

*Ideas to make your paint stripping project as painless as possible.*

- ▶ Use enough tarps to cover the entire area below the boat being stripped before starting. If you try to go on the cheap by using one tarp and repositioning it under each section as you strip, you'll just make a huge mess.
- ▶ Start applying the stripper at the inside of the keel and work your way out to the waterline. This reduces the chance of stripper dripping onto the strippee.
- ▶ Follow the same procedure when scraping, allowing the stripper to fall onto the tarp as you work your way out, so you won't be stepping in the semi-liquified goo you've already scraped from the hull. (This is why you don't want to use one small tarp on multiple sections or you'll wind up stepping on the previously stripped paint.)
- ▶ Start early in the day and check the stripper's progress often. For strippers with 24-hour dwell times, be sure to check it before leaving at the end of the day. Contrary to some product instructions, overnight is just too long in some cases and may allow the partially removed paint (and stripper) to re-harden, making removal more difficult (although some can be sprayed with water to make removal a bit easier in such cases). Most of the products tested seemed to do the lion's share of their work within four to six hours of application.
- ▶ Finally, do not exceed the manufacturer's recommend dwell times—doing so can result in gelcoat damage. In fact, it's best to confirm dwell times for your particular situation by applying it to a test area first.