



# Airstream Tech Help Group

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This group, part of the WBCCI Technical Standing Committee, has been established to help the membership with any of their technical RV problems. Examples of questions that might be of interest to many members will be published in the *Blue Beret*. We will respond directly to you, in response to your email or letter describing a problem you are having. We hope you will find this new service of value in the care and feeding of your RV. You may contact us as follows: techhelp@wbcci.org or by mail: Howard Lefkowitz, 11508 Colt Terrace, Silver Spring, MD 20902

## OPERATING AN ELECTRIC BLANKET FROM A GENERATOR

**QUESTION:** I started the Honda 2000 generator one night to power our electric blanket. It powered everything but the blanket. This is a new one with digital controls. Is this because most of us do not ground our generators?

**ANSWER:** I believe that is correct. I cannot verify this without actually checking the wiring of the blanket. However, electric blankets usually require a three-wire supply with a positive, neutral and ground wire source. Because of the missing ground, the aluminum trailer body is also floating and could therefore be a shock hazard in wet weather. The 120-volt AC power source should always provide the connection from neutral to ground. Every shore power connection has this ground either in the main or local supply box. An inverter provides the ground through an internal relay. A built in motorhome generator provides the ground and so should an add-on generator.

Get a three-wire plug and just connect the neutral side to the ground in the plug. Keep this plug connected to one of the 120 VAC outlets so your source voltage is always grounded. If you ever want to hook two generators together then be sure to remove the plug.

Howard

## Attaching External Grill to Airstream

**PROBLEM:** Can I run a gas grill through two regulators? On my new 2013 Classic they put a nipple valve beyond the regulator at the tanks. I put a quick connect hose on there and attached it to my grill through the grill's regulator. I get a weak flame that blows out easily. I cannot find a grill without a regulator. What is up? What are my options? Why would Airstream put this access valve in if you cannot use it?

**ANSWER:** Figure (1) illustrates the LPG port for attaching external low-pressure appliances.

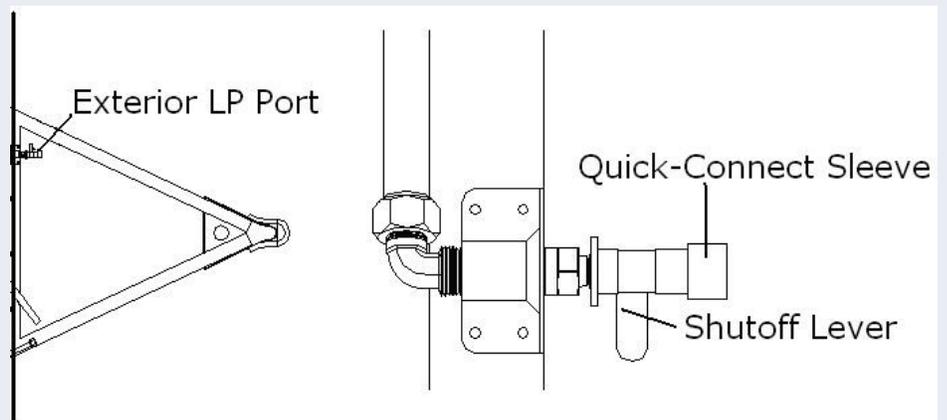


Figure (1) Airstream LPG Port

**Quick Connect Instructions:**

Slide the quick connect valve sleeve back and insert the appliance supply gas line male coupler into the quick connect valve female coupler. Release the sleeve to capture the male coupler and gently pull on appliance supply line to check that it is properly captured. Turn the shut off lever to the on position to supply gas to the appliance.

**To remove the appliance supply line:**

Turn the gas lever to the off position to unlock the male coupler and slide the sleeve back to release the appliance supply line. For safety, the LP port valve has a shut off lever that locks the male coupler in place when the gas is turned on. The gas is on when the lever is turned so it is in line with the valve. Figure (1) shows the shutoff lever in the off position.

