

BOAT NAME REMOVALS

The first step in removing lettering and/or graphics from your boat is to determine what you're dealing with. Determine what the lettering is made of and determine that the surface is made of. This will help avoid costly errors and possible cause permanent damage to your boat. If you are not sure about compatibility of a particular solvent with the surface, spot test in an inconspicuous area first.

Vinyl lettering:

Peel up edge and pull from surface. A heat gun, hair dryer or in some cases the heat from the sun can help this process. Sometimes pulling back on itself or at small angle to the surface can help bring the adhesive with the film. Remove excess adhesive with Goof-Off product or other similar adhesive removal solvents.

After the lettering is removed, take this opportunity to polish the surface thoroughly, which cannot be done with lettering in place. Power buff the surface with a wax less polishing compound. The compound should also not contain Teflon; Silicones as this can affect the adhesion of the new name.

Painted Lettering

Most lettering is one-part enamel and most hull surfaces are gel coat. If that is the case, acetone and rubbing compound mixture used with a power buffer can take the lettering off. This will also polish the gel coat at the same time. This method is best when the paint is worn thin. If the paint is newer and thicker it is best to soften the paint with an acetone saturated pad of paper towels first, then while the paint is still soft quickly scrape the paint off with a razor-blade scraper. It is important to round the corners of the razor blade first with sand paper as to not scratch the gel coat. This should take off a majority of the paint. The power buffer will get the small ruminant and polish the surface to a mirror finish.

It is best when using compounds to use high-end professional products that do not contain waxes or silicones. The idea is to get a mirror finish without waxes, Teflon, silicones etc. These products are disguising the lack of a true mirror finish. Besides, with these contaminants, the new name won't adhere as well or last as long.

No matter what method used to remove lettering from your boat, protective/safety gear is a must. Gloves must be worn because the solvents can be carcinogenic, cause liver damage, skin damage etc. Keep in mind that rubber gloves will not protect you from acetone, lacquer thinner, MEK, and various other chemicals. The molecules of the solvents are smaller than the mesh of the membrane of the glove and will immediately permeate right through. A 4-H glove or Butyl glove can protect you from the a fore mentioned chemicals. A respirator is also strongly recommended.

Another method for removing enamel from gel coat is spraying Easy-Off oven cleaner on the lettering. Mask off any painted or varnished surfaces, also mask the "drip" areas. The oven cleaner will bubble the paint in a few minutes. Before the paint starts to drip, scrape the letter with a razor blade scraper. Wipe off the excess. You will notice this turned the gel coat yellow. Don't panic! Wipe the entire area with distilled vinegar. This will turn the gel coat back to it's original white. Do not use this method on colored gel coats or painted hulls such as Hatteras which has an Imron surface. The next step is to polish to high gloss.

A third method for removing paint from gel coat, and in some cases, a linear polyurethane surface, is to wet sand the lettering from the surface. Usually start with a 600 grit, in some cases 400 in spot areas. Then sand with 800, then 1000, 1200, 1500, and finally finish off with 2000 grit. Do the entire process using plenty of water and a sand block in circular motions. The hard part about this method besides finding the elbow-grease is finding the sandpaper. Most hardware or home supply stores do not carry sand paper this fine. You will need to find it at a marine supply store or auto-body supply shops.