

## **Nubees and experienced RVers RV Basics for Motorhomes, Fifth Wheels & Travel Trailers**

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### **Dust off your user manuals**

Believe it or not, only 10 percent of RV owners actually read the collection of manuals that the manufacturer assembles and makes available when they deliver the new RV. It is also interesting to note that the more experienced the RVer was, the less likely they were to pull out the manuals and review them thoroughly before heading for the open road. When you consider the valuable amount of information that can be found between the covers of these manuals, one should be sure to perform a read-through before the need for an expensive service visit occurs rather than after. Below are a few tidbits of information that can assure you many miles of RV enjoyment. Remember, an RV is a complex house on wheels and there are a number of household chores that must be performed in order to avoid unnecessary repair nightmares.

## Tidbits of information for Motorhomes, Fifth Wheels & Travel Trailers

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- Check all appliances at least once a year. Clean the burners and check thermal couplers on the LP side of appliances.
- Conduct a performance check on all air conditioners at least once a year. Be sure to change the air filters.
- Keep the fins and blades clean on the back of the refrigerator. After each trip, take everything out of the refrigerator/freezer and prop the doors open.
- Flush the holding tanks (black, and grey) after each trip. Use a wand attached to a garden hose to rinse the black holding tank, removing all debris from the sidewalls. This will prevent bad readings from sensors.
- Black water tank sizes are from 25 gallons to 46 gallons. Before each trip add 3 to 6 toilet bowls of water depending on the size of your tank to your black water tank with a tank chemical product **"Note: water weight is 8 pounds per gallon."**
- Purge the water lines with the water pump and remove **any bacteria** in the tank with a tank freshener product. You can also add a cup of bleach to a gallon of water and pour into the empty tank. Fill the tank and run all of the faucets until you smell bleach. **Drain and fill with fresh water.**
- When flushing your toilet--always place at least two inches of water in your toilet bowl. "This will help you from having a dry **black water** tank".  
Clogged black water tanks are no fun.



**Cross of TP in the Toilet.** Many ladies do not like the unsightly mess left over after you have done your "business" in an RV toilet. Because RV toilets have much less water in the bowl, more waste stays on the side of the bowl—making use of a toilet brush after every use almost mandatory. Here is a trick to help minimize this constant problem. First, run a little bit of water into the toilet so that the walls of the bowl are damp. Then place a cross of TP in the bottom of the bowl—probably three or four sheets in each direction, forming a cross over the bottom. After you are finished "doing your thing", the TP cross usually slides down the drain with your contribution, and the sides of the toilet stay much cleaner.

Please be very aware that you should **never leave your Black tank valve open** while you are camped. If you leave the Black tank valve open, all of the water drains out of the Black tank, leaving your solid waste and TP to dry out, and eventually plug up your Black tank. Always leave this valve closed until you are ready to completely dump your Black tank.

You are advised to get in the habit of not dumping your Black tank until it is at least about 3/4s full or three days. By leaving the valve closed, your Black tank has plenty of waste water to break up the TP, and to help break up solid waste so that it is mostly a liquid that can more easily be flushed from the Black tank. The primary reason for not dumping your Black tank until it is almost full is because the surge of fluid leaving an almost full tank helps to clean the tank and helps remove any "stuff" that might tend to stick to the bottom of the tank.

Always dump your Black tank first—*always*. After you have dumped your Black tank, then you should dump your Gray water tank. The Gray water helps to flush out almost all of the Black tank contents from the sewer hose.

- Don't always run the refrigerator on electricity; occasionally run it on LP.
- Always leave enough space for air to circulate around the food in the refrigerator. Unlike a home refrigerator which takes warm air out, an RV refrigerator puts cold air in and it needs room for the cold air to circulate.
- Use distilled water in your batteries and brush the terminal connections to keep them clean.
- Check tire pressure before and after each trip and check for cracks in the tire sidewalls.

Be sure to read all of your user manuals, not just the manuals for the radio, television and entertainment systems. With these manuals, you can arm yourself with the knowledge needed to do the preventative maintenance now rather than pay to have significant repair work done later. It's all in the cards. Well, it's all in the manuals!

## RV Electrical System Basics for Motorhomes, Fifth Wheels & Travel Trailers

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- The electrical system in motorhomes, fifth wheel and travel trailer recreational vehicles is two electrical systems 120 volt city current and 12 volt battery current.
- Understand the amp ratings of all appliances.  
If appliance usage surpasses the 30-amp rating of your RV, fuses will blow.
- Carry a 50amp to 30amp adapter for the places that have only 50amp hook ups.
- The 120 volt system is generally used to run the microwave oven, TV and RV air conditioner. Some lighting may also be 120 volts. To use the 120 volt appliances in your RV you'll need an external power source (home outlet 20amps or campground power 20amps, or a RV generator).
- The power for the 12volt system is supplied by RV batteries. The RV's 12 volt system provides power for most of the light, the water pump, furnace, radio, vent fans; power jacks and stabilizers, and refrigerator.
- Generally you should not operate the converter without batteries connected because the RV batteries acts as a filter to provide a more stable voltage to the electronic circuits of your RV appliances.