

VARNISHING HINTS

Proper varnishing is an art developed over years off experience. The following are a few suggestions to help the do-it-yourselfer do the best job possible with the tools available. the suggestions are aimed at final coats of varnish or when adding a clean-up coat to a previously refinished hull.

MATERIAL

The best sandpaper for sanding a varnished surface in preparation for revarnishing is 180 grit lubricilibrade (available Cdn Tire). It is a non-clogging, fast cutting paper.

Varnish should be a high quality marine varnish to help protect against ultra violet rays from the sun. Varnishes which work well are Benjamin Moore Sunbar and Petit's varnish. Never but never use urethane (plastic) on a wooden boat.

The brush should be a varnish brush with fine bristles. New brushes contain dust and loose bristles. Before use on final varnishing, a brush should be used and cleaned a number of times.

METHOD

Surface preparation is most important. Sand the surface with lubricilibrade paper until it is smooth to the touch. Fully cured varnish (more than a few weeks old) will not clog the sandpaper. For relatively new coats of varnish, some clogging may be experienced.

After hand sanding, vacuum the surface to remove dust. Wipe with a lint free cloth. dampen a dust free cloth with acetone and quickly wipe the area again. This will improve the bonding of the varnish. Be careful not to use too much acetone. If overused, the old varnish could be lifted off the wood.

Dust is the plague of all varnishing jobs. Time spent controlling dust before you start is time well spent. Assuming that you do not have a dust free varnishing room, the following suggestions may help in establishing the best method in your particular case.

- a) Start preparing the varnishing area a few days in advance.
- b) Minimize air movement in the varnishing area.
- c) If possible, spray down the ceiling, walls and floor with a garden hose spray. repeat this a few times to dislodge and collect loose dust. Regularily wash down the floor. As dust settles, it falls to the floor and is trapped by a wet floor. Keeping the floor wet is most important.
- d) For varnishing, get a complete suit of lint free clothing. Paper coveralls from the hardware store work fine. Get a lint free hat or covering for your hair. The floor and your body are the main source of dust during varnishing.
- e) Allow the varnish room to settle with a wet floor for at least 12 hours before starting.

f) Just before varnishing, carefully rewet the floor and varnish in rubber boots.

The varnish should be shaken a few days before it is to be used. This will allow time for the bubbles to come out. When varnishing has started, do not wipe the brush on the can to remove excess varnish. This causes air bubbles to be introduced to the varnish which show up on the boat.

Always maintain a wet edge while varnishing. This will ensure a smooth uniform coverage.

GOOD LUCK!

THOMSON'S DIPPY STRIPPING METHOD

- Equipment:** apron, mask, gloves, Cromac 783 liquid stripper, old paint brushes, old style bristle scrub brushes, detergent, putty knives (bent and straight), garden sprayer, empty tin cans, pail of water & wet rag for removing splashes on skin,
pan, pump, hose & switch - available from John Thomson
- Preparation:** weather should be 65 to 75 degrees with no direct sun or wind as stripper is easily evaporated
- Bare hull: remove loose seats, motor, device, oar locks, light, gas tank, dash accessories, floor boards, etc.
- Block up boat and insert tray under device hole
Put on gloves, apron & mask
- First - strip splash rails, gunwhales & deck**
Pour stripper in a tin can (juice can, etc.)
Paint on stripper with paint brush
When varnish is softened, scrub with scrub brush to remove varnish
Repeat if necessary
With rails still wet with stripper, neutralize with detergent and hot water (can be applied with cloth)
Scrub with brush
Rinse with clean water
- Second - strip the interior of the boat**
Pour stripper into hull and tray in sufficient quantity to circulate and maintain pump action
Initially work proceeds on one section of boat at a time about 1/3 or less (the more the people, the larger the area)
Start pump
Flow stripper over area to stripped (varnish should immediately start to bubble and soften). Keep flowing until varnish starts to dissolve
Shut off pump
Scrub area with scrub brush
Flow stripper over area again
Shut off pump and scrub again - use putty knives under ribs to remove debris
Flow with stripper again
(During this time more stripper may be needed to maintain pump action or may need to be changed if it gets to thick - pump back into empty container)
Then onto next area
Repeat
- ***If at this time only this smaller area is to be stripped, proceed with the following steps for that area as the stripper should not be allowed to dry for a long period of time
- Up to this point work can stop for a short period of time and stripper can be allowed to dry, but from this point the boat must be kept wet at all times to avoid staining
- Drain pan of all used stripper (this can be reused as first application for exterior, seats etc.)
Pour in clean stripper

Flow stripper over entire area that has been stripped
or can be applied with paint brush
Scrub with clean brush to remove last traces of varnish
& colour (keep boat wet)
Empty tray
Spray with a solution of hot water and detergent (we used
a garden sprayer with about 1 cup of laundry detergent
filled to the top with straight hot water)
Scrub again making sure to keep boat wet with detergent
solution
Hose down with garden hose
Let dry

Third - strip exterior

Remove tray from under boat
Prop boat up on edge as high as possible (it is best not
to turn boat upside down as the liquid stripper can
seep through the laps and stain the interior)
Pour stripper into tin can
Start at the top - the stripper will run down & soften
the varnish on lower planks
Paint on stripper with paint brush to area to be done
usually about 1/4 to 1/3 of the boat
Let varnish soften and bubble
Putty knives can be used to remove softened varnish
Scrub
Wet again
Scrub again
Repeat if necessary
Proceed to next area
Repeat
Wet entire area that has been stripped with clean stripper
Scrub - keep wet
Spray with detergent solution
Scrub - keep wet
Hose down & let dry

Seats, seat backs and floor boards can be done in the pan with the
flow method, or can be done with the paint brush method

FOR PAINTED BOATS

One extra piece of equipment - old window screens put on top of pan under boat catches the paint peelings

When stripper is first flowed over interior, it will loosen and soften but will not dissolve the paint

Putty knives or something similar are used to remove the paint. It is best to remove as much as possible of this paint to a container or tin can. If it is all allowed to to down the device hole, you could end up with a very gummy mess that will not go through the pump.

When most of the paint is removed, proceed as for varnish

On our first time using this method, it took two of us about 7 hours to strip the interior of a varnished boat. The exterior took two afternoons, as there was paint on top of the varnish. It took about 80 liters of paint stripper.

On a boat that just had varnish inside and outside, it took four of us about 8 hours to strip the whole boat.

On our own second boat which had 4 colours of paint inside, 3 colours of paint plus a layer of tar on the outside, it took two of us a year and a half to strip her. She took about 120 liters of stripper.

It is almost impossible to strip in the winter as a lot of ventilation is needed