

There's a Lot of Confusion That Surrounds Dumping RV Holding Tanks

The Overall System

Using the water and toilet system in an RV is similar to your in-home system with a couple of very important differences. The RV has a set of holding tanks (one for gray water & one for black water) designed to hold waste water while not connected to ground facilities. A very small number of RV manufacturers utilize a single tank design, one large tank holds both the Gray and Black water. The tank size and plumbing locations as well as components may vary, but the principle is the same. The other difference is the amount of water consumed in an RV versus a home. This is a result of the RV's ability to carry its own supply of water in a separate fresh water tank. When connected to fresh water via a hose, you can use increased volumes of water, however, the water still exits the RV through the holding tanks.

The Gray Left Open

RVers sitting for long periods of time in RV resorts, etc. tend to leave the gray water valve open because it is inconvenient to go outside to pull the valve every few days. This practice leads to future problems with bad odors coming from the tank through the vent pipe or dry a p-trap. In addition, leaving the Gray valve open allows the drained water to splash into the empty tank and the particulate in the water adheres to the sidewalls of the tank, then dries!

The Gray Valve Close

Keeping the Gray Valve closed until the tank is 2/3rds full, then opening the valve, allows the suction created to pull most of the scum out of the tank and down the drain. With the valve closed as the tank fills a scum builds up on the surface not on the tank walls.

Critters

Septic systems as well as city sewer systems are a breeding grounds of all kinds of critters and leaving the Gray valve open with the sewer hose connected provides the perfect path for them to travel into your holding tank! Reason enough to keep it closed!

There's more

If you have ever walked around in an RV park and noticed a smell from time to time and thought the RV you were passing had a problem. Actually, the coach you passed had in all probability, left their Gray Valve open. Someone on another isle dumped their tanks AND the air in the sewer system took the path of least resistance, went up the hose into the tank and out the roof vent! Simply keeping the Gray valve closed would have prevented this. We are surprised that RV Parks do not make it a rule to keep the valves closed until you are ready to go through the dumping process.

The Black Tank System

In general, people know enough to NOT leave the black valve open for extended periods because the waste will clog the 3" hole and fill the tank! What they do not realize is that they need to use more water than the toilet provides on a single flush. This is not the place to conserve water, the more diluted the solution is, the less chance for a clogged tank.

The Proper Procedure

Prior to emptying the holding tanks, be sure the hose is connected using the "First in Last out" method of connecting the sewer hose. See below under First in Last out Rule of Dumping.

TIP

You should also have a tank spray unit added to the Grey water tank. (Y-ing the two tank sprayers together with valves to operate each sprayer independently will ensure maximum pressure on the spray nozzle during the flush process.)

1. To drain the holding tanks, after following the hose connection procedure (First in Last out procedure) Be sure all connections are secure to prevent accidental spillage.

2. Push the black water Drain Master switch toward the open position and hold for 1 to 2 seconds. If your coach has manual pull or cable pull valves pull the handle all the way out. The valve will open and the waste will flow through the hose to the sewer. Turn on the black water tank flush. Watch to see the water start to turn clear and the flow decrease. Close the black water valve while leaving the tank flusher on. When the black water tank is half full or more, open the valve. When it's empty, close the valve and continue to repeat this until the water runs clear through the sight glass in the sewer inlet fitting. This procedure ensures the tank and hose is clean and free of odor.

NOTE:

Purchasing a mechanical water timer and attaching it to your flush system inlet BEFORE connecting the water hose, then connecting the water hose to the timer is a REAL safety measure. By experimenting with how long the tank takes to fill to 2.3rds and setting the timer accordingly insures you will NEVER overfill your holding tanks!

3. Turn off the black water sprayer and close the black water valve.

4. Repeat the above process with the gray water tank.

5. Make sure the contents of the RV system are emptied from the tanks and associated piping and check to insure your tank valves are fully closed. Next slowly remove the hose fitting from the RV outlet allowing any drip age to fall into the hose. Replace cap on the sewer outlet as well as on the hose (if equipped) then walk the hose back to the sewer inlet allowing any residual water in the hose to flow into the sewer. Remove hose fitting from the sewer inlet and cap it, if you have one. Cap the sewer inlet, return hose to its storage location and inspect the area to insure all is ready for the next site occupant.

NOTE:

Store hose and fittings in a sanitary enclosure or plastic bag to prevent odors and unsanitary health issues.

Real Long Term Solution: If your coach was equipped with an Ultimate Waste Master System, the valves are left closed at all times, except when actually emptying the holding tanks. The sewer hose is permanently connected to the RV so there is no need to disconnect the hose. Simply return it to the waste bay or Waste Master Sewer Hose Enclosure and you're done. No mess, no dripping, no cleaning and best of all it's totally sanitary!



If you are interested in learning more about Waste Master, the complete waste removal solution that makes emptying your tanks as easy as putting gas in your car, please visit www.drainmaster.com/rv or call toll free (877) 787-8833