VACATIONER CARAVANS

2026 OWNER'S SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLET



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RV MASTER MANUFACTURER

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RECOMMENDED CUSTOMER SELF-MAINTENANCE

WHEELS, BRAKES & LIGHTS

- [ ] CHECK TORQUE ON WHEEL NUTS AT 100KM / 300KM AND PERIODICALLY AFTERWARDS. (130NM)
- [ ] CHECK TYRE PRESSURES PERIODICALLY AS REQUIRED. (REFER HANDOVER BOOK PAGE 18)
- [ ] VISUAL INSPECTION, CHECK TYRES FOR UNUSUAL SIGNS OF WEAR.
- [ ] ADJUST PARK BRAKE IF REQUIRED.
- [ ] CHECK BRAKING SYSTEM.
- [ ] FOR DISC BRAKES, CHECK ACTUATOR FLUID LEVELS & FUNCTION.
- [ ] CHECK STOP / TAIL / INDICATOR & CLEARANCE LIGHTS.
- [ ] CHECK REVERSE CAMERA.
- [ ] CHECK ANDERSON PLUGS. (ESC / DC-DC / ACTUATOR POWER)
- [ ] CHECK STABILITY CONTROL INDICATOR.
- [ ] CHECK BREAKAWAY TAG.

SYSTEMS & SAFETY

- [ ] CHECK BATTERY LEVELS.
- [ ] TEST SMOKE ALARM, CHANGE BATTERY IF REQUIRED.
- [ ] CHECK EXPIRY DATE ON FIRE EXTINGUISHER.
- [ ] CLEAN & CHANGE AIR FILTERS ON RELEVANT PRODUCTS.
- [ ] CHECK COOLANT LEVEL IN DIESEL HOT WATER SERVICE.
- [ ] ADJUST WATER PUMP IF NECESSARY.
- [ ] CHECK & CLEAN WATER FILTER.
- [ ] RECALIBRATE URINE SENSOR. (OGO TOILETS ONLY)

WHEEL NUT TORQUE CHECKS

130 Nm

100 KM	300 KM	PERIODICALLY
First check after fitting	Second check	Every trip afterwards

RECOMMENDED CUSTOMER SELF-MAINTENANCE

LUBRICATION

- [ ] LUBRICATE PARTS AS REQUIRED ON AWNING.
- [ ] ADJUST STRIKERS & LUBRICATE PARTS AS REQUIRED ON MAIN DOOR.
- [ ] LUBRICATE ENTRY DOOR STEP.
- [ ] LUBRICATE ANY LOCKS / HINGES / ARMS ON ALL EXTERNAL HATCHES / BOXES ETC.
- [ ] GREASE GEARS IN STABILISER LEGS.
- [ ] LUBRICATE STAYS ON FRONT WINDOW SHIELD.
- [ ] LUBRICATE & CHECK SPRING ON MAINS WATER PRESSURE VALVE IF REQUIRED.

TANKS & UNDERBODY

- [ ] FLUSH & CLEAN TANKS. (DIRTY SENDERS DON'T WORK PROPERLY)
- [ ] FLUSH & CLEAN GREY WATER TANK FREQUENTLY. (DIRTY SENDERS DON'T WORK PROPERLY)
- [ ] CHECK SCREW FIXINGS / MOUNTING OF UNDERBODY PROTECTION.

INSPECTION & CLEANING

- [ ] VISUAL INSPECTION, CHECK & TIGHTEN SCREWS & SCREW FIXINGS INTERNALLY & EXTERNALLY AS REQUIRED. (BEFORE & AFTER TRAVEL FOR CORRUGATIONS)
- [ ] VISUAL INSPECTION, CHECK EXTERNAL SILICON SEALING.
- [ ] REFER FIBREGLASS CARE, SPECIAL NOTE: CLEAN ROOF.
- [ ] GENERAL CLEANLINESS, REFER OTHER CLEANING RECOMMENDATIONS.
- [ ] GENERAL VISUAL INSPECTION FOR THINGS THAT DON'T LOOK RIGHT.

SERVICING & MANUALS

- Schedule required servicing. (Do you have appropriate service sheets?)
- Refer product manuals for other suggested maintenance work required.
- If you don't have a manual for something in or on your caravan, contact your dealer.

CARE & CLEANING

ROLL OUT AWNING CARE

Regular maintenance of roll out awnings is crucial to ensure their longevity and functionality. Here are some key points to consider for maintenance.

1. CLEANING

Hose down the awning with clean water every month or so, and allow the fabric to fully dry before rolling it up to reduce mould and mildew growth.

2. DEEP CLEANING

Use a lightly chlorinated solution of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water or a specialist RV awning cleaner. Use cold or lukewarm water, a soft brush and allow the fabric to air dry fully before rolling it up.

3. REPAIRING

Small holes and tears in vinyl awning fabric can often be repaired with ready made tapes or patches. Use a specialist adhesive for long lasting repairs. For larger damage there are vinyl repairers in most larger cities.



CARE & CLEANING

CLEANING ACRYLIC SURFACES

Clean acrylic surfaces (windows / hatches) safely using a mild soap solution, soft microfibre cloths and gentle motions to avoid scratches and clouding.

1. **Prepare your materials.** Use microfibre or other soft, non-abrasive cloths, mild dish soap or gentle detergent, lukewarm water and, if preferred, a spray bottle for easier application. Avoid paper towels, rough sponges and stiff-bristled brushes, as these can scratch acrylic.
2. **Remove dust and loose dirt.** Before using any liquid, gently remove dust with a dry microfibre cloth or soft brush. For stubborn particles, use compressed air or a blow dryer on the coolest setting to clear debris without scratching the surface.
3. **Prepare cleaning solution.** Mix a few drops of mild dish soap into a bucket of lukewarm water. Pour into a spray bottle if useful. Avoid ammonia, acetone, alcohol-based cleaners and other harsh chemicals, as they can cause clouding or fine cracks over time.
4. **Apply the solution.** Spray the solution onto the cloth rather than directly onto the acrylic to keep excess moisture away from edges and frames. Lightly dab or wipe in gentle circular motions, using minimal pressure because acrylic scratches easily.
5. **Address stubborn spots.** For fingerprints or sticky residue, lightly dampen a soft cloth with isopropyl alcohol, wipe the affected area gently, then rinse straight away with a clean damp cloth. Use this only sparingly to reduce the risk of long-term damage.
6. **Rinse and dry.** Rinse with a clean sponge or cloth soaked in plain water to remove soap residue. Dry by blotting gently with a clean microfibre cloth or chamois. Avoid rubbing, as this can create fine scratches.
7. **Optional polishing.** For extra clarity and shine, apply an anti-static acrylic polish after cleaning. This helps reduce dust buildup while protecting the surface.

MAINTENANCE TIPS

- Always use clean cloths so dirt or grit is not transferred back onto the acrylic.
- Work from top to bottom so water and debris move away from areas already cleaned.
- Avoid hot water, which may warp thinner acrylic sheets.
- Clean regularly and gently to prevent buildup that may require harsher methods later.

