

Key Chapter Takeaways



- ❑ RV winterization protects your water lines and holding tanks from damage caused by freezing temperatures.
- ❑ RV winterization should also include general maintenance tasks that prepare your RV for long-term storage.
- ❑ Winterization can be done by the RV owner, or by a service center or mobile technician.
- ❑ Some RV owners still camp in winterized RVs.



Planning for Cold Winter Months & Long-Term Storage



The Big Idea

Unless you live in the Sun Belt, you will need to winterize your RV to make it through the cold winter months without any damage.

Technically, winterizing just means that you remove all the water from your lines and tanks and run RV antifreeze through the lines to prevent water damage.

Most RV owners also perform a slate of maintenance tasks at this time, in addition to taking care of the water system. Just like in the spring, this is the perfect time to double check and clean the exterior and interior of your RV. This lesson will walk you through the winterizing process.

| DIY and Professional Winterizing

- Many RVers winterize their RVs themselves, while others prefer to have an expert handle the task.
- If you plan on having a service center or mobile RV tech winterize your RV, make plans in advance as this is a busy time for RV service professionals.
- If you are winterizing yourself, make sure to avoid common newbie mistakes reviewed in this lesson.

| What if the Temperatures Dip Before You Have Winterized?

Newbie Mistake #1: Panicking when you spot freezing temperatures in the forecast before you have winterized.

Don't panic. There are two safe options if an early cold snap arrives:

1. Empty your tanks, open up the low point drains, and blow out the water lines using an air compressor. Then there will be no water in the system to freeze and cause damage.
2. Put the RV heater on the lowest setting overnight—usually 55 degrees. This will cost you some money in propane, but will save you money in the long run by protecting your RV investment from water damage.

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| What if You Forget to Bypass Your Water Heater?

Newbie Mistake #2: Forgetting to bypass the water heater when adding RV antifreeze to your system.

Don't panic as this won't cause any damage. You'll just have to drain the water heater, buy some more antifreeze, and start over. This time, make sure you bypass the water heater.

| Is Your RV Season Over Once You Have Winterized?

Newbie Mistake #3: Assuming you can't camp in a winterized RV.

Camping in a winterized RV is not only possible, it can be fun and comfortable with many of the newer, all-season RVs. Just make a couple of adaptations:

1. Stock up on plenty of propane and have a propane monitoring system to make sure you don't run out.
2. Keep the food simple and use disposable dishes since you will not have running water.
3. Look for campgrounds with open, heated bathhouses in the winter months.
4. Note that you can still use the RV toilet and flush with antifreeze.

| Can You Only Dewinterize in the Spring?

Newbie Mistake #4: Assuming winterizing is a one-time annual event.

Once you are comfortable with the winterizing process, it shouldn't take you more than 30 minutes to dewinterize and rewinterize the water system of your RV. Some experienced RVers dewinterize in the middle of winter for RV trips in warmer regions of the country. Escaping the northern states for a warm-weather holiday in January or February might be an unexpected perk of the RV lifestyle for you.