

## ROUTE 66 Q&A: RV Performance

By John Smith, master certified RV technician, with over 30 years of experience, at The Great Outdoors, a ROUTE 66 RV Network® dealership in Fulton, New York

# Q&A

**Q.** By now, I've gotten the message that proper tire pressure is an important safety issue with my motorhome. But how do I know the gauge I'm using is accurate?

**A.** Tire gauges can vary in their accuracy and price has little to do with quality or accuracy. The best way to ensure a reasonable degree of accuracy is to purchase several different models, measure the pressure in a tire with all of them and then use the gauge that measures in the middle range of all of them. That gauge may still not be exact, but it will be close enough for safety concerns.

Also, no matter which gauge you use, measure each tire two or three times to be sure you measured it correctly. Remember that gauges can fall out of accuracy over time, so you may want to do

this every year or so and protect your gauge from dust, water or other abuses.

**Q.** My travel trailer is getting up in years, and I worry about the caulking. How long does caulk typically last? Any brand you recommend? We're on the road about three months out of the year, and do have a covered unit for storage. But I don't want to get careless about preventive maintenance and wind up with expensive leaks.

**A.** All RVs, no matter how old, should have all sealants inspected at least every six months, especially if you are washing it on a regular basis. Sealants that appear to be cracking or peeling should be removed and resealed with the correct type of sealant as per the application. Silicone sealants are excellent for resealing doors, windows and body and corner mouldings, but should never be applied to any roof especially rubber roofs. Roofs should be checked and resealed every six months also. Always use a plastic putty knife to remove old sealant to prevent roof damage. Depending on the exact type of rubber roof, use either Dicor or Alpha lap sealants. Neither should be applied if there is a presence of water or other liquids; the sealant will fail sooner when mixed with other liquids.

**Q.** My gas refrigerator hasn't been working right. How can I tell if I have a gas leak? What should I check first? Also, do I really have to level my refrigerator? How level does it have to be?

**A.** Most refrigerators require very little maintenance; however, the burner should be cleaned at least once a year and the ignitor probe readjusted to a 1/8-inch gap. A dirty or rusty burner can prohibit cooling to cool food safely.

The refrigerator will operate even on somewhat uneven terrain, such as traveling to and from your destination; however, it should be leveled

fairly accurately when stopping overnight or permanently for any length of time. This will ensure maximum efficiency of the cooling unit.

Gas leaks are usually found via the LP leak detector that most RVs come equipped with or by smelling the gas yourself. You should familiarize yourself with the smell of propane if you're not already. Leak detectors are not 100% foolproof. They should be checked annually by a professional to ensure their functionality. A manometer test should be performed annually or in the event you believe you have a leak. Many leaks are hard to find; a manometer gauge used per RVIA and RVDA guidelines will accurately pinpoint a leak. Should you believe you have a leak, turn off the propane at the tank immediately, open all windows and doors, and do not turn on any 12- or 110-volt appliances or lighting.

**Q.** I've noticed water dripping from my water heater's pressure relief and temperature valve when the water heater is running. Does this mean the valve is defective? What can I do to seal the leak?

**A.** P&T valves (pressure & temperature relief) usually leak when the normal air pocket trapped in the top of the hot water tank has been absorbed into the water, thereby not allowing ample room for the expansion of the water in the tank. It is forced out of the valve rather than expanding with the tank itself.

One way to replenish the air in the tank is by emptying the city water hose hooked to the RV and the city water supply, then reconnecting it. Turn on the city water faucet outside. Turn a hot water faucet on, the air in the hose will enter the hot water tank.

If it still leaks, the temperature of the water at the closest faucet to the tank should be checked. If it is above 150 degrees, that would indicate there is something wrong with the temperature control system. You should shut off the water heater and have it inspected by a technician.

If the temperature is within the allowed range of 120 to 140, then most likely the P&T valve has failed and should be replaced. Never remove it and put a plug in its place; this could cause pressure to build in the tank, causing it to explode. ⚡



### CLEAN DUMP RV Sanitation Systems

- All hoses and valves have a full 3 year warranty
- Transparent 1" inside diameter hose to insure max flow and won't run the pump dry
- Will dump 150 gallons in about 5 minutes
- System includes Macerator, 20 ft. hose with drip proof valve, wiring kit and clamps

**\$50 Rebate**

Go to [www.cleandump.com](http://www.cleandump.com) for terms and details  
Sold at Camping World and Most RV Dealers

Ask about our extension hoses!

**Clean Dump**  
division of Actech, Inc.

sales@cleandump.com  
[www.cleandump.com](http://www.cleandump.com)

Phone: 360-798-2437 Fax: 360-213-2286