FOLLOWING THESE STEPS WILL HELP KEEP ACRYLIC WINDOWS CLEAR, STREAK-FREE AND SCRATCH-FREE WHILE PRESERVING THEIR DURABILITY AND APPEARANCE.

CARE & CLEANING

CLEANING ABS PLASTIC

Clean ABS plastic safely with mild soap, water or limited isopropyl alcohol, and avoid harsh solvents such as acetone that can damage the surface.

ROUTINE CLEANING

For everyday dirt, dust or fingerprints, use a soft microfibre cloth with mild dish soap and warm water. Lightly dampen the cloth, wring out excess water, and wipe the ABS surface gently in small sections. Rinse the cloth with clean water, wipe again to remove soap residue, then dry with a soft towel to prevent water spots.

REMOVING STUBBORN STAINS

For tougher grime, sticky residue or light stains, use 70% isopropyl alcohol sparingly. Apply it to a soft cloth, test it on a hidden area first, then gently blot the mark. Do not soak the plastic, as too much alcohol may make ABS brittle over time. ABS-safe plastic cleaners can also be used for deeper cleaning when required.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

- Use soft microfibre or cotton cloths. Avoid paper towels, rough fabrics, scouring pads and abrasive sponges, as they can scratch the surface.
- For mineral deposits or soap scum on ABS showers or exterior parts, use a soft-bristled brush with gentle circular motions.
- After cleaning, rinse thoroughly with clean water and dry completely to protect the finish.

WHAT TO AVOID

- Avoid acetone, ammonia, bleach and harsh solvents, which can discolour ABS plastic, make it brittle or degrade the surface.
- Avoid high-pressure washing and aggressive scrubbing, especially on interior ABS parts, to reduce the risk of scratches and fading.

MAINTENANCE TIPS

- For interior ABS parts, a UV protectant spray such as 303 Aerospace Protectant or Meguiar's Natural Shine Protectant can help reduce fading and cracking over time.
- Clean regularly to maintain the plastic's appearance and prevent dirt or oils from building up.
- For exterior ABS parts exposed to sun and weather, rinse off dirt first, apply a plastic-safe cleaner, then finish with a microfibre towel.

WITH THESE METHODS, ABS PLASTIC CAN STAY CLEAN, DURABLE AND PRESENTABLE FOR YEARS WITHOUT UNNECESSARY RISK OF DAMAGE.

CLEANING FIBREGLASS SHOWERS

Clean fibreglass showers safely with mild, non-abrasive products such as dish soap, baking soda and vinegar to remove soap scum, mildew and hard water stains without scratching the surface.

PREPARATION

- Clear the shower by removing bottles, razors and accessories so grime is not transferred back onto clean surfaces.
- Ventilate the area by opening windows or using fans to reduce moisture and fumes.
- Rinse first with warm water to loosen dirt and debris before applying any cleaner.

CLEANING AGENTS AND TOOLS

- Mild dish soap mixed with warm water is suitable for routine cleaning and helps remove oils and soap scum.
- Baking soda provides gentle cleaning power to lift grime without scratching.
- White vinegar helps dissolve mineral deposits, mould and mildew, and may be used alone or with baking soda on tougher stains.
- Hydrogen peroxide can be mixed with baking soda paste for stubborn mould or set-in stains.
- Use soft sponges, microfibre cloths or polyester brushes. Avoid scouring pads, steel wool and harsh scrubbers, as they can damage fibreglass.





CLEANING FIBREGLASS SHOWERS

CLEANING STEPS

1. **Apply the cleaner** by spraying a vinegar solution, using 1 part vinegar to 3 parts water, or a dish soap mixture onto the shower surfaces.
2. **Allow time to work** by leaving the cleaner on the surface for 10 to 15 minutes to loosen soap scum and stains.
3. **Scrub gently** with a non-abrasive sponge or cloth, paying attention to corners, textured floors and areas with buildup.
4. **Rinse well** with warm water to remove all cleaning residue.
5. **Dry thoroughly** with a soft cloth or squeegee to help prevent water spots and mould growth.

MAINTENANCE TIPS

- Wipe down after use with a microfibre cloth or suitable non-abrasive cleaning pad to help prevent buildup and reduce deep cleaning.
- Avoid bleach and harsh chemicals, as they can damage fibreglass resin and gel coat.
- Clean weekly with mild products to keep fibreglass bright and stop stubborn grime from developing.
- Use vinegar after each shower and allow the surface to air dry to reduce soap scum and mildew buildup.

FOLLOWING THESE STEPS WITH GENTLE HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS WILL HELP KEEP YOUR FIBREGLASS SHOWER CLEAN, SHINY AND DAMAGE-FREE FOR YEARS.



CARE & CLEANING

CLEANING STAINLESS STEEL

Clean stainless steel using mild solutions, soft cloths and by following the grain to maintain shine and prevent damage.

ROUTINE CLEANING

For everyday maintenance, use warm water and a mild dish soap. Apply the solution with a soft microfibre cloth or non-abrasive sponge, wiping in the direction of the grain to avoid streaks or scratches. After cleaning, rinse thoroughly with clean water and dry with a soft cloth to prevent water spots or streaks.

REMOVING STUBBORN STAINS

- **Baking soda:** Sprinkle on tough spots, dampen a soft cloth and gently scrub along the grain. Rinse and dry thoroughly.
- **Stainless steel-specific cleaners:** Use sprays or wipes for grease, fingerprints or minor discolouration. Apply to a cloth, not directly on the surface, and buff along the grain.
- **Diluted cleaning agents:** For weather stains or minor discolouration, mix 1 part cleaning agent with 5 to 10 parts water and use a very fine scouring powder like Italian Pumice or Whiting.

AVOIDING DAMAGE

- Do not use harsh chemicals such as chlorine bleach or ammonia-based cleaners, which can corrode stainless steel.
- Avoid ordinary steel wool or brushes; use only fine stainless steel wool, Scotch-Brite or soft sponges if scouring is necessary.
- Protect from scratches by placing mats under heavy objects and handling sharp items carefully.

POLISHING AND MAINTENANCE

- Polish periodically with stainless steel polish to restore shine and remove minor scratches.
- **Regular inspections:** Especially in areas exposed to salt, snowmelt or harsh weather, wipe surfaces periodically and inspect doors or frames monthly to maintain finish integrity.
- Establish a cleaning routine to prevent buildup of dirt, grime and fingerprints, ensuring long-term lustre.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- For burnt-on food or adhesive residues, start with basic cleaning and gradually use stronger methods if needed.
- Always work with the grain and avoid circular scrubbing motions unless specified for satin finishes.
- Homemade cleaners like water-vinegar mixtures can be effective for light cleaning.

