

## Preparing for Winter



Winter drain-downs can be a 10 minute job or a lengthy process depending on whether you intend to use your vehicle at all during the winter. If pushed for time, here is Highland Campervans quick reminder for a basic water system drain-down. A more detailed checklist from The Swift Group is further down.

### Water system quick checklist:



- Fresh water tank – leave drain tap in open position**
- Waste water tank – leave drain tap in open position**
- Hot water tank – open drain valve on Truma models and leave in open position, or remove the external ‘bung’ plug on older Carver models.**
- Kitchen – open tap (set all taps to mid-way position if mixer tap)**
- Bathroom –**
  - **Open sink tap**
  - **Check toilet flush water is empty (don't forget some vehicles also have an additional flush water holder which must be drained).**
  - **Empty toilet waste cassette completely.**
  - **Shower tap – open tap, lift shower head from holder and shake out any water sitting in pipe, allowing water to flow out at floor level.**
- Water pump – run pump for a short time until all water is expelled**

### Gas/Safety systems:

- Ensure gas bottle supply is turned off and individual isolator taps are off inside the vehicle.**
- Take carbon monoxide alarms indoors to preserve the internal battery life.**

Whilst the above is a quick 10 minute winter drain-down to avoid some common freezing problems, a more detailed winterisation process is recommended for vehicles which will be parked up for some time or may be subject to freezing conditions.



**Top tip: Go for a short drive once all the taps are opened – these will help ensure any water sitting in pipes is shaken out. If using the vehicle in winter drain it down before you drive back so it's totally empty when you get home!**

**If you are unsure of any items mentioned above or would like to speak to Highland Campervans about draining down your vehicle, please contact us on 01667 493976 or email: [workshop@highlandcampervans.com](mailto:workshop@highlandcampervans.com).**

## Here is a more detailed winterization process courtesy of The Swift Group

([www.swiftgroup.co.uk](http://www.swiftgroup.co.uk))

### Servicing

Arrange (in advance) the yearly service and habitation check, if the caravan's next service is due while the vehicle is stored.

### Plumbing

- Open all tank drain valves to drain onboard and external tanks, and leave open.
- Open the safety drain valve (yellow handle) next to water heater, and leave open.
- Fully open all the taps and shower mixer, move mixer position to the middle, and leave all taps in the open position.
- Unscrew the shower head and shower hose, shake out remaining water and allow water to drain. It is advised to leave the shower head and hose disconnected.
- Run pump for a short time, until all water is expelled.
- Disconnect the inlet pipe to the onboard water pump, mesh filter and outlet pipe, and re-run the pump for a short time, to ensure all the water is removed. Leave the system disconnected during storage.
- Fit the cowl cover to the Truma Ultrastore.
- Clean waste pipes and tanks using a sterilising fluid.

### Electrical

If vehicle is being stored while connected to 230v Mains Hook-up:

- Ensure that the leisure battery is connected and the 20A local fuse(s) is connected.
- The isolator switch on PSU (where fitted) should be in the 'ON' position, however the control panel should be switched 'OFF'.
- If Alde system is installed, there is a frost protection setting, which can be used.
- Vehicles can be left in this condition for extended periods, with the charger operating to maintain the battery. However, periodic maintenance and inspection is recommended, this should include the battery condition.

If vehicle is being stored not connected to 230v Mains Hook-up:

- Charge the leisure battery for 24 hours prior to placing caravan in storage.
  - Ensure the isolation button on PSU (where fitted) is in the 'OFF' position.
  - Ensure leisure battery is connected and 20A local fuse(s) is in place only if an alarm or tracker device is fitted.
  - The alarm / tracking device will eventually drain the leisure battery - we recommend regular (monthly) inspection / recharging of leisure battery.
  - Remove the leisure battery and store in a dry place, if an alarm or tracker device is not fitted.
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- The battery should not be adversely affected by winter temperatures but the level of charge should be maintained to maximize the life span of the battery. This can be achieved using an automotive type battery charger as and when required.

### Gas system

- Ensure the gas supply is isolated at the gas bottle, and ensure that the gas manifold taps are off.
- Check the age and condition of the high pressure gas hose and regulator, and replace if required.

### Appliances

- Check the battery expiry date on the smoke alarm and replace or remove as required.
- Ensure the fridge is turned off.
- Clean the inside of the fridge.
- Prop the fridge door open, and if possible, the internal freezer compartment door for ventilation.
- Fit fridge vent winter covers (if available).
- Ensure all hob / oven / microwave surfaces are clean.
- If the caravan is going to be left connected to 230v supply while not in use, ensure the microwave is unplugged.

### **Toilet**

- Drain the toilet reservoir.
- Empty the toilet cassette.
- Leave toilet caps removed and apply acidfree Vaseline or similar to the seals.
- Drain the toilet reservoir.
- Empty the toilet cassette - The Thetford Cassette porta potti is easily winterised for storage.
- Empty the fresh water tank using the drain tube / fresh water tank level indicator (level indicator on electronic models only).
- Pull the lever indicator / drain tube down from top plug position and outward through door opening to drain water from the tank.
- Empty the water fill funnel by pulling the bottle away from tank.
- Remove the small water cap on the filler bottom, allowing water to drain from the water funnel. (Not C-200 toilet).
- Do not tighten caps, this helps in keeping unit dry. The pour out spout and vent plug can be removed. Seals should be greased if necessary with acid-free Vaseline.

### **Exterior (Body / Chassis)**

- Ensure that all windows, skylights and access doors are closed and secured.
- Ensure all fixed ventilation points (high and low) are clear from debris and obstructions.
- Ensure the vehicle is not parked where falling debris (i.e. leaves, tree sap) could cause damage.
- Avoid leaving the vehicle parked in soft ground, long grass or a potential area where standing water may form.
- Lubricate relevant points on the chassis.
- Remove road wheels, using the correct jacking points and suitable axle stands, or if being left on road wheels rotate wheels (every two weeks) and ensure the correct tyre pressures are maintained.
- A purpose made cover maybe used, but please ensure the cover is a good fit, breathable and securely fitted. Note: A poorly fitted cover can rub and damage the bodywork. Non-breathable covers will encourage mould to grow.

### **Interior (Furniture / furnishings)**

- Open all lockers and internal doors, to ensure good circulation.
- Remove cushions and store them in a dry location or ensure all cushions are placed in a well ventilated area.
- Close all blinds and curtains. Customers are reminded to check the tension on blinds after storage if left closed for long periods.
- Thoroughly ventilate the caravan or Motorhome by opening doors or windows periodically.
- Placing water absorbent crystals in the van during the winter months, will help reduce moisture levels and mould growth.
- We do not recommend leaving portable heaters in the van unattended.

***Nb. All advice above is given as guidance only. Highland Campervans will not be held responsible for any incidents resulting from the above guidance. All vehicles vary slightly and owners should consult their own vehicle manufacturers handbooks/websites if unsure whether any of the above applies to their vehicle.***