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As I write this article the first week of February the news is that the groundhog did not see his shadow, which means an early Spring!! I am going to be optimistic and assume Punxsutawney Phil was correct, so this month we will cover our Spring preparation checklist so we can get out and enjoy our RV's.

## Spring Preparation Checklist

After having your Airstream in storage for the winter there are some things that may need to be checked or maintenance performed to make your first trip of the season more enjoyable.

### **Starting with the outside:**

- ☐ Open your unit and allow it to “air out” after being closed up for the winter. This will allow fresh air into the unit after storage.

(Note: If the windows have become stuck to the seal from lack of use, you may carefully break the seal from the glass. Never pry with a hard object such as knives or screw drivers. If it won't open, take something like a credit card and insert it between the glass and frame starting at the corner and sliding along the bottom towards the other corner. To prevent sticking, wash the window gaskets with dishwasher soap to remove dirt and resins. Once clean and dry, you may apply a thin coat of a product such as 303® Aerospace Protectant. This cleaning and lubrication may also be done for the main door, access compartments and Fantastic fan gaskets)

- ☐ As you are examining the outside, take note of any cracks or voids in sealants. Remove any weathered sealant and fill with new.
- ☐ Check outside compartments, vents and water heater for any obstructions from possible nests that may have been built. For now, leave the water heater's drain plug open or out (depending on the style of the tank) and the door open. We will be returning later to finish.

- ☐ Open your patio awning (and any window awnings) to check operation. For cleaning instructions follow Zip Dee's Owner's manual or visit [www.ZipDeeinc.com](http://www.ZipDeeinc.com).
- ☐ Your brakes may need inspected, and if your trailer is not equipped with Nev-R-Lube™ bearings, they should be repacked prior to hitting the road.
- ☐ Check your overall tire condition. Make sure the air pressure and wheel lug nut torque are correct. (Some RV Safety organizations recommend that if your tires are 3-4 years old, you should consider replacement due to rubber deterioration; even if the tread looks good. You may wish to follow this or your tire manufacturer's recommendations.) Don't forget the spare!
- ☐ Hopefully your batteries were maintained over the winter. With lead-acid batteries you will want to check the fluid levels and fill, as necessary, with distilled water so the top of the plates are covered. It may also be a good time to have your batteries tested. A load test may be done at many auto stores or battery suppliers. If you have 3 or more years on your current deep cycle batteries, it may be time to think of replacements.
- ☐ Regardless if your battery is a non-maintenance or lead-acid style, inspect the battery terminals and cable ends. If corrosion has developed, clean them with a wire brush and apply a protective coating to the battery posts and cable ends.
- ☐ After verifying that all appliances were turned off and hose connections are tight outside, you may turn on the LP tanks.
- ☐ Do a visual check of the breakaway cable and switch, as well as the 7-way cord connections where you may apply some dielectric grease to. If cables are cracked or corroded they should be attended to. (Note: It is recommended that your breakaway cable and switch be changed every 5 years or as needed!)
- ☐ Lubricate the tongue and stabilizer jacks following the manufacturer's recommendations.
- ☐ Make sure the fresh water valve is closed. This may be a good time to fill and sanitize your fresh water tank. Mixing 1/4 cup of household bleach with one gallon of water will prepare a solution to treat 15 gallons. (2 mixtures for 30 gallons and 3 mixtures for 45 gallons) Let this solution set in your tank for at least 4 hours before flushing. (Note: Products such as Thetford™ Drain Valve Lubricant may be applied to your grey and black tanks to help prevent sticking valves.)
- ☐ Close your low point drain valves if open.

### **Let's go inside!**

- ☐ If you have had a drawer or cabinet come open during a past trip, you may want to check to see if the latch that holds that cabinet or drawer is properly adjusted. If the latch is found to be worn, it may be something you want to change before loading back up.
- ☐ Check and clean your air conditioner filter if needed.
- ☐ Check your water pump to make sure the hoses are connected and tight.

- ☐ You can now open any valves that were closed during the winterization process, with the exception of your water heater bypass. (we will get that later)
- ☐ If you used anti-freeze to winterize your trailer you will need to flush it out. You can hook up to your city water input and flush out the lines by opening the faucets and running water until you no longer see the foaming from the anti-freeze (don't forget the toilet). This could take a couple flushes. (Note: If flushing the lines for the first time after being parked, sediment from hard water may be released which can clog the ends of faucets. Unscrewing the screen and cleaning may provide a better water flow.)
- ☐ Once clean water is coming from the lines you may shut the faucets off. (Note: check if your galley faucet had the filter removed for winterization, or if the filter needs to be changed for the start of a new season. Remove water pressure by making sure your pump is off and the city water is disconnected or turned off. Open the cold side low point drain valve and turn on the cold side of the galley faucet. This will allow drainage of the cold line. With a rag in hand to wipe up any residual water, you may now replace the filter. Once replaced, you may close the low point drain and faucet and turn the water back on.)
- ☐ We are now ready to open the bypass valve to your water heater and flush out any sediments that may have collected in the bottom from last season. (Remember we have left the exterior plug and door open on the water heater) Open the bypass at the water heater to allow the water flow to clean out any debris from the tank. The age and condition of the tank will dictate the length of time you will want to flush. (This could be 1 to 5 minutes). Once flushed, you may shut the bypass valve off and go outside and reinstall the plug and close the access door.
- ☐ Now, go back inside and open the bypass valve to allow the tank to fill with water. We want to make sure the tank is full of water before starting the water heater to prevent damaging the electric heating element. You will also want to open a hot water faucet to allow any trapped air to escape.
- ☐ At this point, you can plug your trailer into your 110-volt power source and turn your battery disconnect switch to the on position.
- ☐ Check your interior lighting and replace bulbs if needed.
- ☐ If you have an electric water heater, you may now check its operation.
- ☐ If your refrigerator is set to automatic, it should start cooling.
- ☐ Test the LP detector by pushing the test button. It is recommended to change the batteries in your CO detector and smoke alarms and test these as well. Don't forget your fire extinguisher!
- ☐ You can test the LP system by lighting the burners at your range. This should remove any trapped air from the lines. Once the air is removed, you may work your way to the refrigerator and water heater, switching to LP to test these appliances. You will also need to check the furnace to make sure it is functioning properly as well.

**At this point we can head back outside and will need to hook up to your tow vehicle.**

- ☐ Check your hitch. The ball may be lubricated with products such as Reese™ hitch ball lube.
- ☐ Make sure the trailer coupler is clean of debris and operating smoothly.
- ☐ Check the 7-way socket on the tow vehicle and make sure there is no corrosion that may need to be attended to. Once this is done, we can plug in to check the lights.
- ☐ Let's first check to make sure that all marker lights illuminate. Next, you can check your brake lights as well as your turn signals.

At this point, you should be ready for that first trip out.

Wishing you and your family a safe and enjoyable camping season!

I would love to hear from you and if you have a suggestion or topic you would like to see covered in a future article, or have a question, just drop me a line at [rmarch@airstream.com](mailto:rmarch@airstream.com) .

Have a great month!

Rick March