

Black & Wash Water Valves

QUESTION: Hello Howard, I enjoyed your article in the *Blue Beret* on “The Care and Feeding of Your RV.” I am curious if anyone has had experience with replacing black and wash water valves. I own a 2007 Safari 27'. The black water valve does not close completely. I have been giving some thought about attempting the repair myself, since my unit is out of warranty. Is this a big mistake? I wish I had a technical manual that I could reference on how these things are assembled. Any help would be greatly appreciated. Thanks, Jerry

ANSWER: I have never seen a manual for the dump valves, however, they are quite simple and easy to take apart and fix (once you can get to them). Since your rig is relatively new my guess is that there is nothing wrong with the valve itself. The problem is you may have toilet paper caught in the valve seat that is preventing it from closing. The valve is just a sandwich with a holder and a flat blade that slides in a rubber channel for a seal. No lubricant is normally required. The valve consists of two rectangular sides that are held together by four stain- less steel bolts, which go through a flange on each side. The flanges attach to round tubes, which are either glued to or attached to the inlet and outlet pipes with clamps. Most of the valves are made by Valterra. A picture is on www.valterra.com/RV/rv-main.htm. The valves usually last for many years as long as they are being used so they do not dry out. There are overhaul kits which have new bolts and rubber seals to renew the valve if the seals are defective.

I suggest you remove your sewer valve and clean the channel. Soap and water should be fine. Make sure it closes completely and then reinstall it. Just be careful not to over-tighten the bolts and damage the plastic flanges or valve bolt holes. If the wash water valve is working OK I see no reason to change it

FOLLOWUP: The valve was easily repaired, it was paper caught in the slot. The greatest difficulty was pan replacement. It was necessary to use a rolling jack to put the pan back in place. After completing the job I realized why the shop was going to charge me \$500, it was a 6 hour job. I would suggest that anyone attempting to do the job by themselves use the jack and an X beam for support because of the warping of the metal on removal. Thanks again, Jerry

FINAL SUGGESTIONS: Another approach is to cut out a section in the pan so that you have easy access to the valves. You can obtain some aluminum pieces from your local dealer that can be used for a patch. Any dealer that does body work will have scrap pieces that can easily cover the access port. Whenever I am visiting Jackson Center I scrounge the junk pile outside for several scrap pieces. I have also seen the old cut out piece being used by screwing 1X2 hard wood to the existing pan. Then simply screw the old cutout to the 1X2. Just do a neat cutout, pre-drill the holes and be sure to use stainless steel screws.

The best solution, however, is to make sure you dump correctly and use a good quality Bacteria/Enzyme product. I have used eco-save, <http://www.eco-save.com>, for years in both the black and wash water tanks. This product helps dissolve

solids, controls odor and liquefies solids. It helps keep valves and in-tank sensors clean. I have a number of friends that winter in Florida and do not move their rigs for several months at a time. They rarely have problems using this product. I recommend the powder which sells for

\$15 for about 30 treatments.

It is OK to leave the wash water valve open in a campground when you have a dump site. However, never leave the Black tank valve open. Always make sure you have almost a full tank and give the bacteria/enzyme product time to work before you dump. In fact, on a caravan I usually wait till I have reached the new site before I dump