

# Using a Probiotic Treatment While Traveling

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Based on new information from TankTechsRx.com, there is a different concept about managing the holding tanks that you should consider.

Tank Techs Rx's newest product labeling recommends only draining your holding tanks when "full." They also recommend draining until the flow rate subsides, then closing the valve to retain approximately one inch (1") of water and, thus, some of the existing "live mother culture" (a.k.a. aerobic bacteria). They also note that it is no longer necessary to "flush" the tanks with fresh water.

Although we consider this very sound advice while "planted" (stationary) in one spot for any length of time, we have adopted a variance to their recommendations –primarily when traveling with our RV.

The Understanding Your RV's "HOLDING TANKS" Primer states that water weighs 8.34 pounds per gallon. If you have 40-gallon holding tanks (black & gray), and if one tank is between 1/2 capacity to full, that tank's contents will weigh between 167 and 334 pounds. Double those numbers, and you have the total weight of (just) the wastewater you carry (between 334 and 668 pounds) in both tanks. Add that to the weight of any freshwater you carry (our FW tank holds 75 gals or 626 pounds of water), and you are hauling around some seriously unnecessary weight. (**Comment:** Admittedly, fuel is currently around \$2.85 to \$3.25 per gallon, not over \$4.00 per gallon as it once was (it was only \$1.35 per gallon when my wife and I started full-timing in 2002). Nevertheless, do you want to pay the additional fuel expense to haul around all that water weight?

So, here's what we do when traveling with our RV. First, we always travel with our fresh water tank empty. If we need to fill the tank, plenty of water sources are available along the way. Second, we always drain, rinse, and "prepare" our tanks before starting on the road. We travel until we reach our first night's layover campground. After the morning rituals (breakfast, shower, teeth, etc.), we use the "Johnny Chock" method to fill our black tank to its 3/4 full level and the "Bathroom Sink" method to fill the gray tank about the same. Then, we drain the black tank completely and back-flood to 3/4 full once. After the rinse is completed, we treat with our usual 1/2 ounce of probiotic and "prepare" with a 1/4 fill. After the black tank is completed, we start draining the gray tank. When the flow has diminished to a very slow rivulet (well below flood flow), we do, indeed, close the gray valve to trap some water and some of the "mother culture." However, when treating the gray tank, we only pour 1/4 ounce of probiotics down the bathroom sink and "prepare" with only a 1/8 fill. (Comment: We do this gray tank routine even when "planted." That's because, like everyone else's, our gray tank fills up every 2 to 2-1/2 days. Hence, it is drained and treated 2 or 3 times more often than the black tank.)

We perform our "travel" routine every morning before hitting the road. The black tank is done "completely" because it only receives a minimum of "deposits" during the day and evening, and those deposits may not have been completely "digested" by the aerobic bacteria. Again, the gray tank is done "partially" because it receives more water deposits than the black tank. Additionally, each tank will have almost an entire 24-hour period to rebuild its "live mother culture" before the process is repeated the following day of travel. Once we reach our destination (and get "planted" again), we'll continue to capture deposits in both tanks until they are nearly full (certainly at least 3/4 full – so we can take advantage of a "Hydrostatic Head").

We believe this variance allows us to travel with minimal extra water weight. Nonetheless, we can still maintain a positive probiotic system.

Additional thoughts concerning some of the differences:

a. I find it challenging to determine precisely when just an inch of wastewater remains in my Black or Gray tank. The lowest level indicator above empty on my tank level system is 1/4 full, and I have no idea how deep the water might be at that level – because I don't know precisely how deep my tank is or if the lowest sensor is exactly where it should be (sensor installation is an estimate, rather than an exact science).

b. When my RV is parked for any length of time, I always rinse both of my holding tanks with fresh water after I have "dumped" them. I staunchly use a clear adapter to evaluate if my tanks (especially the black tank) are essentially "unpolluted" by watching the flow of "rinse" water for any waste material that may be washed by as the rinse drains from the tank. I prefer to know a tank is as clean as possible. One rinse is usually enough to know, but I will rinse again (or repeatedly) if it is not.

I hope this helps.

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