CLEANING ALUMINIUM COMPOSITE PANEL

To clean aluminium composite panels effectively, follow these steps:

1. **Rinse with water.** Start by rinsing the panels with water to remove loose dirt and debris. Use a low-pressure water stream to avoid forcing water behind panel joins.
2. **Prepare cleaning solution.** Mix a small amount of mild pH neutral detergent with lukewarm water. Avoid acidic, alkaline or abrasive cleaners as they can damage the protective coating.
3. **Gentle scrubbing.** Dip a soft cloth or sponge into the solution and gently wipe the panels in a circular motion. For stubborn stains, use a non-abrasive brush. Always work in small sections.
4. **Rinse thoroughly.** After cleaning, rinse the panels completely with clean water to remove any soap residue, which can attract more dirt if left behind.
5. **Dry the surface.** Use a microfibre towel / cloth to dry the panels as thoroughly as possible. This prevents water spots and mineral deposits, especially in hard water areas.



ADVANCED CARE

For advanced care, consider applying a non-abrasive automotive wax or protective sealant recommended by the panel supplier to enhance water repellency and keep the surface cleaner for longer.

FIBREGLASS CARE & MAINTENANCE

Like all exterior finishes, gelcoat is exposed to the elements. Over time, sunlight, heat and moist air can cause the surface to oxidise, leading to fading and dullness, especially on darker colours. With the right care, however, gelcoat can retain its shine and protective qualities for many years. Maintenance requirements will vary depending on storage conditions, climate and how often your RV is used. This guide outlines simple, proven steps to help you protect your investment and keep your RV looking its best, on and off the road.

CARING FOR YOUR RV'S FIBREGLASS GELCOAT

Following a consistent care routine helps to prevent long-term damage and makes ongoing maintenance easier.

STEP 1: WASH

Removes surface dirt and loose contaminants that could bond to or etch the gelcoat surface.

BEST PRACTICE

- Wash your RV's exterior at least once a month, and more often if it's exposed to coastal air, dust, sap or bird droppings.
- Use a suggested gel wash formulated for RV or marine applications.
- Choose a pH-neutral product (around pH 7.0) to avoid stripping protective coatings.
- Remove bugs, sap, tar and bird droppings as soon as possible to prevent staining.
- Always test bug or tar removers on a small, hidden area before use.

AVOID

- Abrasive, caustic (high pH or alkaline) and ammonia-based products.
- Dishwashing liquid or household detergents.
- Dirty, gritty or stiff brushes.

NEUTRAL GEL WASH ONLY



FIBREGLASS CARE & MAINTENANCE

STEP 2: CLEAN

Sharpens colour, restores clarity and addresses surface imperfections. Washing removes loose contaminants, but it won't address bonded surface contaminants and defects. This is where cleaning comes in.

- **Above-surface contaminants:** Tree sap, environmental fallout, bugs.
- **Below-surface contaminants:** Scratches, swirls, oxidation.

BEST PRACTICE

- Use a colour restorer or oxidation remover appropriate for your gelcoat's condition to remove oxidation, stains and blemishes.

STEP 3: POLISH & PROTECT

Enhances gloss and shields the surface. Once the surface is clean and smooth, maintain your RV's shine with polishing and protection.

- **Polishing:** Conditions the gelcoat and restores its natural oils.
- **Protective coatings:** Seal the surface, reducing direct exposure to UV, moisture and contaminants.

BEST PRACTICE

- Polish and wax the gelcoat at least once every six months.
- For darker colours or RVs stored outside, polish and wax at least once every three months.



FIBREGLASS CARE & MAINTENANCE

STORAGE

Storage conditions significantly impact the lifespan and appearance of gelcoat surfaces. We recommend storing indoors wherever possible. However, if storing outdoors:

- Keep away from direct sunlight, trees and bird activity.
- Move frequently to minimise excessive sun exposure to one area.
- Use breathable covers only, ensuring they don't trap any moisture.

Always clean and dry your RV before fitting a cover, as dirt trapped beneath it can act as an abrasive, scratching the gelcoat.

CARE & MAINTENANCE

Consistent maintenance reduces effort and prevents costly detailing work.

- Wash regularly.
- Polish and wax periodically.
- Address oxidation or weathering early using appropriate products.
- Follow cleaning with polishing and protection to seal the surface.

If the surface is badly weathered, use an oxidation remover or cutting compound to address scratches and stains. Follow with polish and wax as with regular care and maintenance.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Before drying, apply Quik Wax onto the surface while it's still wet for extra protection.
- Use high-quality microfibre cloths to dry gelcoat surfaces.

GELCOAT CARE ROUTINE

1. **WASH** — Regularly
2. **POLISH** — Periodically
3. **WAX** — Seal the surface
4. **COVER** — Clean & dry first

POWDERCOAT CARE

LOOKING AFTER POWDERCOATED SURFACES

Powder coating is highly durable, but regular cleaning and proper maintenance help preserve its appearance and protection. Cleaning methods directly affect how long the finish retains its colour, gloss and protective qualities. Using unsuitable products or techniques can damage the coating, leading to premature dulling, discolouration or chemical attack that affects the integrity of the finish.

WHY PROPER CLEANING MATTERS

Regular cleaning also protects the coating, not just its appearance. Dirt, pollution, bird droppings, tree sap, salt spray and industrial fallout can degrade powder coating over time if left on the surface. Because these contaminants may be mildly acidic or alkaline, prolonged contact can stain, etch or accelerate weathering. Prompt removal helps prevent cumulative damage and extends the coating's service life.

This guide explains suitable cleaning methods for different environments and contamination types, outlines products and practices to avoid, recommends cleaning frequencies for various applications, and describes how to restore powder-coated surfaces showing early signs of ageing.



BASIC CLEANING: THE RIGHT PRODUCTS AND TECHNIQUE

For routine cleaning of powder-coated surfaces, the simplest approach is also the best: warm water with a mild, pH-neutral soap or detergent. Dish soap, car wash soap or any gentle liquid soap without abrasives or strong solvents works well. Mix a small amount of soap into a bucket of warm water, apply with a soft cloth, sponge or soft-bristle brush, and rinse thoroughly with clean water.

The technique matters as much as the product. Always start by rinsing the surface with plain water to remove loose dirt and grit. Washing a dirty surface without pre-rinsing drags abrasive particles across the coating, creating fine scratches that dull the finish over time. After pre-rinsing, wash with the soapy water using gentle pressure, working from top to bottom on vertical surfaces to prevent dirty water from running over already-cleaned areas.

Rinse thoroughly after washing to remove all soap residue. Soap left on the surface can attract dirt and leave a hazy film, particularly in hard water areas where mineral deposits form as the water evaporates. For the best results, do a final rinse with clean water and dry the surface with a soft, clean cloth or chamois to prevent water spots.

PRESSURE

For outdoor powder-coated surfaces a garden hose provides adequate rinsing pressure. Pressure washers can be used but should be kept at moderate pressure, below 1500 psi, and held at least 30 centimetres from the surface. High-pressure washing at close range can damage powder coating, particularly at edges and corners where the coating may be thinner.

CLOTHS

Microfibre cloths are ideal for cleaning powder-coated surfaces because they are soft, non-abrasive and effective at lifting dirt without scratching. Avoid using paper towels, which can be surprisingly abrasive, and never use steel wool, scouring pads or abrasive cleaning tools on powder-coated surfaces.

