PILAGUAMISH COMMUNITY CLUB

A Washington Non-Profit Corporation

WINTERIZATION

Every October, as the camping season comes to a close and the weather starts to turn cold, it's time to winterize your campsite. During the winter months, the weather at Pilly includes plenty of rainy and snowy days, and the temperature - especially overnight - can get well below freezing. Winterizing is the act of preparing your campsite equipment to protect it from cold-weather damage during those long winter months.

This guide provides information on two main topics of winterization. The first topic is about keeping the water lines on your campsite from freezing. The second topic is about using moisture control to prevent dampness, mildew, and mold from building up in your RV, cabana, or shed.

How much you should winterize will depend on whether you plan to shut down your campsite until spring, or plan to come up and enjoy winter at Pilly with either an occasional visit or an extended stay.

IMPORTANT: *This guide can only provide general suggestions. You are solely responsible for reviewing and following all manufacturer's recommendations regarding your specific camping equipment*.

Fully Winterizing Your Campsite
If you are shutting down your site for the winter, or you will only be making an occasional overnight visit, you should read this section. If, on the other hand, you will be occupying your site for an extended stay during the winter, you should read the EXTENDED WINTER STAYS section of this guide.

Water Lines, Fixtures, & Drains
Water can freeze in your pipes, in your water heater, and in your RV fixtures, causing them to crack and break. Therefore, it is critical to fully winterize all of these items, both inside and outside your RV.

Winterizing a water line requires draining it. To properly drain any water line, you need to open the line at a minimum of two points, preferably somewhere close to the two ends of the line. This will allow air to enter into the higher end of the line, letting water flow freely out of the lower end of the line. Gravity will usually cause most of the water to drain from a line, if one of the openings is at the low point of the line. If you have a water line that does not drain on its own, you should use an air compressor to blow the water out of the line.

Here are detailed instructions that explain how to winterize the water system on your campsite.

OUTSIDE YOUR RV

MAIN WATER VALVE. Shut off the main water valve at your campsite, and disconnect all hoses from the supply faucet. This will allow the water in your main supply valve to drain properly. It is critical that you do this to make sure there is no water in the above-ground portion of the valve that could freeze.

RV SUPPLY LINE. Disconnect your RV supply line and drain it. Store the line inside your RV during the winter.

FIRE HOSE. Disconnect and drain your fire hose. After the hose is drained, reconnect the hose to your main water supply valve. This will ensure that the hose is available for immediate use in the event of a fire.

INSIDE YOUR RV

WATER LINES. After the main supply valve is shut off, and your outside RV supply line is disconnected, you will need to drain the water lines inside your RV. Your RV should be equipped with at least two drain valves, one for the cold-water line and one for the hot-water line. Open both of these valves and leave them open.

PLUMBING FIXTURES. After you have opened your RV drain valves, open all of the faucets in your RV. This includes both the hot-water and cold-water faucets for the kitchen sink, the bathroom sink, and the shower stall. Leave all of these faucets open. Step on the flush pedal of your toilet and hold it down for several seconds to ensure that the water has drained from the valve.

DRAIN PIPES. Your sink, shower, and toilet drain pipes include an S-shaped bend called a trap that is located just below the drain. This trap always has a small amount of water in it that acts as a barrier to prevent sewer gas from entering your living space. You must pour a small amount of RV anti-freeze into your sink drains, shower drain, and toilet when you winterize. This will prevent the water in your traps from freezing.

WATER HEATER. Open the drain valve of your water heater and allow the tank to drain. Leave the valve open.

MOISTURE CONTROL

During the winter, when your RV, cabana, or shed are closed up for a long time, excessive moisture can build up which leads to the formation of mold and mildew. Here are some suggestions for ways to prevent that from happening.

