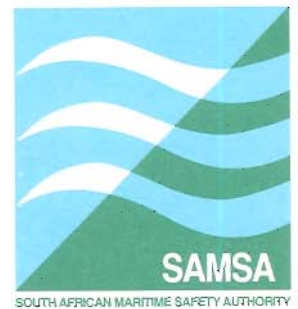


# South African Maritime Safety Authority



Ref: SM 6/6/1

Date: 20 August 2001

## MARINE NOTICE NO. 21 OF 2001

TO ALL SOUTH AFRICAN BOAT OWNERS AND PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

### WOODEN VESSELS SHEATHED IN GLASS FIBRE

It has become a practice amongst certain owners of wooden vessels to cover the hulls of their vessels with glass fibre, in effect sheathing the hull with this material. There are several reasons for this practice, the main reason being to effectively caulk the butts and seams of the planking: the practice is prevalent in the case of old wooden boats where, with the passage of time, the butts and seams have been opened by repeated caulking. There would appear to be no good reason to sheath a new vessel planked in wood.

Sheathing wooden vessels with glass fibre can only be considered as an alternative to caulking, and not as an alternative for strengthening a vessel's hull, which should be provided by the planking and associated frames. Sheathing, therefore, cannot be accepted as a permanent solution to the problem of deteriorating hull integrity, as the wood and nails continue to deteriorate under the glass fibre; the wooden structure is given to flexing, causing the glass fibre to detach from the hull; and the glass fibre traps fresh water leaking through cover boards and stanchions, further encouraging wood rot.

It should be borne in mind that a surveyor inspecting a wooden vessel sheathed in glass fibre cannot readily ascertain the condition of the hull beneath the glass fibre and may therefore require the glass fibre to be removed in places to allow proper inspection, particular of those places where the glass fibre has detached from the hull and where fresh water can be trapped and cause rot.

Given the problems, and the dangers, associated with the practice described in this Notice, owners of affected vessels are advised that extension of the 12 monthly slipping period for hull surveys will be allowed only in exceptional cases and then only for a maximum period of one month.

**B R WATT**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

#### Safe Ships - Clean Seas

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