1500 PSI MAX
Pressure washer limit

30 CM
Minimum distance from surface

GARDEN HOSE
Enough for everyday rinsing

WHAT TO AVOID

Knowing what not to use on powder-coated surfaces is just as important as knowing the right cleaning method. Several common cleaning products and practices can damage powder coating, and the damage may not be immediately apparent. It can accumulate over repeated cleanings until the finish is noticeably degraded.

- **Strong solvents** are the most dangerous category. Acetone, MEK (methyl ethyl ketone), lacquer thinner and other aggressive solvents can soften, dissolve or discolour powder coating. Even brief contact with these solvents can leave permanent marks. If you need to remove a stubborn contaminant like adhesive residue or graffiti, use isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol) or mineral spirits, which are mild enough for most powder coatings. Test any solvent on an inconspicuous area first.
- **Abrasive cleaners,** including powdered cleansers, scouring creams and cleaning products containing grit, will scratch the powder coating surface, creating a dull, hazy appearance. Once the surface is scratched, the damage is permanent and cannot be reversed without recoating. This includes seemingly mild products like baking soda paste, which is abrasive enough to scratch glossy powder coatings.
- **Strong acids and alkalis** attack the chemical structure of powder coatings. Muriatic acid (hydrochloric acid), used for cleaning masonry and concrete, will damage powder coating on contact. Strong alkaline cleaners, including some oven cleaners and industrial degreasers, can soften and discolour the coating. Bleach (sodium hypochlorite) in concentrated form can also damage powder coating, though dilute bleach solutions used briefly for disinfection are generally safe if rinsed promptly.
- **Ammonia-based glass cleaners** are a common source of damage because people assume they are safe for all surfaces. While a single use may not cause visible damage, repeated use of ammonia-based cleaners on powder coating can cause gradual dulling and discolouration over time. Use ammonia-free cleaners on powder-coated surfaces.
- **Pressure washing** at excessive pressure or too close a distance can physically damage powder coating, particularly at edges, corners and any areas where the coating may have minor defects. Keep pressure moderate and maintain distance from the surface.



CLEANING FREQUENCY

The appropriate cleaning frequency for powder-coated surfaces depends on the environment, the type of contamination and the aesthetic standards required. Over-cleaning wastes time and can cause unnecessary wear, while under-cleaning allows contaminants to accumulate and degrade the finish.

HOW OFTEN IS ENOUGH?

- **Exterior surfaces in normal environments** should be cleaned at least four times per year. A quarterly cleaning schedule removes accumulated dirt, pollen and atmospheric deposits before they can cause staining or degradation. Spring and autumn cleanings are particularly important to remove winter salt deposits and summer pollen and tree sap.
- **Exterior surfaces in aggressive environments** require more frequent cleaning. Coastal locations with salt spray exposure should be cleaned monthly to remove salt deposits that accelerate coating degradation. Industrial areas with chemical fallout, areas near construction sites with concrete dust, and locations with heavy bird activity all benefit from more frequent cleaning.
- **After specific contamination events** (bird droppings, tree sap, graffiti, chemical spills or construction dust) clean the affected area as soon as possible. These contaminants become more difficult to remove and more damaging to the coating the longer they remain in contact with the surface.



4X A YEAR
Normal environments

MONTHLY
Coastal salt spray

ASAP
Droppings, sap, spills, dust

REMOVING STUBBORN CONTAMINANTS

Some contaminants require more than soap and water to remove from powder-coated surfaces. Knowing how to handle these situations without damaging the coating is important for maintaining the finish.

- **Bird droppings** are acidic and can etch powder coating if left in contact for extended periods. Remove bird droppings as soon as possible by soaking with warm soapy water to soften them, then wiping away with a soft cloth. Do not scrape dried bird droppings with a hard tool, as this can scratch the coating. If staining has occurred, a mild automotive polish may help restore the surface.
- **Tree sap and resin** can be removed with isopropyl alcohol or mineral spirits applied to a soft cloth. Dab the solvent onto the sap and allow it to soften for a minute before gently wiping away. Avoid rubbing aggressively, as the sap can act as an abrasive if dragged across the surface. Wash the area with soap and water after removing the sap to remove any solvent residue.
- **Rust stains** from contact with rusting steel objects, such as steel furniture on a powder-coated surface, can be removed with a mild oxalic acid-based rust remover. Apply the product according to its instructions, allow it to work for the specified time, and rinse thoroughly. Do not use strong acid-based rust removers, which can damage the powder coating.
- **Mineral deposits and hard water stains** can be removed with a solution of white vinegar and water (1:1 ratio). Apply the solution, allow it to sit for a few minutes to dissolve the mineral deposits, then wipe clean and rinse. For heavy mineral buildup, a commercial lime and calcium remover formulated for painted surfaces can be used.



POWDERCOAT CARE

RESTORING FADED & CHALKED POWDER COATING

Over years of exterior exposure, powder coating can gradually lose its gloss and develop a chalky surface texture. This chalking is caused by UV degradation of the resin at the coating surface, which breaks down the top layer of the coating into a fine powder. Chalking is a normal ageing process for all organic coatings.

Mild chalking can often be improved through cleaning and polishing. Start by washing the surface thoroughly with soap and water to remove the loose chalk and accumulated dirt. This alone can significantly improve the appearance of a mildly chalked surface. After washing, apply an automotive-grade cutting compound or polishing compound with a soft cloth, working in small sections. The compound removes the degraded surface layer, exposing fresher coating underneath and restoring some of the original gloss.

For more significant fading and chalking, a dedicated coating restorer product can help. These products, available from coating maintenance suppliers, contain mild abrasives and conditioning agents that remove the degraded surface layer and leave a protective film that temporarily restores colour, depth and gloss. The effect is not permanent (the restorer will need to be reapplied periodically) but it can extend the acceptable appearance of ageing powder coating by several years.

Wax-based protective products can be applied after polishing or restoring to provide a sacrificial barrier that slows further UV degradation. Automotive-grade carnauba wax or synthetic polymer sealants work well on powder-coated surfaces. Apply a thin, even coat, allow it to haze, and buff to a shine. Reapply every 3 to 6 months for ongoing protection.

WHEN TO RECOAT

When chalking and fading have progressed beyond what polishing and restoration can address (when the colour has shifted significantly, the surface is rough and powdery, or the coating is thin enough that the substrate is visible) the coating has reached the end of its service life and needs to be stripped and recoated. No amount of polishing or restoration product can substitute for a fresh coating at this stage.

WASH Loose chalk › **POLISH** Cutting compound › **RESTORE** Coating restorer › **WAX** Every 3-6 months › **RECOAT** End of life

HOW TO CLEAN AND MAINTAIN YOUR COLOURED GRANITE KITCHEN SINK AND BOWL

CLEANING GRANITE SINKS

Granite sinks are quickly becoming a favourite in modern kitchens, thanks to their beautiful aesthetics and impressive durability. Available in a wide range of colours, they not only enhance the visual appeal of your space but also offer practical benefits, making them a perfect choice for both style and functionality.

EVERYDAY MAINTENANCE

Here's how you can maintain your granite kitchen sink and bowl in three simple steps. Although granite composite sinks are low maintenance, regular, daily cleaning can help to ensure they stay in tip-top condition. Stainable, coloured liquids such as dyes or vegetable juices should be removed straight away and most deposits from general, everyday use can be simply cleaned with just soap, hot water and a soft sponge.

