

DUDLEY DIX YACHT DESIGN

Recipe for Epoxy Clean-up

All of us who have worked with epoxies have experienced the problems of cleaning resin off our skin, turning the epoxy into chewing gum in normal soap or drying out the skin if using solvents. The Gougeon Brothers have been around this problem longer than most and presented this information in the Fall 1992 issue of their "Epoxyworks".

If you need a quick cleaning solution, use vinegar. It will dissolve epoxy that has not yet hardened.

Homemade hand soap

This is a formula for homemade resin-removing hand soap that we have used around our shops for the last few years. You can make it in the kitchen blender from common household supplies. The beauty of this stuff is that it's easy on you, easy to make and easy to clean up. This is a recipe sure to please the whole family. Percentages are provided so you can easily customize batch sizes for a small job or a big work crew.

Ingredients:

6 ounces (35.7%) liquid dish soap (Dawn, Joy, etc.)
4 ounces (21.1%) vegetable oil (corn, canola, peanut or extra virgin olive oil)
5 ounces (30.0%) shortening (lard, Crisco...)
1 ounce (7.2%) Corn meal (for grit)
Dash of water (5.2 %) water (to "taste")

Fully blend the ingredients, using a mixer at medium speed.

The formula was developed by one of our chemists, when he decided he did not like the various soaps available. He reasoned that the detergent would act on the hardeners and the oil and shortening would emulsify the epoxy resin and help to reduce skin dryness. The cornmeal helps on hard-to-clean slightly cured epoxy. The water is added to bring the stuff to the right consistency.

Don't make huge batches of this because it can go rancid. If the mix is left to stand for a very long time, it will separate. You can store the soap in the fridge if you like cold soap, but make sure that no one mistakes it for a dessert topping.

We have a tub of this mixture at the wash-up sinks in our plant. On some big lay-up jobs, our folks will set up a washing station at the work site. This is simply a tub of soap and a large pail of water for rinsing. The rinse water looks pretty bad by the end of the shift, but the arrangement does help our folks stay clean.

Waterless skin cleaners may dissolve the resin/hardener mix, but some of it remains on the skin along with the cleaner when you wipe it off with a paper towel. You must rinse with water to remove residue left behind. We recommend our home-brew as an effective soap, and if you use the rinse bucket, it's every bit as easy to use in a garage or shop without running water.

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