AIR CIRCULATION. In any enclosed space where you want to prevent mold and mildew, the more air flow you have, the better. So, it's a good idea to leave cupboard and closet doors open in your RV to improve air circulation in these areas. It's also a good idea to open the cabinet doors under the sink in your kitchen and bathroom. And, it's a good idea to open storage cabinet doors in your cabana or shed. Also, in a cabana or shed, a small house fan running at low speed will help a lot, as moving air won't mildew.

MOISTURE REMOVERS. Moisture removal products like Damp-Rid are extremely good at keeping enclosed areas dry. These products continuously collect moisture out of the air until they are used up. They don't require electricity, and some types are refillable. Note that these products only remove moisture from the air. They are not useful in situations where standing water may form.

It's a good idea to put one moisture remover in each cabana or shed for the winter. In your RV, you may need to place a few moisture removers in different areas to get proper coverage for your entire interior space. Remember that moisture removers get used up, at which point they stop working. You will want to check on your moisture removers at least once during the winter to see if they need to be replaced or refilled.

ACTIVE HEATING/DEHUMIFYING. You will need to keep some kind of heater or air dryer running in your RV to prevent mold and mildew from forming. Check the specifications of your device to determine the coverage area. If you are heating your RV in the winter, you won't need to keep it any warmer than around 50 degrees, which will help to reduce your heating costs. Remember that active heating and/or dehumidifying consumes electricity in the winter. You are responsible for all utility usage on your site(s) even when you are not there, including all costs for winterization.

WHEN MAKING AN OCCASIONAL WINTER VISIT

ON ARRIVAL. When you arrive for a visit, the first thing to do to restore water service is to close your RV drain valves and your water heater drain valve, and then re-connect your outside RV water line and turn on the main water valve. Then go into your RV and turn off the hot and cold faucets in your shower and bathroom. In the kitchen, turn off the cold-water faucet. Leave the hot-water faucet open until water flows out continuously, then turn it off. This will take a while as the water heater tank needs to fill up. DO NOT turn on your water heater until you see water flowing continuously out of your kitchen hot water faucet. You must ensure that your water heater tank is full before you turn it on. You can damage a water heater by turning it on before the tank is full.

STAYING OVERNIGHT. Your outside lines can freeze overnight in winter. To prevent this, shut off the main water valve just before you go to bed. Also, disconnect and drain your RV supply line, and store it inside the RV overnight. The pipes, fixtures, and drains in your RV should be OK overnight, as you will be running your furnace and the RV will be warm. In the morning, reconnect your outside line and turn on the main supply valve to restore water service.

WHEN LEAVING. Remember to fully winterize all water lines, fixtures, and drains as described in the full winterization section above. Also, restore all moisture-control measures that were in place when you arrived.

EXTENDED WINTER STAYS

When you are staying for an extended time at your campsite in the winter, you will be actively using your RV, so you won't need to winterize it, although you may still want to use the suggestions above for controlling moisture in your cabana and shed. Don't forget that at the end of your extended stay, you will need to fully winterize your site as described above.

While using your RV for an extended winter stay, you will need to take steps to prevent your outside water lines from freezing. This will usually mean installing heat tape to your main water supply valve and your outside water line. When installing heat tape, keep the following tips in mind. If you are not familiar with the correct way to install heat tape on outside water lines, you must contact the ranger before doing any work.

Here are some tips for properly applying heat tape to your outside water line:

- Make sure that the entire outside water line, including the main supply valve, has the heating cable portion of the heat tape attached to it.
- Secure the heating cable portion of the heat tape to the water line every six inches.
- Secure the thermostat of the heat tape to the metal pipe of the main water supply valve with plastic cable (zip) ties or electrical tape.
- Be sure the button of the thermostat is pressed against the metal pipe.
- Wrap your plastic RV water line in aluminum foil before attaching the heating cable to it.
- Run the heating cable in a straight line along the bottom of your water line.
- Do not spiral the heating cable around your water line, or allow the heating cable to cross itself.
- Cover the completed heat-tape installation with a loose-fitting split-foam pipe insulator.
- Make sure that the entire outside water line is fully and properly insulated.