After washing around your sink, always remember to rinse it thoroughly with some fresh water and, to stop limescale from building up on the surface over time, dry it after use with a clean, soft microfibre cloth. This will also stop any water spots from forming.

REMOVING LIMESCALE

Living in areas with hard water often leads to the challenge of limescale deposits in both kitchens and bathrooms, which can be frustrating for those affected. However, there's no need to tolerate those milky white marks on your granite kitchen sink. To effectively combat limescale and stubborn deposits, we recommend using a specialised cleaner applied with a Scotch-Brite pad or similar. This combination helps loosen deposits for easy removal and, with regular use, can provide lasting protection, allowing water to roll right off.

Alternatively, you can try a mild, diluted acid such as vinegar. Simply soak the affected areas with a solution of one part vinegar and three parts water to make scrubbing away stains easier. After cleaning, be sure to thoroughly rinse off all the solution and wipe away any moisture with a dry, clean microfibre cloth for a sparkling, limescale-free sink.

GENTLY DOES IT

Although granite material is strong, scratch-proof and resistant to discolouration, it's best to steer clear of harsh chemicals when cleaning your coloured granite sink. Not only are they a less environmentally friendly option, but they could also dull the surface.

Likewise, don't dispose of any unused paint or household chemicals such as paint strippers down your sink as they could damage its rich colour, while scouring pads and wire wool could eventually cause hard-to-remove scratches. As granite is harder than most metals, aluminium pots and pans can sometimes leave a grey mark on the surface of your coloured granite sink. This is nothing to worry about though as it's not permanent and can be easily cleaned off.

EASY CARAVAN MAINTENANCE FOR BEGINNERS

A strange noise halfway to your favourite campsite or a problem that appears once you're set up can quickly take the shine off a trip. Fortunately, regular servicing and a few simple checks can prevent most issues before they become serious.

Caravan maintenance doesn't need to be complicated or costly. Many essential tasks can be done in your driveway with basic tools and a cuppa nearby.

We often see caravans return for service with problems that a few minutes of regular attention could have prevented. That's why we encourage customers to handle the basics themselves. Knowing your van inside and out is rewarding, and it beats waiting for help on the side of the road.

Whether you're new to caravanning or have been putting off maintenance, this guide will help you keep your home away from home in top condition.

WHY BOTHER WITH REGULAR MAINTENANCE?

Let's be honest: no one buys a caravan to spend weekends crawling around underneath it. You want to enjoy the freedom of the road, not wonder whether everything will hold together until the next town.

A little preventive care makes a big difference. Regular caravan maintenance helps prevent breakdowns, protects your investment, and keeps your van ready for the next adventure.

Routine checks also make travel less stressful. A well-maintained caravan holds its value, provides dependable service for years, and gives you the confidence to explore the out-of-the-way places that make caravanning so rewarding. When professional servicing is needed, your technician will also appreciate working on a van that has been properly cared for.



GETTING STARTED: YOUR BASIC TOOLKIT

Before we dive into specific tasks, let's talk tools. You don't need a workshop full of equipment, just some quality basics that will serve you well on the road and at home. Having a proper tool kit gives you a solid understanding of your caravan's systems and the confidence to tackle basic maintenance.

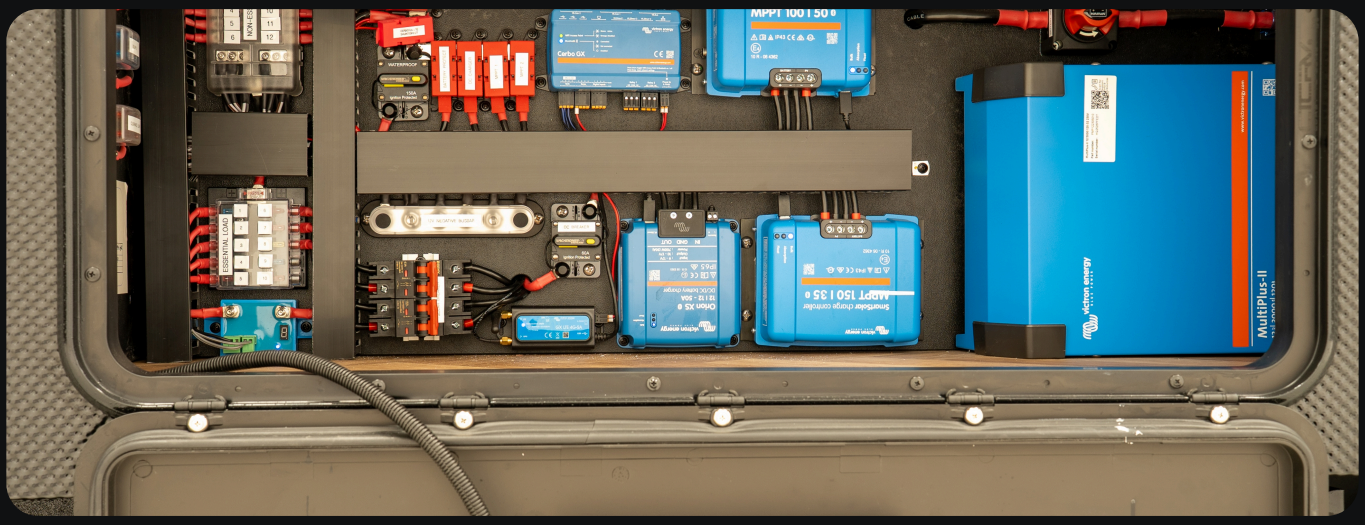
ESSENTIAL TOOLS

- A decent socket set (you'll use this more than you think)
- Torque wrench
- Quality screwdrivers, both flathead and Phillips
- Adjustable spanner for those odd-sized nuts
- Grease gun with marine-grade grease
- Electrical contact cleaner and silicon spray
- Basic multimeter for electrical troubleshooting

HANDY CONSUMABLES

- Assorted fuses and spare globes
- Plumber's tape and good-quality silicone sealant
- Some spare electrical wire
- Basic plumbing bits and pieces
- Tank cleaning products
- Lubricants for all those squeaky hinges

HAVING THESE ITEMS ON HAND MEANS YOU CAN TACKLE PROBLEMS AS THEY CROP UP, RATHER THAN ADDING THEM TO THE EVER-GROWING LIST OF THINGS TO DEAL WITH "NEXT TIME."



DO THE FOLLOWING BEFORE EVERY TRIP

Some checks are important enough to do before every trip. These quick steps are the foundation of good caravan maintenance and can help prevent avoidable problems on the road.

TYRES

Your tyres keep your caravan moving, so they need regular attention. Check the pressure in every tyre, including the spare, using a proper gauge rather than relying on sight. Underinflated tyres wear faster, increase fuel use, and build up dangerous heat that can lead to blowouts.

While you're checking pressures, inspect the tyre walls and tread. Cracks, bulges or uneven wear are warning signs that should be dealt with early. Preventable tyre failures can ruin a holiday, especially when help is hours away.

