TIRES & WHEELS

How much air should I put in my RV tires? For your tow vehicle, there are a few answers depending on the number of passengers and how heavily the vehicle is loaded. Just check your manual. For the trailer or motor home however, there is no easy answer. Get it weighed when it is fully loaded with water, propane and equipment. This should be done for each wheel of the vehicle for a motor home and for each side for a trailer. Now use the manufacturers chart to determine the air pressure versus actual weight for the front single tires, the rear duals and the tag axle for your tire size and type. The air pressure should be the same on both sides for the front tires as well as the rears. Just use the highest air pressure required in any individual tire axle set. When in doubt, use the sidewall pressure recommended by the tire manufacturer.

About every 200 miles or each time you move your RV to a new site you should torque your wheel lug nuts. You should have a ½-inch drive socket set in your tool kit and a torque wrench. For your wheel nuts purchase the correct size, black, 6-point socket, that was designed for an air driven wrench. We recommend a ½-inch "clicker" torque wrench. Current recommendation is torqueing trailer lug nuts to 110 ft-lbs. The larger motor homes require a ¾-inch drive torque wrench that goes into the 500 ft-lbs. range. RV tires die of old age helped along by ozone and temperature. They have a shelf life of about 5-6 years especially since they spend most of their life sitting in the driveway. How old is the tire; look for DOT followed by numbers and letters. The last group of numbers, either 3 or 4, is the date of manufacture. If it has three numbers, it was made in 1999 or earlier and should be rejected immediately. For a group of four numbers the first two numbers are the week it was made and the last two are the year. For example, 2315 would be the 23rd. week of 2015. If you are not sure how to read the date, ask the dealer to show it to you when you are buying the tire.

BRAKES

It is a good idea to keep a record of the mileage when you have your brake pads changed. This should be done for trailers as well as motor homes. You should have the pads checked at least every 15000 miles. The friction material should be a minimum of ¼ inch thick. If it is less than 1/8 of an inch, then change them ASAP. Be sure and check all of the wheels including the tag axles. On most automobiles, the pads can be checked without removing the wheels. For trailers and motor homes, the wheels will usually have to be removed. If you are going across the country and on a caravan, that will travel 10,000 miles or more, consider changing the brake pads before the trip. Changing the pads is less than $200 and since you will be on the road for 10,000 miles or more it is good insurance. Listen for strange noises. A grinding sound may mean you have worn out your pads and are getting metal-to-metal contact. This usually means new rotors, calipers and pads. It is always less expensive to start out with new brake pads then having to change them on the trip.

FURNACE & WATER HEATERS

The coach furnace rarely has problems while water heaters are always going bad. The water heater is exposed to the elements since its electronics are outside while the furnace is nicely protected from the weather inside the RV. Both these units use igniters, which provide a spark to light the propane. Igniters wear out and may be replaced depending upon usage. You should

have a spare igniter for each heater. Other than cleaning the gas nozzle and the burner chamber every year, you usually do not need to worry about the furnace. You should **purchase a new potted board** with the spare igniter so that when cleaning the old board no longer works you are ready to go. Periodically clean the furnace compartment and its main burner. Learn how to adjust the main burner for the proper flame for both the water and coach heaters. The proper gap for the igniter is 1/8" between the electrode and ground. Clean the burners in alcohol and let them dry. You can use a round toothpick to clean the jets but never use a metal object since it can change the orifice opening. Wet the toothpick and twirl it in the jet. Circuit board contact cleaner will also work since it leaves no residue.

Normally we never find a defective pressure-temperature relief valve. However, we have found many leaking valves. Most water heaters are designed to operate with an air gap at the top of the tank that provides for expansion when the water is heated. When the valve leaks, it is usually because this air gap is no longer present. To fix the problem turn off the heater and the water supply. Open a faucet in the RV and relieve the water pressure. Open the relief valve handle and keep it that way until the water stops flowing. Snap shut the valve handle and you will then have the air gap back with no more leaks.

REFRIGERATOR

The primary maintenance for your fridge is keeping the compartment clean, cleaning the burner assembly and cleaning the flue baffle. On gas operation, the spark electrode should be spaced from 1/8" to 3/16" from the burner tube. A separate thermocouple tells the gas valve that the flame is on and it is safe to keep the gas valve open. The thermocouple should be in the flame. The flame should have a clear blue color. The burner jet can be cleaned by soaking it in alcohol and then blowing dry with compressed air. If you do not have alcohol you can soak, it in vinegar except you should leave it in for at least 2 hours. You can also use special contact cleaner (leaves no residue). Do not use anything metallic that could alter the size of the jet. Procedures for cleaning the flue are in your Instruction manual. You should do this maintenance procedure at least once a year. For spare parts, you should have a 3 amp and a 5 amp. cartridge type fuses. The 3 amp is for the control system and is required for gas, A/C or DC operation. The 5-amp fuse is for the heater for A/C operation. If you have a three-way unit that operates on DC, you will also have a 35-amp fuse. Remember for DC operation you are drawing over 25 amps out of the coach batteries and you should only do this with some source of high current DC, in addition to the batteries (like the engine alternator in a motor home or a generator).

The circuit board connectors are a big source of failures, especially for the older units. There are several connectors (Molex connectors) on the board that can get loose and may develop corrosion. Remove each connector separately and spray both sides with the contact cleaner. Wipe the contacts dry and put a small amount of silicon dielectric on the male pins. Many Refrigerators have been repaired with a new circuit board when all that was required was cleaning the contacts on the old circuit board connectors.

During hot weather if your unit is not cooling too well, we recommend installing a fan in the outside compartment. This should be installed as close to the top of the coach as you can reach and should be exhausting the air. The air across the fins is what takes the heat out of the Fridge compartment and provides maximum cooling. We do not like the fan units that come with an

automatic thermostat since they do not come on soon enough. Once you lose temperature, it can take many hours overnight, to regain adequate food storage. We recommend installing a switch inside the RV and turning it on when the thermometer inside the Refrigerator shows it is getting near 40 degrees. A tip: If you lose your refrigerator on a caravan and cannot get a fast repair remove as much of the food that does not really need to be cooled (soda, fruit, veggies, cheese, etc.) and put bags of ice in your freezer compartment. Also, fill your vegetable crispers with ice.