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Maintain your coach in tiptop shape.

This review admittedly will be “old hat” to many of you, but there are new motorcadgers joining the club every day who could benefit from your input and questions.

- One of the most important is your tires. Make sure they are properly inflated. This will necessitate you taking your coach to a scale to get it weighed. Remember, your coach should have the fuel and fresh water tanks filled and all cargo you will be carrying on board. Inflate the front tires according to the tire inflation chart in your owner's manual. Similarly, the rear axle should be weighed separately and the rear tires inflated according to manufacturer specifications. The air pressures should always be checked **when the tires are cold**. This practice will help improve the ride quality of your coach and increase the longevity of your tires. Also, it is advisable to regularly rotate and balance them.
- Water filter and pressure regulator. Always use them; you never know what the campground water pressure is. When you blow a line loose, it's too late and a lot of water damage could happen. Always use a filter to get the sediment out of the water. You don't want sand or other contaminants to get into the faucets and cause them to start leaking.
- Use toilet holding tank chemicals. It is amazing how often we find this practice not used. It is also recommended to use tissue paper that will easily dissolve. This practice will help retard the buildup of contaminants on the holding tank walls, probes, valves, and sensors and will limit the frequency of flushing the holding tanks out.
- Perform regular maintenance on your chassis and coach components. This practice will keep your coach in good operating condition that would eliminate some costly repairs later on. The maintenance schedule is in your owner's manual. You should read and become fully familiar with it. In the unlikely event of a breakdown, these manuals contain some valuable information, which could get you out of a tight jam on the side of the road.
- Contrary to popular belief, except for some of the new models, your refrigerator is not “frost free” and should be regularly defrosted. Make sure the ice buildup around the icemaker is melted; if not, you will not get ice and you will be embarrassed when you make out a work order to find out it is just ice buildup around the icemaker inlet tube.
- Roof air conditioner preventive maintenance is important but often overlooked. You can help the efficiency of the air conditioner by keeping the return air filters clean. With constant usage, they should be cleaned every two weeks. Remove the interior ceiling vent to access the filters. They can be washed with soap and water, vacuumed, or blown clean with compressed air. In severe contamination cases, replacement of the filters is advisable. The condenser coil must be accessed from the roof of your coach. The exterior shroud will have to be removed to clean the condenser fins. These fins are delicate and sharp, so wear protective gloves if you are going to use a “fin comb” to straighten them out. Use compressed air or a low pressure water source to clean any dirt or debris that has collected. This should be done if you have been camping in an area that has a lot of cottonwood trees.
- Don't forget about the batteries. While your coach is stored for a long period of time, there may be small DC loads parasitic on the engine batteries, i.e. engine computer. Turn the boost switch on at least once a week for 12 hours or more so the batteries will be topped off with a charge. It's your decision if you want to leave the boost switch on all the time or not. Remember, if the ac power fails, all the batteries will be discharged.
- Before starting out on a trip, remember to check for dirt daubers that may have made your coach their home also. They can cause a lot of grief and be costly if they make a nest in the furnace or the Aqua Hot exhaust.
- Last, but not least, the tow bar should get some attention. Inspect for worn pins, bolts, and cable connections. Now is the time to replace them if they are worn or damaged. The electrical cord will probably be corroded. Clean the contacts with contact cleaner and a soft brush.

by Jack Bradshaw - Reprinted from Winter 2005 Motorcader

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