Caravan tyres work harder than car tyres. They carry heavy loads, sit still for long periods, and face harsh conditions such as outback heat and coastal salt air. A few minutes of checking now can save a lot of trouble later.

LIGHTS

Faulty lights can quickly turn a trip into a roadside stop. Before hitching up, test every exterior light on your caravan: brake lights, indicators, tail lights and clearance lights. Ask someone to help so you can check them properly.

Clean the electrical connections at the same time. Dust, moisture and corrosion can cause electrical problems, but a quick spray with contact cleaner helps keep everything working reliably.

WHEEL NUTS

Loose wheel nuts are a serious safety risk. Use a torque wrench to check them before you leave and again during your trip. This only takes a few minutes and can help prevent a dangerous failure.

1. **TYRES** — Pressure incl. the spare
2. **LIGHTS** — Test with a helper
3. **WHEEL NUTS** — Torque wrench check

MONTHLY MAINTENANCE

Once a month, or after returning from a trip, take a closer look at your caravan's systems. These checks help identify issues before they become costly failures.

WATER SYSTEMS

Your water system is easy to overlook until it stops working. Flush the tanks regularly, especially after periods of storage, as stagnant water can develop unpleasant tastes and odours.

Run fresh water through the entire system, check taps and fittings for leaks, and listen to the water pump. Constant cycling or unusual noise usually points to a leak or a pump adjustment issue.

GAS SYSTEMS

Gas leaks are serious but preventable with regular checks. Mix soapy water in a spray bottle and apply it to all gas connections. Bubbling indicates a leak that needs immediate professional attention.

Test your gas appliances as well. The heater, stove and hot water system should ignite reliably and burn with a clean blue flame. Yellow or orange flames may indicate gas flow or adjustment problems.

ELECTRICAL HEALTH CHECK

Your 12V system works hard, especially when camping off-grid. Keep battery terminals clean and check voltage regularly with a multimeter.

If your batteries consistently show low voltage, they may need replacing. Planning ahead is better than discovering the problem while trying to power your fridge remotely.

While checking the power system, test other electrical equipment, including the water pump, fans and interior lights, to confirm everything is working correctly.





BRAKES, SUSPENSION & SEASONAL CARE

BRAKES AND SUSPENSION

Do not attempt brake servicing unless you are qualified, but watch for warning signs. Unusual noises when moving slowly or changes in electric brake controller behaviour should be investigated.

Inspect visible suspension components for wear or damage. If your suspension, weight distribution hitch or tow ball setup has grease nipples, a few pumps with a grease gun will help keep parts moving smoothly.

SEASONAL MAINTENANCE: PREPARING FOR STORAGE AND HEAVY USE

Every few months, take a broader look at your caravan's condition. This helps catch slower-developing issues and prepare for seasonal use, long trips or storage.

EXTERIOR CARE: KEEPING THE WEATHER OUT

Australia's weather is tough on caravans. UV, heat, rain and hail can wear down seals and surfaces, so inspect the seals around windows, doors and roof fittings regularly. Keep these areas clean to reduce rust and deterioration.

Small gaps can often be repaired with fresh sealant, but larger issues need professional attention. Resealing a window is far cheaper than repairing interior water damage.

Your awning also needs regular care. Roll it out fully, clean it, and check that the mechanism operates smoothly. A clean, well-maintained awning will last much longer than one that is neglected.



INTERIOR SYSTEMS & STORAGE PREPARATION

INTERIOR SYSTEMS

Clean those air conditioning / dust suppression filters regularly, especially if you're travelling through dusty country. Most filters can be cleaned with a vacuum or a gentle wash, but check your manual for specific instructions. While you're at it, make sure your roof vents aren't blocked. Proper ventilation prevents condensation issues that can lead to mould problems down the track.

Your fridge works harder than any appliance in your home, so give it some love. Clean it thoroughly, check the door seals, and make sure the drainage system is clear. For long-term storage, clean it completely and leave the doors slightly open with some bicarb soda inside to keep things fresh.

STORAGE PREPARATION: SETTING UP FOR SUCCESS

If you're storing your van for extended periods, a bit of preparation pays big dividends. Drain all water systems completely, as even a small amount of water can cause problems if it freezes or goes stagnant.

Remove batteries if possible and store them where they can be kept charged. If not, check on them periodically and don't let them go flat. Clean everything thoroughly and ensure the van is completely dry before you close it up. A little ventilation helps prevent condensation, but secure all access points to keep unwanted visitors out.



WHEN TO CALL THE PROFESSIONALS

There's a fine line between sensible DIY maintenance and getting in over your head. Some jobs require professional expertise, proper equipment and certifications, particularly anything involving gas systems, major electrical work or structural components.

Annual professional servicing isn't just a good idea; it's often required to maintain your warranty. A qualified technician at a service centre will check things you can't safely inspect yourself and catch problems before they become failures. They'll also make sure your setup is safe and that your loaded caravan weight doesn't exceed your gross vehicle mass or what your tow vehicle can handle, and that you're within all the maximum weight limits for your rig.

Keep good records of all maintenance and services. This helps with warranty issues, resale value, and tracking any recurring problems that might indicate bigger issues developing.

Different suspensions can have different servicing requirements and intervals, so always check with your dealer and / or suspension supplier when having your van serviced.



MAINTENANCE FOR BEGINNERS

YOUR GO-TO CARAVAN MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

BEFORE EVERY SINGLE TRIP

- [ ] CHECK ALL TYRE PRESSURES AND CONDITION
- [ ] TEST EVERY EXTERIOR LIGHT
- [ ] VERIFY WHEEL NUT TIGHTNESS
- [ ] CHECK HITCH COUPLING AND SAFETY CHAINS
- [ ] TEST THE ELECTRIC BRAKES AND THE BREAKAWAY SYSTEM
- [ ] SECURE ALL LOOSE ITEMS INSIDE
- [ ] CHECK THAT FIRE ALARMS AND FIRE EXTINGUISHERS ARE ACCESSIBLE
- [ ] VERIFY FIRST AID KIT IS STOCKED AND CURRENT

WEEKLY WHILE TRAVELLING

- [ ] CLEAN TRAILER PLUG CONNECTIONS IF CONDITIONS ARE DUSTY OR HUMID
- [ ] LISTEN FOR NEW RATTLES OR LOOSE FITTINGS
- [ ] CHECK THE WATER SYSTEM FOR LEAKS
- [ ] TEST WATER PUMP OPERATION
- [ ] MONITOR BATTERY VOLTAGE

MONTHLY OR AFTER EACH TRIP

- [ ] FLUSH AND REFILL WATER TANKS
- [ ] TEST ALL GAS APPLIANCES AND CONNECTIONS
- [ ] CLEAN BATTERY TERMINALS AND CHECK VOLTAGE
- [ ] LUBRICATE HINGES, LATCHES AND THE JOCKEY WHEEL
- [ ] INSPECT AWNING CONDITION
- [ ] CHECK EXTERIOR SEALS AROUND WINDOWS AND DOORS

