

Wheel Bearings / Slide-out Rams

If it's been 10,000 miles or more, or over two years, it's a good idea to grease the wheel bearings. And while you're at it, you should put some silicone spray lubricant on the slide-out rams. Those of you with a flush floor unit, with the older style rollers or slide plates on the end of the slide-out room rams, should go one step further and clean and lubricate the slide plate surface. Your slide-out room will move up and down freely and continue to give you trouble-free service.

Water System

Spring is a good time to flush your unit's water system. The procedure is simple. Just mix 1/4 cup of Clorox with one gallon of water. Pour the solution into your water tank. Then, add 10 more gallons of water to the tank. Pump the treated water through your entire system, then let it set overnight. The next day, flush your system thoroughly with fresh water. In just a few days, all evidence of the chlorine will be gone.

Exterior Maintenance

The high quality fiberglass exterior on your Excel unit will keep looking terrific with a little TLC! In fact, you care for your Excel's exterior in much the same way you care for the finish on your car—with a combination of wax and just a tad of elbow grease. To retain the shine and luster of your gel-coated fiberglass exterior, and to keep it looking new for many years, simply wax it at least once a year with a high quality automotive wax.

Gray Water Tank

If the light on your monitor panel remains on when the tank is empty, it's a sign that you have a filmy build-up on the sensors inside the tank. Typically this build-up is caused by grease, soap, and scum from the kitchen sink. An easy method of breaking up this greasy film is to put approximately two ounces of black water holding tank chemical into the tank with five gallons of water, just prior to leaving on your next trip. If your traveling distance is 100 miles or more, your tank should be clean and your monitor panel working properly when you reach your destination and set up for the night's stay.

Rubber Roof Maintenance

While the Excel's "Walk Anywhere" one-piece rubber roof is a rugged and durable component of your fifth wheel, there's no question that maintaining it will extend its life and keep it performing perfectly. First of all, maintenance is simple, easy, and requires NO special materials. Just clean your roof at least four times each year using water and a medium bristle brush or broom. If your rubber roof is extra dirty and has stains, use 409. Be sure to rinse your roof thoroughly, however, to avoid residue build-up on your RV.

"Dry Camping" Tips

Conserving electricity is one of the challenges of dry camping. At night, we suggest using one or two lights at a time. Don't leave the lights on in rooms you aren't using. We also suggest connecting

your unit to your pick-up each day, and running the engine for about 30 minutes to assure your battery is fully charged. The first weeks of summer are the best times of year for dry camping because it's generally warm enough at night to forget the furnace, and moderate enough during the day that opening a few windows and drawing the shades against direct sunlight will keep your home cool without air conditioning.

Slide-out Fuse

If you've experienced any problem with blowing the recommended 30-amp fuse while moving your slide-out room in or out, feel free to replace it with a 40-amp fuse. The wiring to the slide-out motor is #8 gauge, which is rated for the higher amp fuse, and the motor itself is also rated for the larger fuse. Making the switch to 40-amps is perfectly safe, and should also end the problem with blown fuses. New units have automatic resetting breaker instead of a 30-amp fuse.

Dump Valve Maintenance

You're winding up a great weekend in your Excel, and you pull up at the dump station to take care of the "necessary" duty of dumping your tanks. You dig out the sewer hose, take off the sewer cap, and out comes the liquids (and solids) that your dump valve failed to hold in the tank!

When this happens, don't jump to the conclusion that your dump valve has failed and needs to be replaced. More than likely, it is material that has become trapped in the groove where your dump valve seals.

The dump valve slides open and closes in a groove that has a rubber O-ring on each side of a nylon flat plate. What often happens is this: If you slide your valve closed while the tank is still emptying, toilet paper and solids can get worked into the groove--keeping the slide plate from making a proper seal.

Before you leap into an expensive dump valve replacement, try this easy procedure for cleaning the groove and O-rings. First, fill your holding tank completely with a mixture of water and dish soap (the dish soap acts as a lubricant for the rubber seals around the dump valve slide plate). As the water is emptying, repeatedly open and close your valve. This action works the solids loose and the running water washes them away. You may have to repeat this process a couple of times.

Black Water Tank Management

After dumping your black water tank, put four or five gallons of fresh water back into it. Adding water to the clean tank will assure that the solids always flow to the deep end of the tank. Following this procedure will probably not be much of a factor in your dumping habits, since your demand is much greater on your gray water tank and the black water tank is rarely full when you dump anyway.

Make sure when you are at full hook-ups, that you keep your black water valve closed during use and only dump the tank as needed. Even though you leave your gray water valve open, keeping the black water valve closed except for periodic dumping is the best practice. If you have a flushing system, you should flush the tank every time you dump.

Always use toilet chemical and make sure to use only RV paper. Tank chemical reacts much quicker to the RV paper than it does to residential paper.

Refrigerator Maintenance

Your refrigerator is one of the most crucial appliances in your RV. Here are a few tips for making sure your refrigerator keeps its cool!

