

Water Leaks

Water leaks can silently destroy the integrity of the RV by wreaking havoc within the walls or under the floor of the motor home, away from visual detection. Perform a careful inspection of the RV, including inside cabinets, drawers and storage bays, for any indication of a water leak. Stains from water damage, or the sound of a water pump cycling frequently, may indicate the presence of a water leak.

Tissue paper will quickly saturate when coming into contact with water, and is an excellent tool for use in leak detection. If you suspect a water leak, perform a systematic inspection of the plumbing fittings and connections to uncover any sign of moisture. Depending on the floor plan, you may have to remove an access panel to inspect the water lines that run to the shower. In some motor homes those lines are located behind a wall, mirror or the backside of the shower stall. Accessibility to the shower p-trap is generally in front of the shower base behind a small access panel near the floor. In some motor homes, the carpeted plywood floor located under the cabinet in the galley area is designed for removal to inspect the water lines.

The water heater located inside of the RV is another location to check for signs of a water leak. Open the door to the water heater and check around the back of the tank. Use tissue paper to wipe around the fittings and the bypass valve.

Examine slide out rooms for any signs of moisture around the seal that is not the by-product of heavy rain. Keep window wells free of debris and mold to allow moisture a path of clear drainage. Remove the intake roof vent and air conditioning frames to inspect for water leaks.

If the RV is equipped with a washer/dryer, use a mirror and flashlight to check behind the appliance at the faucets and hoses. If the RV does not have a washer/dryer unit installed, but has been prepped for one, water lines and piping are located behind a false wall that can be removed for inspection of the fittings.

Water leak inspection should also include areas on the outside of the RV. Check the water heater through the outside access door to confirm that the drain plug is not leaking. Inspect the outside service center. If the unit is equipped with Aqua Hot or Hydro Hot, carefully probe that system for signs of a leak. Go up onto the roof to make sure that all components are appropriately sealed. Look around the roof edge to make sure all joints are sealed. Check window frames to make sure they are properly sealed.

If you have a stand-alone ice maker, open the front cover and inspect the water lines. A rubber washer at the inlet fitting may get hard and start to leak. Remove water pressure and place a rag under the inlet fitting. Open the fitting and check to see if the hose washer is hard. Change the rubber washer as needed.

Look at the ceiling and walls for any discoloration or streaking that could indicate that a leak is present or has been present. Follow the stain to the area near the source. Find the source and make the appropriate repair.

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Avoid over-tightening fittings, which can cause damage to rubber seals and create a bigger leak. Carefully check areas surrounding water damage to assure that the problem has not spread.

To prevent future water leaks, routinely re-caulk areas around sinks, the shower, toilet, windows and roof components. Wipe away moisture from the interior slide room walls when retracting, and empty the RV of all potable water during prolonged storage.

RV Survey