



Airstream Tech Help Group

Howard Lefkowitz, #6077
Phil Broomall, #2654
Lawrence Kerner, #7044
Jamie King, #7018

This group has been established by WBCCI 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

Automatic Water Fill Valve

QUESTION: Hello, we have just purchased a 1990 Excella1000. It has an automatic water fill valve. It is not working and I can't locate it. Can you advise me where it is located? Thanks for the help. Chuck

ANSWER: I cannot find any specific reference to an automatic fill valve for your unit. However, my 1990 Classic Motor Home had a fill valve switch and it was on the galley panel, which also had the lights for the tank sensors and the water pump switch. Other year Excellas had the switch on this panel as well. However, the automatic fill function did not last very long. It seems the valves quickly corroded and locked up so switching on the 12 volts to the valve did nothing. Most people simply disconnected the wires to the valve. I actually fixed my valve twice but after the third failure I gave up. The valve was located near the water pump itself on the inlet side. This provided a bypass from the pump input directly to the water tank. I have not run into any unit which had the switch located in a different spot. By the way these valves were also a source for flooding. Occasionally, they would stick open and end up dumping water on the outside of the trailer, sometimes with nobody home.

The only automatic tank fillers I have found that work are on the motorhomes. These have a simple valve which allows you to fill the tank from the external water supply. This is useful since you are filling the tank using the built in water filters.

Howard

FOLLOWUP: Thank you so much for the information. It has saved me a lot of time looking for something I probably am better off without. Thanks for this service. I am so glad WBCCI is putting this

type of info in the *Blue Beret*. Much thanks again, Chuck

Black & Wash Water Valves

QUESTION: Hello Howard, I enjoyed your article in the *Blue Beret* on "The Care and Feeding of Your RV." I am curious if anyone has had experience with replacing black and wash water valves. I own a 2007 Safari 27'. The black water valve does not close completely. I have been giving some thought about attempting the repair myself, since my unit is out of warranty. Is this a big mistake? I wish I had a technical manual that I could reference on how these things are assembled. Any help would be greatly appreciated. Thanks, Jerry

ANSWER: I have never seen a manual for the dump valves, however, they are quite simple and easy to take apart and fix (once you can get to them). Since your rig is relatively new my guess is that there is nothing wrong with the valve itself. The problem is you may have toilet paper caught in the valve seat that is preventing it from closing. The valve is just a sandwich with a holder and a flat blade that slides in a rubber channel for a seal. No lubricant is normally required. The valve consists of two rectangular sides that are held together by four stainless steel bolts, which go through a flange on each side. The flanges attach to round tubes, which are either glued to or attached to the inlet and outlet pipes with clamps. Most of the valves are made by Valterra. A picture is on www.valterra.com/RV/rv-main.htm. The valves usually last for many years as long as they are being used so they do not dry out. There are overhaul kits which have

new bolts and rubber seals to renew the valve if the seals are defective.

I suggest you remove your sewer valve and clean the channel. Soap and water should be fine. Make sure it closes completely and then reinstall it. Just be careful not to over-tighten the bolts and damage the plastic flanges or valve bolt holes. If the wash water valve is working OK I see no reason to change it. Good luck Howard

FOLLOWUP: Thanks Howard for your advice. The valve was easily repaired, it was paper caught in the slot. The greatest difficulty was pan replacement. It was necessary to use a rolling jack to put the pan back in place. After completing the job I realized why the shop was going to charge me \$500, it was a 6 hour job. I would suggest that anyone attempting to do the job by themselves use the jack and an X beam for support because of the warping of the metal on removal. Thanks again, Jerry

FINAL SUGESTIONS: Another approach is to cut out a section in the pan so that you have easy access to the valves. You can obtain some aluminum pieces from your local dealer that can be used for a patch. Any dealer that does body work will have scrap pieces that can easily cover the access port. Whenever I am visiting Jackson Center I scrounge the junk pile outside for several scrap pieces. I have also seen the old cut out piece being used by screwing 1X2 hard wood to the existing pan. Then simply screw the old cutout to the 1X2. Just do a neat cutout, pre-drill the holes and be sure to use stainless steel screws.

The best solution, however, is to make sure you dump correctly and use a good quality Bacteria/Enzyme product. I have used eco-save, <http://www.eco-save.com>, for years in both the black and wash water tanks. This product helps dissolve

Club News

solids, controls odor and liquefies solids. It helps keep valves and in-tank sensors clean. I have a number of friends that winter in Florida and do not move their rigs for several months at a time. They rarely have problems using this product. I recommend the powder which sells for \$15 for about 30 treatments.

It is OK to leave the wash water valve open in a campground when you have a dump site. However, never leave the Black tank valve open. Always make sure you have almost a full tank and give the bacteria/enzyme product time to work before you dump. In fact, on a caravan I usually wait till I have reached the new site before I dump.