

How to Winterize Your RV

After a long summer camping in the great outdoors, you want your RV to come back the next summer performing just as well as it did this summer, so it's critical that you properly winterize your RV. Not only is this a good practice to get in the habit of doing before you put it to bed for the winter, but it will ultimately maximize its functional life, saving you money in the long run. We'll discuss the tools and supplies you'll need and show you the basics of winterizing your RV. We will also provide references to the winterizing resources we used to write this guide so you can have the most detailed information possible to complete the winterizing process like a pro.

Note: We recommend that you have your RV winterized by a certified technician if you are uncomfortable or unsure about how to complete the process yourself.

Supplies

- RV or Marine antifreeze
- A water heater bypass kit
- A tank cleaning wand (if there's no built-in rinser)
- A water pump converter kit or tubing
- Simple tools to connect and remove drain plugs

A water heater bypass kit and water pump converter kit are not technically necessary, but we recommend both as they make both the winterizing and de-winterizing processes smoother.

Procedure

1. **Deep clean your gray and black tanks.**
2. **Remove in-line water filters** (if your RV has any).
 - If your RV does have an in-line water filter, there should be a bypass hose you can install after the filter is removed.
 - If your RV does NOT have an in-line water filter, you can skip to [Step 3](#).
3. **Drain all your tanks** (freshwater, gray, black, and your water heater tank; be sure to rinse your black tank).

CAUTION: Never drain your water heater tank when it is under pressure or hot. Always make sure no water is connected to the RV and that your 12-volt water pump has been off for some amount of time.

4. **Push out excess water from the pipes.**
 - a. Open all the water faucets in your RV (both hot and cold), including the faucets and valves on your toilet and shower.
 - b. Locate and remove the drain plugs on the low point water drain lines.
 - c. Flush your RV's toilet and use the pump to help push out any water that might remain in your plumbing.

- d. Turn off the pump as soon as your system is empty of water. You can also use an air compressor to blow out all the water with air.
- e. Replace drain plugs and close all your faucets.

5. **Bypass your water heater** (many RVs come with a water heater bypass built-in). You can buy aftermarket bypass kits, something you should consider to avoid wasting antifreeze, which will collect in the water heater before getting to the rest of the water system.
6. **Fill your RV's water system with RV antifreeze.**
 - a. You can either install a water pump converter kit or disconnect the inlet end of your water pump and use plastic tubing to connect the inlet to a gallon of antifreeze.
 - b. Turn on your 12-volt water pump, which will pressurize the system and pump RV antifreeze into your water lines.
 - c. Open the water faucet closest to the water pump until pink antifreeze begins to run out of the faucet, and then quickly close the faucet. Replace your gallon of antifreeze with another as needed.
 - d. Repeat [Step C](#) for each faucet and valve, starting with those closest to the water pump and finishing with the ones that are farthest away.



Additional Resources

This guide was written by referring to several different articles for the best winterizing tips:

- [7 Easy Steps to Winterizing Your RV Plumbing System](#) (KOA.com)
- [Step by Step Winterizing Checklist](#) (KOA.com)
- [How to Winterize Your RV](#) (GoRVing.com)

These sites are each recognized experts in RVing, so we believe you can feel safe following their recommendations. If you're still unsure about anything to do with winterizing your RV, we recommend you simply take your RV into a qualified professional and have it winterized.

e. Flush your toilet until pink antifreeze appears in the bowl and pour a small amount of antifreeze down each drain in your RV. You can also fill your toilet bowl with antifreeze and flush it, which will keep any residual water from freezing in your holding tank.

7. **Close all your faucets and valves.**
8. **Make sure the water heating element is turned off.**

Note: If your RV's water heater has an electric water heater element, make sure this is turned off for the winter. If it is left on, the heating element will burn out and you'll need to replace it.

