



Kirby Morgan Dive Systems, Inc.®

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Safety Bulletin #1 of 2007. March 1, 2007 Helmet Shell Repair Caution

A KMDSI dealer recently received three SL-17B helmet shells for insert repair. Upon receipt it was noticed that the shells had been painted. Because there was no documentation of previous repair or refinishing, the dealer informed the customer that no work could be done until all the paint had been removed and a complete inspection performed.

A visual inspection inside of all three helmets showed an obvious irregular finish around the regulator mount area. Once the paint was removed around the irregular area it was noticed that the whole lower section of the helmet had been previously removed and replaced with non-laminate filler.



This is how the three stripped helmets appeared when they were received by the repair facility.

It was obvious that someone had performed extensive modifications to the helmets for some other use by completely changing the front end of the helmets. They then attempted to put the helmets back into their original configuration as SuperLite 17B's.

The company that purchased these used helmets was unaware that the helmets had been extensively modified, patched and painted to look as if original. The company assumed that they were in good condition especially because they had a good external finish.

These three helmets may not be the only ones that have been modified in this potentially dangerous way. Anyone noticing an irregular finish on the inside around the regulator mount as shown in the pictures, should not use the helmet and should immediately contact a KMDSI dealer or KMDSI. The helmets in question all came from the UK, however because of the international nature of commercial diving all users should use caution and carefully check any previously acquired used helmets.



The interior of one of the painted helmets shows obvious sub-standard repair work.

Often Kirby Morgan helmets are painted by persons with good intentions, but who do not understand that when it comes time to replace an insert or repair fiberglass damage, all of the paint must be removed. This removal requires sanding, because chemical strippers will de-laminate the fiberglass. Sanding alone usually requires at least 2-3 hours work, thus greatly increasing the repair cost.



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KMDSI has always discouraged painting of fiberglass helmets because there is no way of telling what lies beneath the finish. Refinishing should only be done by a specifically trained and certified KMDSI fiberglass technician. All repairs should be well documented, including pictures. Certified KMDSI fiberglass repair technicians will only use polyester gel-cote for refinishing and will only perform fiberglass repairs on helmets that have a record of repair, or only after removing any unauthorized coatings and performing a proper inspection.

In this time of high demand for helmets, unscrupulous people may try to sell patched up helmets. Some people even pose as KMDSI repair technicians and try to sell helmets that are outright dangerous. Buyers must beware! Always have the helmet checked out by a certified KMDSI technician before buying.

Please see the training and repair policies listed on the KMDSI and Dive Lab web sites for further information.



The unauthorized paint job on these helmets concealed repairs performed with sub-standard materials.