- Ventilation is of the utmost importance. Make sure side and roof vents are clear and free of nests, and check the roof vent from the top.
- If your refrigerator isn't working, make sure the LP gas valve at the refrigerator or on the LPG container is turned on.
- A sweating or frosting problem in the freezer usually indicates air leaks or an improper condensation tube.
- If the freezer is fine, but the food area is warm (or there's an ammonia smell), it's probably a bad cooling unit.
- When you load your refrigerator, don't pack items tightly...it will interfere with air circulation.
- The normal operating temperature for the food compartment is 34-40 degrees F. The freezer compartment should be between 8-15 degrees F.
- When leaving the refrigerator out of use for an extended period, prop the door ajar to avoid mildew and odors.
- The flue, burner, baffle, fins and coils should be cleaned annually for best performance.
- The burner jet should be cleaned with wood alcohol and compressed air...NEVER poke anything into the burner jet.

Following these simple guidelines will extend the life of your refrigerator and allow it to provide dependable service for years to come.

12-VOLT Electric Motors

You'll find 12 volt electric motors in many places around your Excel fifth wheel, powering such things as slide-out rooms, landing gear, and stabilizer jacks. Because of their size, power, reliability and convenience, the 12-volt motor is an excellent workhorse.

A very important feature of the electric motors is a built-in clutch system, designed to reduce the stress on the motor and related components, and to reduce the likelihood of failure. Many of you have been taught that in order to ensure that a slide-out room or jack leg is fully extended or retracted, you need to listen for the clutch to engage or "ratchet."

THIS IS NOT CORRECT!

In fact, excessive "ratcheting" of the clutch motor not only puts you at risk of causing a failure of the clutch itself, but can also cause damage to components that the clutch is intended to protect.

Excel Service Department Manager, Elwin Conrad, advises to "go easy on the switch" as soon as you first notice the motor starting to "pull down," or take on excessive load. At that "pull down" point, the clutch is ready to engage. This is the optimal time to remove your finger from the switch.

If you teach yourself to avoid ratcheting the clutch, and learn to "go easy on the switch," you'll greatly extend the life of your electric motors.

Self-Adjusting Brakes

Self-adjusting brakes have been around for a long time, but like most technologies there have been some significant improvements over the past few years in the way they're designed. The older style

of self-adjusting brakes taught many RV owners to go through an adjustment procedure that included backing up the trailer and applying the brakes. Many of you still remember that procedure, and continue to perform it.

However, Dexter Axle took away the need for the "back-up and brake" adjustment method in July, 1996, when they introduced forward self-adjusting brakes. The new style brakes adjust each time the trailer is pulled forward and the brakes are applied.

If you have any doubts about which kind of brakes you have on your unit, the easiest way to check is by looking at the brake shoe. The newer forward self-adjusting brakes have a round pulley on the brake shoe that guides the adjuster cable.

Always be certain that if you replace the brakes or axle, only one type of brake is used. DO NOT mix brakes (e.g. -- some forward type brakes, some backward).

Awning Care

Now that many of you are in a warm climate (compared to our seasonal refrigeration here in Smith Center, KS), you'll no doubt be using your awning more. Here are a few recommendations from the manufacturer to help keep it looking like new:

- Use a soft bristle brush and the least expensive liquid soap you can buy to clean the surface of the awning (Dawn, Palmolive, etc.).
- Do NOT use any kind of degreaser! Degreasing agents can strip the protective film applied to the awning.

BONUS TIP:

If you own a unit with oak cutting boards and/or sink covers, we recommend treating them with cooking oil at least once a month. Put the oil on a cloth, and rub it into the oak.

Hooking up your satellite dish is a breeze!

All Excel models since July 2000 have been pre-wired for dual LNB satellite dishes.

There is a connection at the left rear corner of the unit for a ground based satellite dish and another in the ceiling to accommodate a roof mounted dish.

There is an A/B switch near the living room TV and one near the TV cabinet in the bedroom. The 'A' directs the signal to the receiver from the roof mount dish and the 'B' side from the ground based dish. A coax runs from the left rear corner to the living room A/B switch and another runs from the rear corner of the unit to the bedroom A/B switch.

To install a roof mounted dish, locate the end of the coax by the small tag fastened to the ceiling in the living room area. From this location we've run a coax cable to the living room A/B switch and another to the bedroom A/B switch. This wiring allows you to have a receiver in both the living room and the bedroom with a portable or roof mounted dish.

In addition to the wiring discussed, there is a coax run from the antenna to the living room and bedroom A/B switch boxes so the antenna can be used in conjunction with each receiver. The center connection on each A/B switch is to be connected to the receiver at the "Sat in" hookup.

Follow these instructions and you'll be enjoying entertainment in no time!

Battery Tips

Many RVers have experienced the mess and inconvenience of batteries that have boiled over. This occurs because the battery charger in your unit never completely shuts down when you are plugged into shore power. Taking any one of the following steps will prevent battery boil-over from spoiling your day:

1. Remove the positive cable from the battery and wrap the end with black electrical tape, or,
2. Install a battery disconnect on your trailer, or,
3. Order a battery disconnect when you purchase your new Excel.

TECH TIPS

- To keep your sinks shining and free of water spots, spray or wipe them with rubbing alcohol.
- Purchase a carpet rake at any furniture or flooring store to use on high-volume or matted areas to give your carpet an eye-appealing lift.