EVERY THREE MONTHS

- [ ] SERVICE AIR CONDITIONING / DUST SUPPRESSION FILTERS
- [ ] CHECK THE HOT WATER SYSTEM ANODE IF APPLICABLE
- [ ] CLEAN GREY WATER SYSTEM THOROUGHLY
- [ ] UPDATE ANY SMART DEVICE FIRMWARE
- [ ] DEEP CLEAN FRIDGE AND CHECK DOOR SEALS

EVERY SIX MONTHS

- [ ] TREAT RUBBER WINDOW SEALS WITH SILICON
- [ ] PROFESSIONAL GAS SYSTEM SAFETY CHECK
- [ ] COMPREHENSIVE BRAKE SYSTEM INSPECTION
- [ ] REVIEW SOLAR AND ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS
- [ ] DETAILED CHASSIS AND SUSPENSION CHECK

ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- [ ] COMPLETE SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE CHECK
- [ ] GAS CERTIFICATION AND APPLIANCE SERVICE
- [ ] BRAKE SYSTEM OVERHAUL
- [ ] STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY INSPECTION
- [ ] INSURANCE AND REGISTRATION RENEWALS

MAINTENANCE FOR BEGINNERS

YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE STARTS WITH PROPER CARE

Effective caravan maintenance comes down to three habits: start with simple checks, stay consistent, and deal with small issues before they become bigger problems. Once you build a routine, maintenance quickly becomes second nature.

Begin with the basics, such as tyres, lights and water systems, then add more tasks as your confidence grows. Understanding how your van works is rewarding and helps you keep everything operating as it should.

With regular care, your caravan can deliver years of reliable service. The time you spend on maintenance pays off through smoother trips, fewer repair costs, and confidence that your home away from home is ready for the next adventure.

At Vacationer, we build caravans for Australia's toughest conditions, but even the best engineering needs regular care to perform at its best. Whether you are planning a weekend escape or preparing for the big lap, our Australian-made caravans are designed to get you there in comfort and style.

THREE MAINTENANCE HABITS

1. **START SIMPLE** — Tyres, lights, water
2. **STAY CONSISTENT** — Build a routine
3. **FIX IT EARLY** — Before they grow



PACKING FOR BEGINNERS

HOW TO PACK YOUR CARAVAN, FOR BEGINNERS

If opening a caravan locker sends gear tumbling out, your packing system probably needs attention. Learning how to pack caravan storage so it stays safe, balanced and easy to access usually comes down to a few practical habits, not a complete setup overhaul.

A well-packed caravan tows better, is easier to live from, and makes quick roadside stops less frustrating. It also protects your gear from damage and reduces the rummaging that happens when items are packed wherever they fit just before departure.

HOW TO PACK CARAVAN STORAGE WITHOUT WASTING SPACE

Pack according to weight, access needs and storage location. Heavy items should sit low and as close to the axle as possible, while lighter bulky gear can go higher or further out. Everyday items should remain easy to reach without unpacking half the van.

Many packing problems start when storage is planned around empty space instead of towing balance. A camp oven, tool kit, bottled drinks and power gear may seem tidy in the front boot, but too much weight at either end can affect stability. If the van feels unsettled on the highway, review the storage layout first.

Give every category a clear home: cooking gear in one zone, bedding in another, power leads together, and outdoor setup gear together. When everything has a place, packing before a trip and packing down in a hurry both become easier.



START WITH WEIGHT AND BALANCE FIRST

Before buying tubs, dividers or labels, focus on weight distribution. Dense items such as tools, recovery gear, generators, batteries, tinned food and bottled liquids should be stored low and near the centre where possible. This improves stability and reduces strain on cupboards and fittings.

Every caravan layout involves some compromise. Some provide useful internal storage near the axle, while others rely more on front or tunnel boots. If central space is limited, spread heavy items evenly and avoid creating one overloaded area.

Also consider tow ball weight. Loading too much gear at the front can make the hitch heavier than intended, while too much weight at the rear can encourage sway. Practical packing matters, but safe packing matters more.

WHAT SHOULD GO LOW AND CENTRAL

Place heavy, compact items in lower cupboards, under-seat storage or central lockers where the layout allows. Tool bags, bottled drinks, spare parts, hoses, levelling gear and pantry items usually belong here. Avoid leaving hard items loose where they can shift or hit plumbing or fittings.

Use tubs, crates or soft-sided bags to contain heavier items. Soft-sided storage often works best in tight caravan spaces because it flexes into awkward areas and is less likely to rattle.



PACK AROUND HOW YOU ACTUALLY TRAVEL

WHAT SHOULD GO HIGH OR OUT OF THE WAY

Use upper cupboards and overhead storage for lighter items such as towels, clothing, doonas, paper products and soft food items. Secure breakables properly and avoid storing anything dense overhead where it could cause damage if it moves.

Items used only occasionally do not need prime storage space. Extra shoes, spare linen and backup kitchen items can go in harder-to-reach areas, provided they remain light.

PACK AROUND HOW YOU ACTUALLY TRAVEL

A caravan packed for a weekend away will differ from one prepared for a two-week regional trip. The best system is the one that suits how you travel.

If you move camp often, keep setup gear easy to grab. Chairs, a folding table, awning accessories, wheel chocks, power leads and water hoses should be near the door or in an external locker. For longer stays, tuck occasional-use items deeper and prioritise food, clothing and everyday gear inside.

Families often need quicker access to more items than couples. Snacks, first aid, torches, wipes, charging gear and wet-weather extras should be easy to reach. A simple packing system saves time and reduces frustration.

WHERE IT GOES

UP HIGH
Light items: towels, clothing, doonas, paper products

HARD TO REACH
Occasional-use items, as long as they stay light

NEAR THE DOOR
Setup gear: chairs, table, chocks, power leads, hoses



USE ZONES, NOT RANDOM GAPS

One of the easiest ways to improve caravan storage is to stop filling any empty space you can find. That may work once, but it makes the next trip harder because nothing has a set place.

Create simple zones instead. Keep kitchen items together, even across two cupboards. Store outdoor gear together. Keep electrical items, adaptors, leads and chargers in one dedicated container. Group bathroom and cleaning products so they are easy to find.

Zoning has two benefits: you find items faster, and you are less likely to overpack because duplicates become obvious. Many travellers carry too many “just in case” items without realising it, and zoning makes that clear quickly.

STORAGE TUBS, BAGS AND ORGANISERS

You do not need a fancy fit-out to improve storage. A few practical organisers can make a big difference: clear tubs for pantry items and loose gear, soft bags for clothing and bedding, and drawer organisers for utensils, torches and small items.

Avoid overdoing it. Too many containers can waste space, especially in smaller vans. Choose organisers that suit the cupboard shape and still allow access to items behind them.

PACK BY ZONE

KITCHEN
Kept together, even across two cupboards

OUTDOOR
All outdoor gear in one place

ELECTRICAL
Adaptors, leads and chargers in one container

BATHROOM
Bathroom and cleaning products grouped

SIMPLE ORGANISERS

CLEAR TUBS
Pantry items and loose gear

SOFT BAGS
Clothing and bedding

DRAWER ORGANISERS
Utensils, torches, small items

KEEP DAILY-USE GEAR EASY TO REACH

The best-packed van is not the one that looks perfect before departure. It is the one that still works on day four when you need a torch in the rain or a frypan before coffee.

