

RV Maintenance Made Easy: LP System



How to Upkeep Your RV's LP System

Keep your RV's LP system in top shape with these easy maintenance and troubleshooting tips.

LP System Maintenance and Troubleshooting Tips

The LP system is responsible for all of the propane-fueled appliances in your RV, like the cooktop, oven, water heater, refrigerator, and furnace. It's imperative to conduct ongoing observation and maintenance to check for leaks or compromises to the system.

Preventative Maintenance

- Have a certified RV inspector or technician perform an annual leak drop test and pressure test on the propane system. This checks for any compromises to the connections or lines and confirms that the system holds proper pressure.
- Confirm the manufacturing dates on the collar of propane tanks on travel trailers or fifth wheels—they shouldn't be older than 10 years. If they are, they need to be re-certified or replaced by a certified propane specialist. The tanks on motorized RVs don't expire.
- Ensure that the connections at the tanks are secure and tight. Use an LP leak detector spray to verify that connections are leak-free.
- Consider the appliances that utilize propane, like the refrigerator, water heater, and furnace. Keep those compartments clear of debris, insects, and nests, and make sure floor vents and return vents for the furnace are clear and clean.
- Regularly test your LP detector for proper operation. LP detectors have a 5-year life span and will need to be replaced.



Always use an LP leak detector that's approved for LP gas. Some sprays contain chemicals that can corrode LP fittings.

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Troubleshooting

- RVers commonly experience something called a “propane lockout.” This means that a small amount of propane flows to the cooktop, but none of the larger appliances ignite. To remedy this, turn off any appliances calling for propane, turn off the service valve at the tanks, count to 10, and then open the valves to allow propane to flow into your system and build up the pressure needed to properly operate.
- Cold weather and low propane volume can reduce the available British thermal units (BTU) output in the LP system. Top off your propane tanks when you know that temperatures are going to drop.
- Only a certified propane technician can “break” into the propane lines for repairs. Insist that a propane leak drop test is performed again at this time.



Some LP detectors include a cut-off valve in the system and must be turned on before it will allow any propane to flow to appliances.