



Clear Water for your RV



By Stuart Price

Several years ago, my wife and I bought a travel trailer. I went shopping for the necessities. That proved to be a rather expansive list, prompting questions from my wife about whether things like hanging Coleman Lantern LED lights and an entire, dedicated tool kit large enough to restore a '57 Chevy were "necessary." Indisputably on the list, however, were a surge protector for the power connection, a sewer hose, and a water filter.

As I researched water filters, I found the offerings underwhelming. One industry magazine suggested a two-canister filter system with a punched-out plastic tote from Target serving as the "chassis." That sure looked like a gap in the marketplace to me, and a year later, I was in business.

In this article, aside from shameless (but overt) self-promotion, I will walk you through what you need to know about water quality, and the options for taking care of that part of the campground hookup process.

WATER QUALITY

When you camp at an RV park, the water for your rig comes from a hose bib. Because you don't know whether the water is clean and sanitary (or whether the last user was clean and sanitary), you want to filter your water every time.

The same holds true if you are filling your potable water tank. For clean, great tasting water, you also want to filter the water you put in your fresh water tank. Common contaminants in our water sources include silt and sediment, chemicals, petrochemicals, pesti-

cides, chlorine, chloramines, viruses, bacteria, and cysts like giardia.

You want a filter system that will remove as much of that stuff as possible. You also want a system that will work well even a challenging environment, and with heavy or prolonged use for a long time.

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WATER FILTRATION

Water filters work by passing the water through a medium. The medium has pores large enough for water molecules to pass, but small enough to block contaminants.

Contaminants range in size. Silt and sediment range in size from 50 to 150 microns. Other contaminants are much smaller. Bacteria range in size from 2 to 10 microns. Cysts like Giardia can be as small as 0.5 micron.

Filters are rated by the size of their pores. A filter with a rating of 100 microns might reduce the sediment in your water, but it will leave in harmful chemicals, bacteria and cysts. Many small in-line filters, typically blue and about the size of a cucumber, are rated at 100 microns – or not at all.

Better filters are rated at 5 microns. The best filters are rated at 0.5 micron, but are prone to clogging unless paired with a sediment filter in a two-canister setup.

In a two-canister system, the first canister has a filter element specifically designed to reduce silt and sediment. A 5-micron rating is perfect for this task.

The second element is rated to reduce chemicals, bacteria, viruses, cysts, and other smaller contaminants. A 0.5 micron (one-half micron) is best for this purpose.

When you buy a filter, check out its micron rating. If its rated at 50 or 100 microns, consider buying something that will filter out even smaller contaminants. If the manufacturer doesn't state a rating, you might want to pass.

TASTE

Water taste is equally important. Coconut shell carbon block is the gold standard for improving taste and smell in campground water. To ensure you are drinking safe, clean, great tasting water each time you hook up, buy a water filter system made for RV use with quality components, and a micron rating small enough to filter your water properly.

CERTIFICATION

NSF (National Science Foundation) is the gold stan-

ard rating agency when it comes to water filters. When you buy an NSF rated filter element, you know an independent agency has tested it, and found it met the claimed specifications. NSF International is an accredited, independent third-party certification body that tests and certifies products to verify they meet these public health and safety standards.

TDS

It's a very common misperception that low TDS (Total Dissolved Solids) equates to great taste, and that the lower the TDS the better the taste. That's not the case. Next time you are at the store, look at the labels on some bottled water. You will likely see TDS above 200 or 250, or higher. Why? Because minerals give water its taste. Water with no total dissolved solids tastes horrible. Bottled water manufacturers commonly take their water down to zero TDS with reverse osmosis, then add specific minerals back for the taste they want – which brings the TDS back up well above zero.

So, why do we care about TDS and what do we do about it? And, more to the point, how do we produce great tasting water? High TDS is a measure of hardness in the water, which can create deposits on plumbing fixtures. The best way to tackle a hard



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water problem is with a portable water softener. “On The Go” makes a good line of them.

Taste is where filtration comes in. With the right filter media, you can dramatically improve the taste and smell of campground water. In our system, our proprietary coconut shell carbon block second stage filter element produces great tasting water while eliminating contaminants.

A final note on TDS. Deionized water takes TDS down near zero. That’s not good for taste, but its superb for rinsing off your rig after a wash. “Spot free” would be an ambitious claim, since anything that floats down onto your rig while its drying will create a spot. But rinsing things down with deionized water will save you a lot of effort toweling off an entire bus, and give you a great looking finish. We offer a deionizing kit. You just swap in those filters, rinse your rig, swap the water filters back in, crack a beer, and call it good. Way good.

CHOOSING A FILTER FOR YOUR BUS CONVERSION

You have a lot of choices in the RV water filter market. If you want the best filter you can buy, handmade with all premium components, that’s us. We are the YETI ice chest of RV water filters. We make an external system designed to go on the ground between your campground water source and your rig. We also make a line of OnBoard systems for internal, permanent installation. You may check us out at www.clearsourcerv.com. Our products are also available on Amazon. Right next to those hanging Coleman Lantern LED lights.



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By Stuart Price

Stuart Price grew up camping in the mountains of California, and in coastal Baja. Today, he backpacks extensively in the Sierras, and tours the national parks with his wife Samantha in their RV. He is the founder of Clearsource, a manufacturer of premium RV water filters. Clearsource products are available at www.clearsourcerv.com, or on Amazon, by searching for "Clearsource RV Water Filters."

Stuart can be reached at Stuart@clearsourcerv.com or by calling (949) 860-1561



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