



**Rick March, General Manager
Customer Relations Group**

Greetings! I hope you have had a safe and enjoyable Summer season so far. It has been difficult, to say the least, for most of us with our travel plans during this pandemic but I hope you did find some time to travel and use your Airstream's. After a season of use it is time to talk about holding tank maintenance. When I give seminars at the different events I visit each year I always discuss briefly the topic of how important it is to use your black tank flush if your trailer is equipped with this feature. I will also discuss the black and grey tank chemicals we should use in each tank, etc.

What is a black tank flush and when do I use it?

The black tank flush is a shower head that Airstream installs in the side of the black tank. We also install a back flow preventer in this line to avoid any chance of tank contents coming back through the water entry line. We install it in the black tank only as this is the tank that holds all sewage of both solids and liquids. Liquids will empty quite easily but there are often chances that solid waste, toilet paper etc. get caught in the tank. If not properly flushed when dumping, then the trapped solids will continue to build up until eventually it will clog the black tank system from draining or it can minimize the capacity the tank will hold in the future. The black tank flush should be used each time you dump the tank. Hook your city water hose into the flush inlet and let it run until the water running out of the dump hose is clear. When I perform the flush I usually close the tank valve and let the flush fill up the tank for a couple of minutes and then open the valve again. This will allow the clean water to build up and flush very quickly hoping to take any solids left in the tank with it. I usually do this twice and then let the flush run with the valve open for another 3 minutes. I have a mock-up of how the black tank flush is installed in the trailer below.

Back flow preventer.
Could be metal or
clear plastic.

Black tank flush
inlet.



Shower head
installed in the
black tank.

Why do you call the black tank flush valve the use it or lose it valve?

The shower head installed in the side of the tank is made up of many small size holes to help build up the pressure to get a nice spray inside of the black tank. If you do not use this valve on a regular basis than solids will get caught in the small holes. Eventually dry in there and completely plug up the shower head. I have seen this many times. Even hooking up air pressure to try and blow the debris out will not work. The tank cover will have to be dropped and a new shower head installed in the tank is the only option.



Tank side of the black tank flush shower head inlet.

What type of Chemicals are available to help guard against build up and odors?

Thetford makes a variety of products to help with your maintenance needs for all of your holding tanks. They are the most common products used and can be purchased at most RV parts store.

Thetford Aqua Kem Liquid Holding Tank Deodorant – Powerful odor control. Helps liquefy waste. Powerful detergent keeps tanks clean.

Thetford Tissue Digester – Effectively prevents tissue build up and clogging. Keeps drain lines clean.

Thetford Drain Valve Lubricant – Prevents the drain valves from sticking. Coats drain lines for smooth tank outflow. For both grey and black tanks.

Thetford Grey Water Odor Control – Prevents offensive odors in drains and vents. Prevents grease build up in holding tanks.



Lastly, but just as important, make sure you use a quality grade RV/Marine toilet tissue. This tissue is usually a single ply biodegradable tissue that dissolves quickly in your holding tank making it easier to flush out when dumping.

I would love hearing 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.

Have a great month!

Rick March