



DIY & SAVE

THE OWNER'S GUIDE TO RV MAINTENANCE



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Introduction

Hi! We're Christina and Justin.

We've been living and traveling the country in our fifth wheel RV since May 2016. Justin is a certified RV technician and Christina runs a website focused on RV living and travel.

Before Justin became an RV tech, we spent thousands of dollars each year on RV repairs and maintenance. While many repairs should be left to the experts, every RVer can perform simple maintenance tasks that will extend the life of RV parts and prevent future issues.

We hope this guide helps you travel safely and confidently.

A complete list of tools mentioned in this book can be found at our [Amazon Affiliate RV Maintenance Toolbox List](#).

Disclaimer: This book is intended as a general guide for performing RV maintenance tasks. All RVs are different, so instructions may not directly apply to your RV. Always consult your owner's manual and a professional RV technician to determine or confirm the correct maintenance for your RV.



Chapter One: RV Appliances

Water Heaters

RV water heaters must be cleaned and serviced annually to prevent build up. If you are a seasonal camper, service your water heater before winterizing your RV.

There are two common brands of RV water heaters, Suburban and Atwood. The pictures below show an Atwood appliance, but differences in maintenance of the two brands are noted below.

Tools Required

1. Tank Rinsing Tool
2. Air Compressor
3. Anode Rod (Suburban water heaters only)

Step 1: Turn the Power Off

Before cleaning your RV water heater, turn it off and allow enough time for the water to cool. Test the hot water from an indoor tap to verify that the water in the tank is no longer hot.

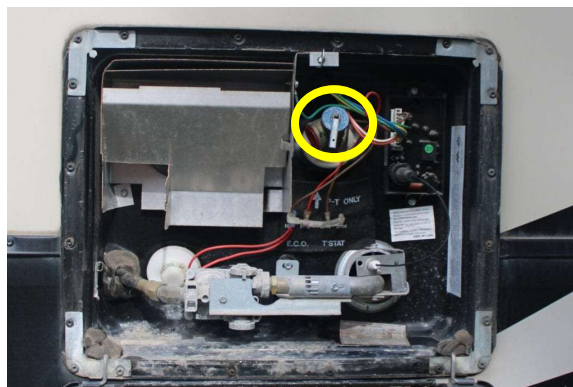
After the water has cooled, turn off any water flowing into the RV. To ensure the water heater cannot turn on while you are performing work, turn off all power sources: unplug your electric power, turn off your battery and shut off your propane.

Step 2: Visually Inspect Unit

Look the unit over for any mud dauber (wasp) nests. These pests commonly build nests in RV appliances and it is important to clean them out to prevent damage. Mud dauber nests are clay-like cylinders with a hole on top. Look for and completely remove any nests or other debris in your unit.

Step 3: Relieve Pressure

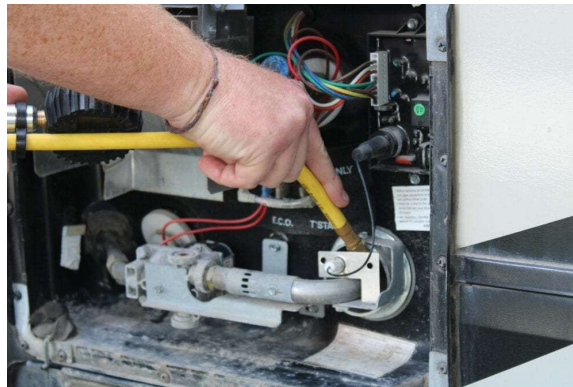
Next, locate and open the water heater access on the outside of your RV. Flip up the lever on your pressure relief valve to remove any pressure from the water heater. The pressure relief valve is circled in the below image.



Step 4: Clear Debris

Use an air compressor to remove debris from the burner tube and the burner chamber. The burner chamber is where the air hose is inserted in the below image. The burner tube is the metal tube

connected to the chamber. Simply, blow compressed air for a minute or two into these areas to clean debris from your RV water heater.

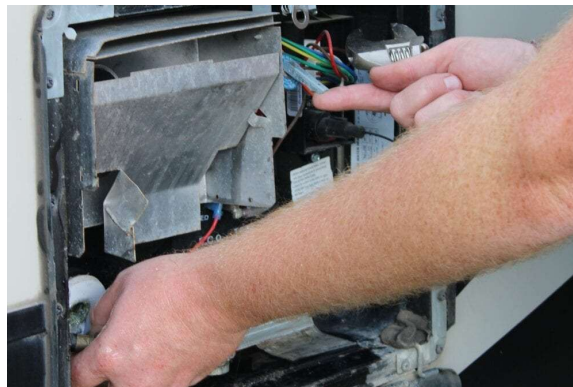


Step 5: Drain Water Heater (Suburban)

Anode rods on Suburban RV water heaters should be replaced every year. Using a 1-1/16-inch socket loosen the anode rod until it is hand tight. Then, lift the pressure relief valve and finish removing the anode rod with your other hand. Allow the water heater to fully drain.

Step 5: Drain Water Heater (Atwood)

Loosen the plug (see image below) using a 7/8-inch socket, until it is hand tight. Use one hand to lift the pressure relief valve, and finish removing the plug with your other hand. Allow the water heater to fully drain.



Step 6: Flush the RV Water Heater

Next, connect the tank rinsing tool to a garden hose. Insert the tool into the hole where the anode rod or plug was removed. Moving the tool around, run water into the water heater for a few minutes. Turn off the hose, and allow any water to fully drain out.