



## HOW TO SELECT, INSTALL, AND CARE FOR FIBERGLASS BATHWARE

We consider fiberglass bathware a most advantageous product for the do-it-yourselfer with easy installation and a long service life. It won't ever rot, peel or corrode. The one-piece construction assures a water-tight, worry-free fixture that is easy to clean. Several liquid cleaners that do a good job on fiberglass bathware are available. Ask a salesperson to show you one. *NEVER use an abrasive-type cleaning compound as it will scratch the surface causing it to dull.* A good auto cleaner/polish is another fine method of maintaining the original luster of the finish.

When choosing a fiberglass unit, particular attention should be given to the quality of the gel coat finish. If this surface is less than perfect, it could lead to difficult cleaning. Most fiberglass units are structurally strong in both the base and sidewalls and are less likely to be damaged than their counterparts of other materials. We study the construction and finish quality of any line of fiberglass bathware very closely before marketing it.

Fiberglass tub and shower combination units measure a standard 5 feet long and are approximately 6 feet high. They measure about 34 inches deep. Standard sizes for shower stalls are 32", 36", 48" and 60" wide although some other sizes are available, usually on a special order basis. Shower stalls are almost 7 feet tall. Tub units and showers are stocked in white and are available through order to match the colors of most major fixture manufacturers.

If you are intending to use a fiberglass unit in a new home, you will have no problem getting it into the place where it is to be installed as long as you make selection and purchase before the final interior framing is completed. If you are considering the use of a fiberglass unit in a remodel situation as a replacement or addition, you should check the measurements of doorways, hallways, stairwells, and ceiling heights in order to determine whether you will be able to get one in. Remodel units are made which are designed to break down into three or four pieces. One can take the pieces into the bathroom, bolt them back together and use silicone calk to make the joints waterproof.

Framing for use of a fiberglass unit should be made so that a stud is positioned at the front edge of the unit where a nailer flange that is part of the stall can be fastened. Some people prefer to put blocking

between the studs at the top of the unit for nailing the top flange. Otherwise, you can nail only at each stud. When the sheetrock is put up, it will cover these flanges. The area in which the faucet will be mounted should be kept clear of studs and drainage or vent plumbing. Drain fittings are connected to fiberglass units using silicone rubber caulk to make the seal between the drain assembly and the bath ware. Most authorities have recently approved for use a drive-in rubber seal for making the drain-to-pipe connection at showers. Even more recently, many showers are being equipped with a glue-on plastic drain. These simplify the most critical part of a shower installation.

Faucet and shower fittings install the same when used for fiberglass as when they are used for other type fixtures. (See rough-in dimensions in drawings.) There are some holes that have to be cut into the units for faucet handles and trim and for shower arms. These cuts must be measured out very carefully. Cuts can be made with a hole saw or sabre saw. It is a good idea to cover the area surrounding the holes with masking tape as it helps to prevent chipping around the edges of the cuts and also prevents scuffing the gel coat surface from tool rubbing. One must be particularly careful while using tools such as hammers and heavy wrenches around any bathware. When working around a fiberglass unit, an additional hazard is encountered. If a drop cord or open bulb used for temporary lighting is left hanging against or laying on a fiberglass surface, it is likely to melt it. Fiberglass with gel coat finishes can usually be repaired more easily and completely than other types. Since faucets used in tubs and showers are mounted inside of the wall and with the fiberglass one-piece units, they become even more isolated. We recommend that only a good quality valve that has all replaceable parts accessible from the front be considered for use.

Tub combo units and shower stalls are most serviceable when equipped with a good quality door or enclosure. Several styles and price ranges are available in sizes that will fit these units. Check to see whether the stall you are considering is adequately reinforced to support an enclosure. If not, additional framing should be included for this purpose.



## TYPICAL ROUGH-IN DIMENSIONS FOR FIBERGLASS BATHWARE INSTALLATION