**WARNING:** Each time you use the exterior LP port, check it for wear and/or damage. If any damage or wear is found, DO NOT USE the port until it has been inspected by a qualified technician.

# REFRIGERATOR TOO COLD

You should be able to run the grill off this valve. All the grill regulator is doing is limiting the maximum gas pressure. As long as the pressure stays below the regulator setting, the grill flame should be fine. There is no problem having multiple regulators in a propane line. If you were going to add a separate propane heater, it would also have its own regulator. The problem is you are not getting enough propane pressure to run the grill.

Assuming all of your main propane appliances work fine and you can run your furnace and cook top at the same time, your total gas pressure is probably set correctly. You may have a faulty LPG gas shut-off valve fitting, or your grill regulator is not working.

Your grill regulator may be stuck which will result in a low yellow flame. Try this procedure first by going through the following steps:

1. Turn off the propane at the tank regulator
2. Disconnect the grill gas line to the Airstream nozzle
3. Open the grill lid
4. Turn all of the grill valves to high
5. Wait about a minute or so
6. Turn the grill valves off
7. Reconnect the gas line to the nozzle
8. Slowly turn on the main tank valve
9. Light the grill

This will release the pressure on the grill regulator. Your problem is definitely not having two regulators.

If this does not fix the problem, the grill regulator may just be defective. Try using a one pound propane tank to test the grill. If it still does not work the quick release valve may be defective or have a metal chip stuck inside. Get an Airstream dealer to check the gas pressure available at the quick release coupling.

**RESULTS:** I did as you suggested and after several minutes, I have a solid 350 degree flame temperature, which should suffice for most things. It is not a big grill. Thanks.

Howard

**PROBLEM:** I just finished reading your article in the *Blue Beret* on refrigerators. I have a 1996 Airstream, which I bought 6 months ago. No matter what setting it is on, things in the refrigerator will freeze. Now after reading your article, I realize it should be switching on and off but my unit never goes off. Even at the warmest setting, it is too cold. On occasion, it will also change the temperature setting by itself. I have tried moving the slide on the fins but that does not make any difference. Any suggestions?

**ANSWER:** The best bet is your thermostat, which is monitoring the box temperature. This sensor can fail and then:

#### SPECIAL FEATURES OF OPERATION

The control system contains a feature where it will continue to operate the cooling system in the event of a failure of a major operating component. Two different modes of operation can occur in this category.

1. If the display module becomes nonfunctional, the control system will revert to full automatic operation selecting the best energy source available with AC then GAS priority. The temperature of the refrigerator will be maintained at the MID position within normal temperature tolerances. The power module will continually attempt to reestablish operation of the display module.

2. The second special feature of operation will execute when a **failure of the temperature sensing device or associated electronic circuitry occurs**. If this should occur, the control system will operate on the energy source selected via the control panel. The cooling unit will run continuously on the selected energy source and could freeze. The refrigerator will continue to operate in this mode indefinitely or until a new sensor is installed and the system is reset.

In the *Blue Beret* article check on the overall schematic of the fridge and you will see a thermistor on the left side about in the middle. The thermistor is installed inside the fridge and has two white wires that feed out and are plugged into the main circuit board. Unplug the white leads from the main circuit board and check it for a reading on an ohmmeter. If you get no reading at all, it is open and has failed. If it has a reading, then remove it from the main box and disconnect the terminals from the main board. If you put it in a glass of ice water, you should get an ohmmeter reading of 7000 to 10,000 ohms after 2-3 minutes.

If the sensor is OK you could possibly have a defective main board or control board. Usually what fails on the main board is the connections. Removing the little Molex connectors and spraying both sides with terminal cleaner, will usually fix any poor connections. Be sure to use the special electronic circuit spray, which does not leave any residue. Then plug and unplug the connectors several times to remove any deposits.

You can download a complete seminar on troubleshooting and servicing your fridge by going to:

<http://wbccicaravan.wbcci.net/> and downloading "Troubleshooting & Repair of Your Propane Equipment."

Howard