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## **PURPOSE**

This section provides information on the Surface preparation of fibreglass – new and old. Removal of release agents, and filling imperfections.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Fibreglass, polyester reinforced with chopped or woven glass fibre, is used extensively in the boat building industry. A well-maintained fibreglass boat, in the absence of osmotic blistering can last a long time. In all cases, correct surface preparation is essential for optimum performance.

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## **GENERAL ASPECTS**

### **New Fibreglass**

In the case of newly made fibreglass boats, mould release agents are used by manufacturers to remove fibreglass hulls from moulds. The presence of mould release agents or grease is indicated if water forms droplets on the hull instead of an even film. These contaminants are detrimental to the adhesion of a coating system. They must be removed prior to any other surface preparation using a suitable wax and grease remover.

### **Old Fibreglass**

The removal of all oil, grease, fat and other contaminants is essential prior to any other surface preparation. In most cases, the existing coating system will need to be removed entirely to ensure a sound base for the new system.

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## **SURFACE PREPARATION**

To ensure good adhesion and long term performance of any coating for fibreglass, it is essential that the correct type of surface preparation is carried out. The removal of chemicals, oil, grease and fat must be completed before any other preparation work commences.

### **Removal of Release Agents**

The mould release agents and other contaminants can be removed by degreasing, using commercially available biodegradable degreasing solution. After cleaning, the surface should be flushed thoroughly with copious quantities of clean, fresh water. If the water spreads evenly over the surface of the hull the surface is clean.

### **Filling Imperfections**

Imperfections should be addressed using the following method:

- Abrade the surface thoroughly to a dull matt finish with P80 grit paper, wash with clean, fresh water.
- Prime the surface. Allow to dry. Refer to relevant data sheets.
- Fill the primed imperfections with SeaPro EFC (epoxy fairing compound) to remove the imperfection.
- Sand the SeaPro EFC (epoxy fairing compound) to give a smooth, even finish.
- Overcoat with the appropriate Primer or Undercoat.

### **Abrasive Blast Cleaning**

The surface of the fibreglass hull can be sweep blasted using a non-metallic grit such as ilmenite, bicarbonate soda or garnet. The surface should be washed clean after blasting using clean, fresh water to remove any dust or loose materials. The dust and spent abrasive must be thoroughly removed after blasting. Care must be taken to avoid damage to or removal of gelcoat. Where gelcoat is damaged or removed a high build epoxy coating system must be used to protect hulls from osmosis.



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132 101  
[www.wattylpc.com](http://www.wattylpc.com)**

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0800 735 551  
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