

CLEANING

Prior to any repairs, it is necessary to remove foreign material which may contribute to poor adhesion in the repair and/or electrical problems. Routine cleaning is recommended as a preventative maintenance measure. Two methods have been employed in cleaning Exel Composites FRP; one method involves a solvent wipe technique and the other method utilises steam cleaning.

Solvent Wiping

This method is popular because it does not rely on the accessibility of a steam line; for many Exel Composites shapes already in service, this is the only practical technique. In this procedure, the FRP shape should be wiped using a non-abrasive cloth and a solvent such as acetone (highly flammable). The cloth may require repeated soaking in these solvents as they evaporate readily (do not use gasoline). Do not wipe surfaces to be adhesively bonded with a solvent dampened cloth (see pg. 10 "Making the Adhesive Joint").

Note: Do not immerse Exel Composites FRP in solvents as prolonged soaking may cause damage.

Caution: Most solvents are flammable and the vapours can be harmful; do not apply by spraying.

Abrasive cloths may ultimately be required for complete cleaning. If these are used, some surface repair may be required prior to returning the part to service.

Steam Cleaning

The following procedure should be followed if the part is to be cleaned by steam:

1. The steam heat temperature should not exceed 250°F; the pressure should be below 85 psi.
2. For steam cleaning, elevate one end of the Exel Composites shape whenever possible; this permits drainage for the dirt and condensed water. Do not turn the steam jet directly onto any hose assembly (as in booms) for an extended period; this may cause hose damage.
3. Do not apply the steam jet directly to any adhesive joints as this may loosen the joints resulting in erroneous electrical readings or other problems.
4. Permit the FRP shape to dry for 24 hours after steam cleaning as the areas to be repaired must be dry.
5. Use the Solvent Wiping procedure for difficult substances such as road tar.

Inspection

Part of the cleaning procedure must be a thorough inspection of the FRP shape. Ruptures to the surface can be caused by bolts, tools, or other items striking the part. Minor impacts normally have a minimal effect on the electrical and/or mechanical properties of the structural shape, but may cause cosmetic problems.

If any question on the performance of the FRP exists, contact Exel Composites Customer Service Department on (03) 8727 9600.