



# Kirby Morgan Dive Systems, Inc.®

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## **Maintenance and Repair Bulletin Service Life Recommendation for Fiberglass Shells and Frames/ MK 21 Shell Conversion**

**Products affected by POLICY:** Primarily older SL 17A/B Helmet Shells (P/N 520-065) and older KMB 18 BandMask® frames (P/N 520-055).

Not accepting requests for MK 21 conversions to SL 17s.

**Products affected by Service Life Limit:** Primarily older 17A/B Helmet Shells (P/N 520-065), older KMB 18 Band mask frames (P/N 520-055), Also- all Kirby Morgan fiberglass helmet shells, fiberglass yokes and fiberglass band mask frames.

**New POLICY now in effect:** Kirby Morgan will not be offering the conversion of MK21 Helmet shells (P/N 520-067), into SL 17A/B shells (P/N 520-065). One of the reasons for this: The work required for the conversion, plus other repairs required along with conversions on these units, makes this an economically unfeasible procedure.

**NOTICE re. old fiberglass:** Kirby Morgan began producing SL 17A/B helmets in **1976**, and KMB 18 Band Masks in **1977**. We are seeing shells & frames made on or around these original manufacture dates come in for repair. These shells & frames are currently 37/36 years old and have reached the end of their service lives.

Because Kirby Morgan has been seeing an increase of fiberglass shells and frames coming in that have been in service for twenty five years or longer (in very poor, un-repairable condition), it is necessary to call attention to the fact that, with age and exposure to the elements, fiberglass can lose its integrity, turn brittle and become difficult or impossible to work with. Attempted repairs to such units will be short term at best, and worst, inadequate and dangerous. Repairs often will not adhere well to aged, brittle, severely worn or otherwise compromised fiberglass. The port retainer threaded inserts and the areas surrounding are of special concern regarding brittleness, as the weakened material usually prohibits repairs / insert replacement in this critical area.

**Kirby Morgan recommends that fiberglass shells and frames in service for twenty five or more years (sometimes fewer depending on condition) be replaced.** Because of the obvious safety issues in regards to the integrity of underwater life support equipment, we feel these units have reached the end of their service life. Special circumstances, e.g. long term storage and/or infrequent use, may be exceptions- to be determined by the factory or in some cases, technicians that are factory trained & certified in advanced fiberglass inspection & repair.

*Please contact your local KMDSI dealer or e-mail sales@kirbymorgan.com for more information.*

