

## In Search of Clarity

**M**any of the problems with clear-vinyl windows are actually the result of overzealous cleaning.

“You can quickly ruin a brand-new vinyl window if you’re not careful,” says Eric Kolek, whose family-run canvas business, American Canvas (941/388-3078), has been serving Southwest Florida for more than 20 years. Kolek and other canvas professionals that *PS* spoke with for this article offered these tips to preserving a clean and clear vinyl window. (More tips are available online under “Tools and Techniques,” at [www.practical-sailor.com](http://www.practical-sailor.com).)

- **Rinse** well with a fresh water hose before wiping.
- **Clean** with a mild, environmentally safe soap and a soft cotton cloth (diapers or micro-fiber cloths are good) with straight strokes (no swirls), thoroughly rinse with fresh water, and dry with a soft chamois. Avoid glass cleaners and ammonia-based cleaners such as Windex. Alcohol can also accelerate the loss of the plasticizers. Do NOT use paper towels, brushes, or salt water to clean your dodger windows. Quickly rinse off any beer, suntan lotion, or soft drinks that spill on the vinyl.
- **Protect** windows with a polish that includes a UV blocker and a barrier to keep the chemical plasticizers in and the elements out. Use soft plastic stand-offs to prevent any contact between metal supports and the clear vinyl.



*Eric Kolek of American Canvas in Sarasota, Fla., installs a zipper on a clear-vinyl window for an enclosure on a sportfishing boat.*

.....

- **Store** or roll up windows carefully, and protect both sides with a soft sheet or towel. Rolling a soft towel up with a window will prevent scratching.