

Hello again, welcome to November (Brrrrrr....)! Things have been staying busy and questions continue to be asked. A gentleman recently asked if I could touch on (only with gloves) the topic of dumping and the cleaning of holding tanks used on his Airstream.

Taking Care of Your Holding Tanks

Preventative maintenance for the holding tanks in your RV can help save you problems and money down the road.



Here are some simple suggestions you may want to try:

- Dump tanks when they are full.
- Dumping a full tank will allow for a larger volume of water to help flush the solids out of the tank. This prevents the solids from building up.
- If your unit has both a black and gray tank (older units may only have a black tank), dump the black tank first followed by the gray tank (from the shower and sink).
- If your unit has a tank flush, you will want to turn it on for 2-3 minutes with the gate valve closed after the initial dumping of the black tank. Then turn off the tank flush, open gate valve and monitor the fluids coming out; repeat process until fluids coming out are clear.
- If you do not have a tank flush, you will need to fill the tank from inside (use a bucket of water or hose with a spray wand) and flush until you have clear fluids coming out of sewer hose.



The clear sewer elbows that are available will help monitor the fluids being dumped (*A thetford dump valve cap system will require an adapter for the pictured elbows*).

- Be sure your tank stays clean after dumping.

How do I do that? I am glad you asked!

There are various chemicals that are on the market you can use to maintain your holding tanks. There are, however, some other products that you use on a regular basis around the house that can help maintain your tanks.

Many customers are using liquid fabric softener and powdered water softener in their holding tanks and have reported they work very well.

Some of their suggestions:

- To keep tanks clean, try using water softener or fabric softener. Water softener will help prevent any mineral build up while the fabric softener will help loosen the solid material from the sides of the tanks and help keep solids from sticking to the tank.
- Simply mix 2-3 cups of water softener or fabric softener in 2 gallons of hot water and pour 1 gallon down the drain of each of the black and gray tanks when empty.
- Keep the valve closed and use the tanks normally and drain once they are full.
- If you are adding just water softener to the black tank, you can also add a cup of laundry detergent.
- If you want to monitor the “clarity” of the water when dumping, use a clear sewer hose elbow to connect to the sewer drain line and the sewer hose on your RV, then monitor the output.
- If you still feel the tank is not totally cleaned out you may want to try the old bag of ice trick. Just fill your black tank with about ¼ tank of water and add a bag of ice, then take your trailer for a ride around the block. The ice moving around inside the tank should help loosen any remaining solids.
- Always clean out and sanitize your holding tanks before storing for the winter.

A few indicators of problems with holding tanks.

Is there fluid in the sewer piping when removing sewer cap or dripping past the sewer cap seal?

Is there water under unit or dripping from one of tank pans?

Is there an unexplainable odor in the unit?

All of the above could be signs of a leak whether at the gate valve, plumbing or the tank itself.