

12 Tips for Keeping Water Fresh in an RV

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Tips for Keeping Water Fresh in an RV

If you turn on a faucet in your RV's kitchen or bath and are hit with the smell of rotten eggs, that's a sure sign that it's time to freshen your RV's system. Although some well water contains sulfur, which can lead to the smelly spray, the likely culprit is a buildup of bacteria in your freshwater system. Don't wait until the water starts smelling before you sanitize. It's a good idea to flush your recreational vehicle's water system once or twice a year to keep your water fresh. Here's how to sanitize your RV's water supply system:

1. Begin with your freshwater tank about half full.
2. Turn the water heater off and wait for it to cool.
3. Add a cleaning solution to the water tank. Here's where opinions differ. Most people agree that using a household bleach solution is the most effective way to cleanse the bacteria (Note: always dilute bleach with water – about ¼ cup of household bleach for each 15 gallons of tank capacity); however, some people prefer to use milder cleansers like dish detergent, baking soda or vinegar. The bleach solution is the most effective sanitizer, but make sure you flush and rinse well.
4. Next, using the water pump (not the external water supply) turn on every hot and cold faucet in the unit, one at a time, letting the chlorinated water run through them for one or two minutes. You should be able to smell the chlorine.
5. Top off the RV freshwater tank and let the solution soak overnight if possible.
6. Completely drain the system by flushing the faucets for several minutes each.
7. Open the freshwater tank drain valve as well as the hot water tank drain plug and drain.
8. Close all of the valves and faucets and drain plugs.
9. Fill water tank about half full again with fresh water.
10. Drive your RV around the block to let the water slosh around, which will help rinse the system.

11. Flush each faucet for several minutes each repeating until the tank is again empty. (Make sure you are using the water pump and not an external water supply.)

12. Fill the tank again. The water should now be safe to drink but if the chlorine odor is too strong, flush with baking soda or vinegar and repeat the freshwater rinse.

Remember: Never turn on your water heater while it is empty.