

How to Dump Your Holding Tanks at Home

RVer's commonly ask the question: can you dump your RV waste at home? Is it possible to do this? Yes, and there are several ways to do it, but before you dive into this option be sure your community allows this. For those in communities who allow dumping at home, there are good reasons to prefer dumping at home over dump stations, and this article will walk you through some of the benefits of and different methods for dumping your RV holding tanks at home. Keep in mind that certain techniques for dumping at home may take some additional time and effort.

Why Dump My RV Holding Tanks at Home?

People have many different reasons they'd prefer to dump at home, but let's name a few of the common reasons.

Avoiding Dumping Fees – Dump stations used to be mostly free, but after quite a bit of abuse by irresponsible RVer's, many dump stations now charge a fee to dump, typically between \$10-\$25 per dump.

Skip the Lines – Depending on the location of the dump station, there might be a pretty lengthy line and some people take way more time than is really necessary to finish with their dumping routine.

Forget the Extra Stop – If you were not on full hook-ups or at a campground that had an included dumping station, stopping at any point to dump on your way home is just a pain when you are wanting to get home, get unpacked, and prepare for the work week.

The Bucket Method

This method works best when you have only a small amount of waste in your RV holding tanks. We strongly recommend that you use this technique only if you have a few gallons of waste in your tanks. Since many RVer's won't want to make a trip to the dump station to dispose of just a few gallons of waste, we suspect that this is the home dumping option that most weekend warriors and overnight RVer's may use most often.

Supplies

- 5-gallon bucket (consider using a bucket lid with a wide-mouth spout to avoid spilling)
- [Disposable rubber gloves](#) (optional)
- [Wide mouthed funnel](#) (optional)

While wearing gloves is optional, we highly recommend wearing gloves and even a mask to protect your face and hands from splash back when dumping waste out of the bucket.

Procedure

1. Get a 5-gallon bucket, and place it under the discharge line.
 2. Open the valve slowly, and fill the bucket with waste (we recommend wearing a face covering, and/or gloves to avoid contamination).
 3. Close the valve when the tank is done emptying or when the bucket gets close to being full.
 4. Unscrew the cap from the sewer cleanout.
 5. Carefully dump the waste into your cleanout port (septic or city sewer); we recommend using a funnel to avoid a mess at the cleanout pipe.
- Note:** If your septic tank does not have a cleanout, you can also use an access port (use the one closest to your home)
6. Repeat these steps until your gray or black water tank is empty. Don't forget to clean and disinfect the bucket!



Caution for Dumping in Septic Access Ports

The reason you need to pour the waste into the access port that is closest to your home is because this is where the inlet baffle is located, which is where waste from your home toilet passes through before it gets to the tank itself. A baffle is something that keeps sludge (solid waste) from clogging your outlet. There is also an outlet baffle which stops the solid waste from getting to the leach field (something you never want). So, if you pour on the wrong side of the baffle (the one farthest from your home), you risk clogging your tank. You also need to minimize the amount of time the lid is off your access port. Keeping it open too long can kill the bacteria that help to break down waste in your septic tank. It can also harm you if you inhale the very strong and potentially deadly gasses that accumulate in the tank.

While some sources recommend dumping into your toilet, we highly discourage this! It can very easily cause nasty clogs in your plumbing system that will ultimately lead to expensive and stressful repairs. If you do not have a septic system or accessible city sewer cleanout at your home, we recommend that you go ahead and dump your tanks at a dump station. And if the bucket option is just too up-close-and-personal for you, there are some other options available that may not be as uncomfortable.

The Macerating Method

Macerating is just a big word for crushing, so with this method you are using a special pump (a macerator) that chops the waste up into a smoothie-like consistency. The macerator pump then connects directly to a garden hose, and the macerated waste can be channeled to your home's septic tank or cleanout port. Macerating your waste before dumping it into your septic tank will help the bacteria in the septic tank to break down the added waste much faster.

Supplies

- [RV macerator pump](#) (these can be obtained for between \$100 and \$200)
- A [curved extension](#) or [straight extension](#) adapter to connect the pump to your RV (if needed)
- A [CDFJ adapter](#) to connect your macerator pump to the garden hose that will carry the waste away (some pump kits will come with this piece)
- A [garden hose](#) or [accordion macerator hose](#) (best to dedicate one hose for this use)

Procedure

1. Connect your macerator pump to your RV's discharge pipe.
2. Using the CDFJ adapter, connect the macerator pump to the garden hose.
3. Place the other end of your garden hose into your home's cleanout (choose the shortest hose you can find that will still reach the cleanout).
4. Hook up a fresh water hose to the water inlet on the macerator pump.
5. Plug in your macerator pump, and open your RV's discharge valve.
6. Turn on your macerator pump and the fresh water hose.

Note: Most macerator pumps caution against leaving the pump continuously running for more than 15 minutes at a time.

7. Rinse your black tank while the macerator is still running (if you can).
8. When the water coming out of your RV is clear, turn off and disconnect everything.
9. Clean and store your dumping materials appropriately.

Guide: [Proper Care of RV Dumping Tools](#)



Standard Dumping (No Macerating)

The last option for dumping your tanks at home is to dump your gray or black water tanks without macerating. As with the other options, you will be dumping into your home's cleanout or access port (on septic systems or city sewers). This is perhaps the simplest method so far, as it only requires that you connect your RV's black or gray water tanks to your cleanout port using your sewer hose and flush the waste out just as you would at a dump station.

Note: For step-by-step instructions on how to dump your tanks using the typical dumping tools, refer to our guide on [How to Dump Your Black and Gray Water Tanks](#).

If you decide to use this option and you are on a septic system, you should empty waste into your home's cleanout port slowly. If waste is added too quickly, the tank can become overloaded and push undissolved waste into your lateral line system. Also, if you are accessing your septic tank through the access lid, be careful to not disturb the scum layer too much. Dumping directly into your septic tank has the potential to be a very damaging process, so take great caution when doing it this way.

Using the Right Products Before Dumping

Regardless of which home-dumping method you use, you should always be very mindful of the treatment types you are using in your RV holding tanks because treatments containing chemicals and other substances like zinc that kill bacteria will disrupt the healthy bacteria colony in your septic tank. Putting waste into your septic system that also contains bacteria-killing substances will create a headache you don't need, so be sure to use bacteria and enzyme tank treatments (like [Unique RV Digest-It](#)) and soaps and cleaning products that will not kill bacteria. We recommend using [Unique RV Toilet Cleaner + Holding Tank Enhancer](#) that will effectively clean the toilet bowl and also boost the bacteria in the tank rather than harm it. In addition, we recommend using [Dawn Ultra](#) dish soap for washing both dishes and hands because it is a fantastic grease-eater to keep your gray tank sensors working and won't harm bacteria in the gray tank or in your septic system once you dump.

Even if you are dumping your tanks into the city sewer cleanout at your house, using bacteria and enzyme treatments over chemical treatments will benefit the waste treatment plant once the wastewater gets there. City treatment facilities use bacteria to break down the human waste, so any time you can opt for a treatment or cleaning product that won't harm bacteria, it makes the process at the treatment facility that much more effective.

