

QUESTIONS & answers

Our caravan expert,
Lee Davey, answers
your questions

Using propane year-round is fine

Q We use our caravan all year and have two propane bottles for use during the colder months. Is it OK to use propane in spring and summer, or should we be using butane instead?

A Propane is absolutely fine for year-round use, and it's what I use in my own caravan. Some folks switch to butane in the warmer months, because Calor butane bottles contain slightly more gas than propane bottles, but for the additional bottle cost and hassle of switching, most people use propane year-round.



Insurance is worth buying, even on an older caravan

Q Our caravan is a 2005 model. Is it still worth insuring something that old?

A In most cases, yes. Even an older caravan can represent several thousand pounds' worth of value, once you factor in awnings, movers, leisure batteries and contents.

Ask yourself two simple questions:

- Could you afford to replace it if it were stolen?
- Could you pay for repairs if it were damaged in an accident or storm?

If the answer to either is "no", insurance makes sense. Premiums on older vans are often very reasonable, making insurance a small annual cost for peace of mind. It's worth noting that not all car policies automatically include third-party insurance when your caravan is being towed. Always check with your car's insurer.



How to clean seals on front and rear panels

Q The white seal around the front and rear panels of my caravan has gone grey and grubby. What's the easiest and safest way to clean it and make it look smart again?

A If you've tried the usual caravan cleaners and the seal still looks grubby or mouldy, here's how I cleaned mine. Using thick bleach and a small paintbrush, apply to a small, out-of-sight area to ensure that it won't stain or mark the seal or any paintwork. After a successful test, paint the bleach onto the seal (thick bleach will stay on the seal) and leave for a minute or two. Then wash thoroughly with a good-quality caravan wash. Avoid abrasive pads, stiff brushes, or solvent-based cleaners, as they can damage the seal or bodywork.



ASK THE EXPERTS... Email your tech questions and pictures to caravan@warnersgroup.co.uk or, if you prefer to post, write to Questions & Answers, *Caravan Magazine*, The Maltings, West Street, Bourne, Lincs PE10 9PH

Changing the Alde heating fluid

Q How often should the fluid in an Alde heating system be changed?

A Alde's pink antifreeze typically has a service life of five years. It doesn't suddenly stop protecting against freezing, but the corrosion inhibitors within it gradually degrade. Those inhibitors protect the system's pipes, boiler, and radiators from internal corrosion. Leave the fluid too long, and you risk long-term damage that's far more expensive than a fluid change. Most dealers will check the condition during an annual service, and many owners schedule a full change every five years. It's a relatively modest job that keeps the heating system healthy for the long term.



Take stuff out when you have your caravan serviced

Q When you take a caravan in for its annual service, do you need to take anything out of it beforehand?

A A little preparation helps both you and the workshop, so try to remove as much as possible. Clear the lockers, under-bed spaces and the gas locker, so that the engineer can access the walls in the lockers, seat bases, and bed(s). This will help pinpoint any problems during the damp test. I spent a day 'helping' an engineer service a caravan and discovered it's surprising how even a small amount of caravanning kit can impact a service. If in doubt, remove any possible obstructions. Plus, it will give you the chance to sort anything that's been unused for some time.



Disengage movers once you are on a pitch

Q Once you're pitched, should you leave the caravan's motor movers engaged, or disengage them?

A Motor movers should always be disengaged once you're in position. Leaving the rollers pressed against the tyres for long periods can cause flat spots on the tyres and unnecessary strain on the mover rollers. I once forgot to disengage an automatic mover, and over a few days, the mover 'forgot' which position it was in. With a ferry to catch (of course!), I had to hurriedly disengage the mover manually before heading towards the port.



Run the fridge on 12V when towing



Q Do people tow with their caravan fridge switched on? Is it best set to battery mode?

A Most caravans are designed to run the fridge on 12V while towing, powered via the car's electrics. It won't actively cool from warm, but it will maintain the temperature if the fridge has been chilled beforehand. The usual routine is to run the fridge on mains or gas before departure, then switch to 12V for the journey. This requires a fully wired 13-pin or twin 7-pin socket with fridge supply. When you arrive on a site, switch back to mains or gas.

GOT A QUERY?

Our expert team is happy to answer your questions, whether they relate to touring or towing, DIY or disasters! Whatever it is that's been causing you bother, we are on hand to help!

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