Think through a normal day on the road. What do you need first thing in the morning? What do you reach for when arriving late to camp? What comes out at fuel stops or lunch breaks? Those items should be the easiest to access.

Kitchen basics, tea and coffee gear, toiletries, chargers, medications, pet items and weather layers should not be buried behind spare parts or backup supplies. If making lunch means unloading three compartments, the storage plan needs work.

A small grab-and-go setup tub is also useful. Keeping the power lead, hose fittings, levelling ramps, mallet and chocks in one place can make arrival much faster, especially in fading light.



PACKING FOR BEGINNERS

PROTECT GEAR FROM MOVEMENT AND DAMAGE

Australian roads are tough on loose caravan gear. Even on sealed roads, vibration, corrugations and sudden braking can quickly turn poorly packed storage into a mess.

Fill gaps so items cannot shift. Use non-slip liners in cupboards and drawers, wrap breakables in tea towels or padded containers, secure bottles upright where possible, and keep chemicals away from food and soft furnishings.

Cupboard latches help, but they cannot contain everything. If you have opened a door to a packet avalanche or broken mug, you already know internal containment matters. Pack for movement, not just for fit.

External lockers need the same care. Wet gear, hoses and dirty items can go there, but they should still be restrained. A tunnel boot full of loose gear can become noisy and disorganised quickly.



WHAT TO LEAVE AT HOME

Learning to pack caravan storage also means being honest about what you do not use. Every unnecessary item takes up space, adds weight and makes the van harder to manage.

Extra frypans, spare blankets in summer, duplicate tools, too many shoes and backup cable sets all add weight. If something has not left the cupboard in the last few trips, it probably does not need to come every time.

This is especially true for food and water. Carry what you need for the route and conditions, but avoid overloading the van with supplies “just in case.” Remote travel is different, but short coastal trips and holiday park stays usually allow a lighter, simpler setup.

REPACK AFTER THE FIRST TRIP, NOT SIX MONTHS LATER

No one gets caravan storage perfect the first time. The real test is how the van works on the road. If the kettle is always blocked in, the outdoor gear is hard to reach, or the pantry shifts every drive, fix it straight after the trip while the problem is fresh.

Small changes often make the biggest difference. Move heavy gear lower, shift daily items closer to the door, swap rigid tubs for soft bags, and remove anything you did not use. Steady adjustments will build a setup that suits your travel style.

If you are setting up from scratch, practical storage gear from a reliable Australian retailer can help without overcomplicating things. Keep it simple, pack with purpose, and make the layout work for the way you travel.

A GOOD CARAVAN STORAGE SETUP SHOULD MAKE EVERY TRIP EASIER BEFORE YOU EVEN LEAVE THE DRIVEWAY.

LEAVE AT HOME

Extra frypans | Spare blankets in summer | Duplicate tools | Too many shoes | Backup cable sets



SUSPENSION

HOW TEMPERATURE AFFECTS SHOCK ABSORBERS

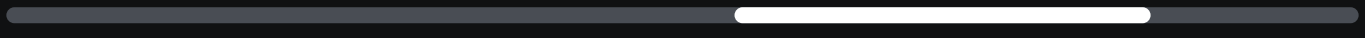
Cold weather thickens your shock absorber fluid, increasing viscosity by up to 300% at 0°C, making the ride feel stiffer and less compliant. Metal components contract slightly, tightening internal clearances by up to 0.02mm. In contrast, heat reduces fluid viscosity by as much as 30% above 120°C, causing foaming and inconsistent damping. This leads to spongier handling and reduced wheel control. Performance peaks between 70 and 110°C.

NOTABLE INSIGHTS

- Cold temperatures thicken damping fluid, increasing viscosity and making shocks stiffer and less responsive.
- Heat reduces fluid viscosity, leading to weaker damping and a softer, less controlled ride.
- Extreme cold causes metal contraction, tightening internal clearances and reducing suspension compliance.
- High temperatures can cause fluid foaming, resulting in inconsistent damping and spongy suspension behaviour.
- Optimal shock performance occurs between 70 and 110°C, where fluid flow and resistance are properly balanced.

WHY SHOCKS FEEL STIFFER IN COLD WEATHER

When temperatures drop, you'll notice your shocks feel stiffer because cold weather increases the viscosity of the damping fluid inside the shock absorber. This thicker fluid creates greater hydraulic resistance, slowing piston movement and reducing suspension response. You're fundamentally fighting more internal friction with every bump. At 0°C, damping fluid viscosity can increase by up to 300%, sharply limiting flow through valve orifices calibrated for normal conditions. Metal contraction also plays a role: steel components shrink slightly in the cold, tightening internal clearances by as much as 0.02mm. This further restricts movement and increases perceived stiffness. Together, hydraulic resistance and metal contraction reduce compliance over small imperfections, making your ride harsher. While temporary, this effect impacts handling precision and comfort until operating temperatures stabilise.



0°C
Fluid up to 300% thicker, stiffer ride

70–110°C
Best damping

120°C +
Thinner fluid, foaming

SUSPENSION

HOW TEMPERATURE AFFECTS SHOCK ABSORBERS

WHY SHOCKS LOSE EFFECTIVENESS IN THE HEAT

Although heat typically increases fluidity, it can undermine shock absorber performance by reducing the viscosity of the damping fluid. When you push your shocks hard, temperatures can exceed 180°F, triggering heat degradation that alters the fluid's chemical stability. This breakdown reduces damping efficiency, making your ride feel loose and uncontrolled. Excessive heat also causes fluid foaming, where air bubbles form in the hydraulic fluid. Since air compresses but fluid doesn't, foaming leads to inconsistent piston resistance and a spongy response. You'll notice reduced handling precision, especially during repeated bumps or high-speed cornering. Gas-charged shocks help minimise foaming, but prolonged heat cycles still compromise performance. Heat degradation accelerates seal wear and increases internal leakage, further diminishing control.

HOW TEMPERATURE EXTREMES AFFECT BRAKING AND HANDLING

Extreme temperatures don't just alter shock fluid behaviour, they directly impact braking and handling performance. In freezing conditions, shock fluid thickens, slowing response time and reducing wheel control during sudden stops. This lag diminishes tyre traction, especially on wet or icy roads, increasing stopping distance by up to 20%. Conversely, in extreme heat, fluid breaks down and loses viscosity, causing inconsistent damping. Your suspension alignment shifts subtly as components expand, altering camber angles by as much as 0.5 degrees, enough to unevenly distribute tyre wear and reduce cornering grip. Misaligned suspension also delays steering response, making emergency manoeuvres less precise. Both hot and cold extremes compromise the harmonised operation of shocks and springs, disturbing the vehicle's balance. The result: reduced stability, longer braking zones and less predictable handling, critical factors in maintaining control.



VACATIONER CARAVANS

BUILT TOUGH FOR EVERY ADVENTURE



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