

WATER SYSTEM

A common water system problem that I have run into a few times is the tank drain valve. Many trailers have the drain valve at the bottom of the tank in the center so it sticks out, unprotected. Of course, this breaks off when driving over a high rock, log or other road projection resulting in no more water. I remember when a camper had four spares and he used all of them to save his fellow campers on an Alaska Caravan. We carved a plug from a branch to save another camper. Carry at least one spare if your valve is under the tank. You should also purchase a brass plug, with the correct threads, as a back-up solution. The plug will allow you to at least use the tank until you can get a replacement valve. A better solution is to move the drain valve to a better location that is protected. You should do this anyway to make it easier to drain your tank. I believe it is a good idea to drain all of the water tanks and lines after every rally or caravan.

This results in cleaner tanks that do not have to be dosed with Clorox so often. I had three drain valves in my motorhome that required me to remove the bedding and unscrew several plywood panels (25 to 30 screws). I installed a new drain valve underneath the RV which could be easily reached from outside. I then permanently opened all of the hidden valves so that the external valve was all that was needed to drain the lines. I also installed a drain valve in my hot water heater in place of the fixed drain plug. Now I open two valves, easily reached from the outside of the RV, to drain all of the water. We are lazy creatures by nature so we should make it easy to do the important maintenance items.

Filtering our drinking and cooking water on a Caravan is of major importance. Most of the rigs have filters on a special kitchen sink fixture. A lot of these use very expensive cartridges that do an excellent job. I replaced mine with a simpler unit where the cartridge case remains and you simply replace an internal filter. I get carbon filters which remove chlorine, odors etc. for about \$6 or \$7. These last over six months and are so inexpensive that you do not mind replacing them every year. I use these instead of my special kitchen sink faucet filter. I have also added an external RV sediment cartridge filter holder that hangs on my bumper. I use the sediment filter before the water enters my RV or the water tank. There is another filter screen between my water tank and the water pump, which is connected into the water pump. Do not forget to clean this filter at least once per year.

I mounted the external filters on a wooden board that also has a separate water faucet available for washing the RV or any other external water needs. I used quick release fittings for easy and fast hook-up. So part of my RV set-up is hooking up my external water supply system along with leveling and electric supply hook-up. I like to be completely hooked up, sitting in my lawn chair and sipping some refreshment as fast as possible. You can easily add a second filter holder and have both sediment and charcoal filters on the water supply to your RV. Make sure you get the filter holders that use the inexpensive standard cartridges available at Lowes, Home Depot or Sears.