FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT GELCOAT

What is Gelcoat?

Our gelcoat is a polyester resin designed as an in-mold coating to give a smooth, water resistant, lightfast, and durable finish to a fiberglass part. When sprayed into a mold and backed up with a fiberglass laminate, gelcoat will yield a superior finish, duplicating the mold surface. Gelcoat is not paint. It must be 15-20 mils thick to cure as the pigments and fillers block the crosslinking between the catalyst and the resin. A thin film will not cure and that can cause a project to completely fail.

Should I re-gelcoat or should I paint?

Either method is acceptable for refinishing a fiberglass part.

Paint is the quicker solution and it offers better weathering properties. Gelcoat is more durable due to the thicker film. Gelcoat is also easier to apply for the novice. However, it is quite labor intensive as it will require wet sanding and polishing to achieve a glossy finish. In addition, gelcoat bonds well to fiberglass because it is the same polyester base as your boat, R.V., etc. The greatest advantage to using gelcoat for your repair or entire re-spray is that should you need to repair it again, it is much easier to spot repair than paint.

Can I gelcoat over paint?

No – remove Paint by stripping or sanding and leave an 80 grit tooth on the fiberglass before rolling or spraying your gelcoat repair.

Can gelcoat be rolled or do I have to spray it?

For a smooth and glossy appearance plan to spray with a pressure pot or gravity feed cup gun. For non-cosmetic surfaces such as a boat bilge, floor, cabin top, or countertop, rolling on a thick film will give a uniformly textured surface known as orange peel.

Why does my gelcoat stay tacky?

Most gelcoat systems are *air inhibited* and a complete cure will still have a tacky surface. This is definitely desirable for secondary bonding.

How do I prevent a tacky surface?

The old-school method of adding a surfacing agent works well if you know for certain that it is the final application. The wax in the surfacing agent comes to the surface during cure and seals it from the air.

Another method is to spray PVA(polyvinyl alcohol) onto the gelled surface and it quickly dries to a cellophane-like coating, sealing your film thickness from air. After full cure, it can be washed off with water.

The most popular technique is to use an additive that is a blending resin, most often referred to as a patch booster. It is clear and promoted to cure with a gelcoat to a tack-free finish. Our Duratec High Gloss Additive lowers viscosity making the mixture easier to spray and reduced orange peel. That means that it takes less sanding to achieve that Class A finish.