

ROUTE 66 Q&A: RV Performance

By Reggie Sykes, service writer, Hawley's Camping Center, a ROUTE 66 RV Network® dealership in Wilmington, N.C.

Q&A

EXPERT ADVICE ON CLEANING, GENERATORS AND REFRIGERATORS

Q. What's the best way to determine what size of generator I need for my motorhome? Can I run my generator for extra power while I'm hooked up at a campground? And am I really supposed to "exercise" my generator?

A. It is easy to overcomplicate picking the correct size of generator, and adding up power requirements of all the appliances is somewhat cumbersome and time-consuming. I suggest using Ohm's law, which tells us: volts x amps = watts.

For example, if you have a 50-amp service, this is the maximum current your system can handle at a constant draw of power. Since motorhomes and campers use 120-volt systems, multiply 50 amps x 120 volts = 6,000 watts. Therefore, a 6,000-watt generator would handle everything. You can add in another 1,000 to 1,500 watts for start-up surge requirements, such as for air-conditioning systems, microwaves, etc...

Using a generator when hooked up to a power source will not help provide extra power due to the fact that, almost without exception, motorhomes switch over to the generator automatically when the generator comes on line.

As far as "exercising" your generator, manufacturer guidelines usually advise you to run a generator once a week or so, for about 10 to 15 minutes after they reach running temperature.

Q. As luck would have it, my air conditioner developed a blockage and leaked inside onto the ceiling of our motorhome, causing a stain. I tried using a soap solution to remove the stain which was no help whatsoever. Any recommendations on how to remove stains from my white ceiling?

A. Always spot test first. If an upholstery or carpet cleaner does not do a satisfactory job, then a mild bleach/water mixture can be misted or towed onto white surfaces and this will usually work. If water/bleach mixture is used, rinse the area thoroughly with fresh water after the spot is gone to prevent yellowing or discoloration.

Q. We just moved up to our first Class A motorhome (Winnebago Vista), and I want to do everything I can to protect the finish. Are microfiber cloths really safe to use? What about products containing petroleum distillates? Will general car wash products ruin the finish?

A. Since a good motorhome's finish is not only designed to make it look good but also protect it from the elements, I would stick with products designed specifically for the RV industry, and yes, some of the industry products do contain petroleum distillates. Microfiber cloths seem to do a great job!

Q. Should a gas refrigerator maintain a 38-degree temperature when the ambient temperature is from 90 to 100? If not, can it be adjusted to do so? I've noticed that the internal temperature on our refrigerator starts climbing as the outside temperature rises.

A. The refrigerator temperature will, at times, rise with an increase in ambient temperature. There is also a slide-type thermostat on the fins in the refrigerator that can be used to adjust temperature as the weather changes. You might also consider purchasing a battery-powered refrigerator fan that is placed in the refrigerator and helps circulate cold air for more even and constant cooling.

ROUTE 66 RV Network® dealer service managers share knowledgeable opinions in this column, but their advice is not intended to supersede specific recommendations from manufacturers. Have a question about RV maintenance or performance? Send it to: Scenic Route Q/A, Cygnus Business Media, 1233 Janesville Ave., Fort Atkinson, WI 53538. Or, e-mail your question to: scenicroute@cygnusb2b.com.



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