

At the end of your camping season you drain the water system, winterize the RV and put it in storage for the winter. One problem with this is that on most RV's when you drain the fresh water holding tank there is still some water left in the tank. Let's say you do manage to drain all of the water out of the tank. There is still moisture in the water system. Just imagine what can grow in that moist tank and in the water lines while it sits for three or four months. I'd rather not think about it.

This is the water tank that you drink from and the water you use to wash dishes and take showers with. We cannot assume that it will stay safe and fresh like the water system in our home. Contaminated water is extremely dangerous. We not only have to deal with a water system that hasn't been used for sometime, but when we travel in the RV we hook our water system up to a different water source every time we stop to spend the night some where. We hook up to city water, well water, and eventually contaminated water. You've probably heard people say don't drink the water if you go to Mexico. Well that can be true anywhere. We stopped at a campground one night just to get a few hours of sleep and I didn't bother to use the water filter. The water coming out of the faucet was cloudy and had small particles suspended in it.

There are no guarantees that any water is completely safe for us to drink, but if we take certain precautions we can keep our RV water system safe to use. So where do we start? First of all you should always use a white non-toxic drinking hose. Hoses not labeled safe for drinking can contribute to lead and other dangerous chemicals getting in the water. Use the white non-toxic hose for hooking up to the water source and take along a green or black garden hose for all other uses like flushing out holding tanks or washing the RV. When you're not using the drinking hose roll it up and connect the two ends together. This will keep dirt and other debris from getting in the hose. The next time you use the hose, run some water through it before hooking it up to the RV.

Next you need to filter the water going into the RV with a high quality filtration system. Water filters do not purify the water but they can control and remove bacteria, lead and other dangerous contaminants found in drinking water. In our "Easy RV Add-On" video we demonstrate installing and using Hydrolife water filters. [Video Details](#)

Hydrolife filters use a filter media called KDF. It uses electro chemical oxidation-reduction to neutralize harmful chemicals and bacteria. It also uses carbon to reduce pesticides, fungicides and other organic contaminates. You basically have two choices on how to filter your RV water system. You can install an inline water filter directly to the water line that you drink from, or you can filter all of the water going into the RV. I prefer to filter all of the water going into the RV. This helps to protect the entire water system and even filters the shower water to help prevent any type of skin irritation.

Possibly the most important step you can take is to keep the fresh water system sanitized. This is an excerpt from my "Checklists for RVers" e-book.

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At a minimum you should sanitize the system every spring when you take the RV out of storage and any time you notice stale water or an odor. It's really quite simple to do. You can start by draining the water heater. Go to the outside compartment where the water heater is located. The drain plug, or petcock is located in the bottom left hand corner. Remove the plug and open the pressure relief valve on top of the water heater to assist in draining. **CAUTION: Never drain the water heater when it's hot or under pressure.** Next you need to locate the low point water line drains. It may take a while to find them, but I assure you they are there. There will be one for the hot and one for the cold water lines. This is the lowest point in the water system. Open these and let the water drain out. Now, find the drain for the fresh water holding tank and drain all of the water from it. At this point you can turn the water pump on for a moment to force any remaining water out. Do not let the pump continue to run once the water stops draining. Close all of the drains.

What we have accomplished so far was to evacuate the majority of water from the system. Now take a quarter cup of house hold bleach for every fifteen gallons of water that your fresh water tank holds. Mix the bleach, with water, into a one-gallon container and pour it into the fresh water holding tank. Fill the fresh water tank almost completely full of water. Turn the water pump on, open all hot and cold faucets and run the water until you smell the bleach at each faucet. Close the faucets. If it's possible drive the RV or pull the trailer so the water can move around to assist in cleaning the entire tank. Let it sit for at least 12 hours. Drain the entire system again and re-fill the fresh water tank with potable water. Open all of the faucets and run the water until you no longer smell any bleach. It may be necessary to repeat this process again to eliminate all signs of bleach from the water system. Once this is done it is safe to use your water system.

If you follow these simple steps you can rest assured that the fresh water system in your RV truly is fresh.

*Happy Camping,
Mark*

Mark Polk is the owner of RV Education 101. RV Education 101 is a North Carolina based company that produces professional training videos, DVDs and e-books on how to use and maintain your RV. Our goal is to make all of your RV experiences safe, fun and stress free. www.rveducation101.com