



Ask Dr. Gel

by Dave Weakley



Dave Weakley is the owner of American Boat Restoration and has been keeping boaters afloat in fine trim and good repair for over 40 years.

“Email me or call me with your questions! I’ll be happy to help you out”

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Looking to a Brighter 2021

The boating season of 2020 is now history! It’s a year we don’t want to do over. Our hearts and prayers go to those that were affected by Covid-19. Fortunately we had our boats. Boating was certainly a good way to socially distance this year. We hope you all had a good season!

It’s never too early to think about plans for 2021. Now is the perfect time to get your boat repaired! Avoid the repair & service rush in the Spring! A rush is like a packed restaurant on a Saturday night. Are you getting the best service?

You can keep your boat in good condition with a little TLC and routine maintenance. Letting it go can be costly. Off season is the best time to address issues. We have seen many boats that are pristine and well maintained and those that are pretty disgusting. It’s worth it to keep your investment nice especially if you are trading it in or selling it.

The four photos here show some steps of a repair. This boat owner wants to keep his boat in good condition. He contacted me and signed up to take a gelcoat repair class so he could learn how to do the needed repairs on his own boat under my direction. He is just one of many boat owners who have taken my repair class. Once the skill is learned repairs can be done as they are needed so there is not a nick here and a gash there all over the boat.

It’s really always best to get proper training before attempting any repairs! There are videos on UTube and the internet showing how to do gelcoat repairs but most have very bad and often missing information. Some are actually laughable. Avoid botched repairs and don’t waste your time and money on Gelcoat Repair Kits, Gel Paste or Pre-Vals. I even cannot do a successful repair using repair kits! Avoid what I call “snake oils”! Shown is a beautiful boat with a “solution” the owner applied hoping to make it shiny again. Within

a very short period of time the owner realized what a mistake he made. The “solution” started to turn a whitish grey. Now to get it off it will require careful sanding. This is going to be a major undertaking and expensive! There is a lot of crap solutions on the market so be careful. Call a professional before applying any solution on your gelcoat. It may cost you thousands to remove it!

Before a repair is started there’s a lot to think about and examine. What was the cause of the damage? what is the extent of it? Sometimes the cause is obvious for example impact damage caused when a jet ski smashed into it. True repair I did. In other situations the cause of damage is not so clear. There could be underlying circumstances. For example; structural issues causing gelcoat and fiberglass cracks, improperly installed header panels causing pressure on the inside of the hull causing cracks on the outside hull and or deck gelcoat surface. There are airvoids (like bubbles that pop or crack). These issues are caused by improper fiberglass and resin layup at the manufacturing plant, gelcoat cracks, especially notable in corners or curves due to excessively thick sprayed gelcoat while building the boat, osmotic blisters, rotted core materials, the manufacturer tech who uses too long of a screw to install upholstery for example. All of these damages and more have a story behind them. They each require specific repair techniques along with the proper materials to repair and most importantly the power of knowledge of how to do a successful repair.

Contact me if you’d like to learn more!

Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays to all! Best wishes for a Healthy & Joyful New Year! From our boat to yours!
“Dr Gel” & Dee



1. Damage owner wanted to repair includes previously done failed. “patch” in which marine tech was used.
2. Damage ground out ready to be filled with proper fillers.
3. Filled, sanded and prepped for gelcoat.
4. Successful repair completed.
5. “Snake Oil” solution failure! Now needs removing.