

Replacing The Water Heater In A 60s Vintage Trailer

QUESTION #1: I have a problem with the water heater in my 1966 Safari. It worked fine when we put the trailer away last fall. Now I can get no water through it. I disconnected the inlet and outlet lines, and they are clear. The obstruction is in the tank. Compressed air into the inlet (cold) will not produce a discharge from the outlet (hot). Air into the outlet will force water from the inlet. How do I remove the water heater?

ANSWER #1: Are you sure you have opened up the hot water bypass valves, which are used for winterizing the heater? They cut the heater out of the circuit, so you do not have to fill it with antifreeze. The water heater usually removes from the outside of the trailer by removing the screws all around the flange. It would take a pretty large obstruction to clog the tank.

QUESTION #2: Thanks for your prompt reply. I think that the Atwood Heater in the newer trailers does pull straight out the side. However, this is a 1966 model that used the larger 9 gal., Bowen Heater. I have removed the screws and flange. It appears to me that the tank is much larger than the cut-out. It has no bypass valves. Any thoughts?

ANSWER #2: I replaced the water heater in my 1967 six years ago. At the time I had the sink out of the trailer and was easily able to remove the water heater from the inside. My 67 Globe Trotter and 67 Trade Wind have identical baths, so your Safari probably does also. The molded fiberglass sink unit was easy to remove and replace, and makes replacing the water heater, adding bypass valves, replacing the Univolt (in Trade Wind) with an Intellipower, and re-plumbing the sink easy. The Atwood G6A-7, 6 gallon gas only was my choice. It required a new outside panel to fill the gap between the new unit and the old hole -- see picture. If you go this route, use Alclad 2024-T3 aluminum so that it can be polished. I didn't know that at the time. An Internet search will find suppliers. Use Olympic rivets from Vintage Trailer Supply. They also sell a rivet shaver to produce a rounded head. Borrow one if you can, they're expensive. If I had it to do over, I would get a water heater with an electronic igniter. Good luck

