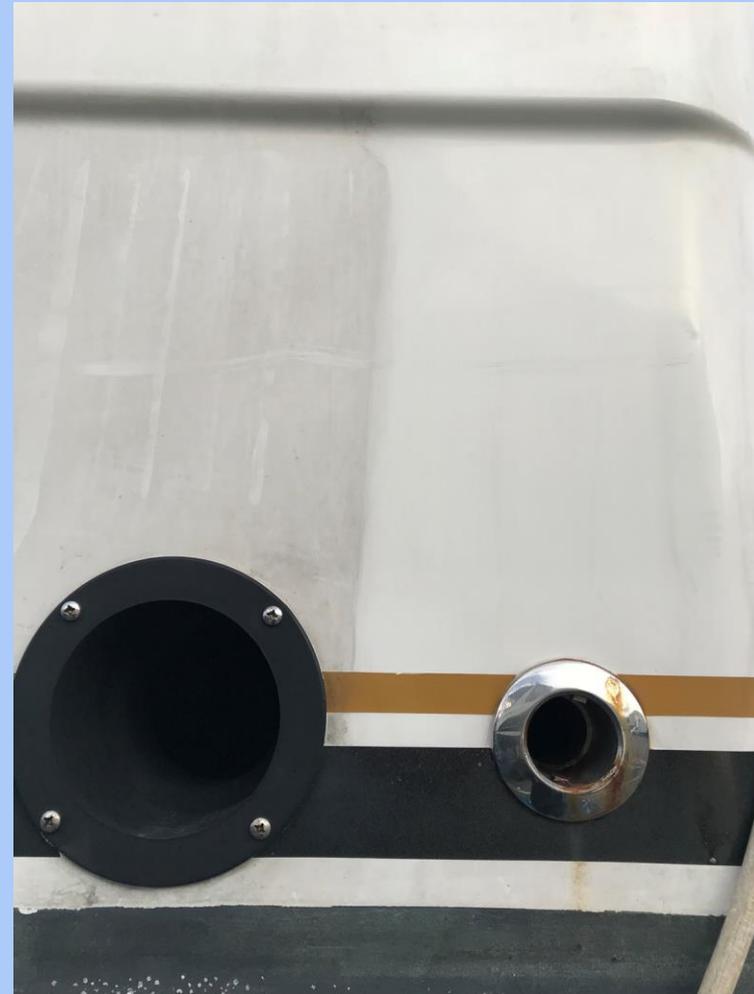
# Brown bow stains and rust marks:

- Use a specialist product such as Wash Safe's Rust Off
- Spray or paint it on
- Avoid getting it on your skin or eyes; keep it away from coated glasses lens
- Allow it time to work
- Rinse off
- Use on stainless steel to remove rust stains too





# Exhaust stains



# Stainless Steel

- Use a rust remover
- Light scratches can be buffed out by professionals
- Polish and protect with a product such as Peek or Flitz
- Rinse down after immersion in salt water, and chamois dry



# Sealing & Polishing

# Sealing and Polishing 1

- **Do not start polishing until all cleaning is complete and all marks and stains have been removed.**
- If the gelcoat is oxidized or lightly scratched you will need to compound it with a cleaner wax, or a fibreglass restorer or similar, depending upon the severity of the damage.
- If necessary a heavy duty compounding may be required - at this stage you may want to hire a professional!
- Use a wool pad for this process.



# Sealing and Polishing 2

- Use an electric polisher - rent or buy a Makita or Hitachi machine for around \$250- 270
- Don't waste your money on cheap orbital polishers



# Sealing and Polishing 3

- Keep the speed on '2' to avoid burning
- Keep the pad flat on the surface
- Work an area between your waist and top of your head, and up to 3ft wide - stretching further is very tiring and less control over the machine - these machines weigh 4kg
- Keep the power cord out of the way!
- Do not use too much polish
- Leave an 'edge' around the area so you know where the next section starts
- You cannot polish in the rain!
- There is no rush...



# Sealing and Polishing 2

- With a rag wipe the polish over a small area 3ft x 3ft maximum - do not use too much.

OR

- Apply the polish to the buffing pad
- Spread quickly and evenly over the area with buffer set at '2' on the dial.
- Continue buffing to an even, dull haze.
- Allow to dry and then polish it off by hand with a microfibre towel. Wipe over the area to ensure all the polish has been removed. Use the cloth in creases and seams to remove any residue.
- Any light marks remaining following cleaning will disappear as the polish is applied.

# Access?

- Before you start work out how you are going to reach each part of the boat



Access?



# Windows & teak

# Window cleaning

## ■ Materials

- Roll vinyl - the least expensive but more flexible clear film used for an enclosure - 20 and 30 gauge
- Crystal Clear - roll vinyl pressed and polished for better clarity - 40 gauge
- Isinglass/Stratoglass - has a polymer coating to make it more resistant to scratches and UV damage - 40 gauge

## ■ Wash off any dirt, salt and particles

## ■ Spray on a cleaner such as Imar's and wipe off with a soft, clean rag. Then polish surface with another clean rag

## ■ Protect with Imar's Stratoglass Protective Polish



# Teak cleaning

- Use a product such as Te-Ka and follow the instructions on the bottle
- Scrub across the grain
- Rinse well and ensure all dirt and product is rinsed out of scuppers and off the hull sides



# PVC, hypalon and vinyl

# PVC, hypalon and vinyl cleaning

- Use a cleaner such as 3M's Sharpshooter, Z-Care, or Aurora's Inflatable Boat Cleaner and Speed Clean with a wet magic eraser
- Rinse well after cleaning
- Protect with Aurora's Poly Guard



# PVC, hypalon and vinyl cleaning

Before



# PVC, hypalon and vinyl cleaning

After



# PVC, hypalon and vinyl cleaning

Vinyl cushion before & after



# What to look for when employing a boat cleaning company?

- Are they an established company? Are they full-time? Do they operate all year?
- Website? Testimonials? Insurance? WCB coverage?
- Can they give you an estimate? If it's too cheap - why?
- Ask them what their process is? If they do not mention washing the boat before polishing it, they're not for you!
- Ask them how they will clean Stratoglass/vinyl windows
- How do they want you to pay? Do they require a deposit?
- Do they warranty their work? Will they correct any damages?
- Afterwards, if you're pleased with their work, recommend them to other boat owners!



Any questions?

Please stop by booth 54 to 56 on the  
Upper Concourse Level

