

# Water filtration systems gives RVers piece of mind

By Bill Contaxis

There have been several instances of recreational water supply contamination at campgrounds. Additionally, many travelers only associate filtration with drinking water. They travel with large quantities of bottled water for drinking, but use the local source for bathing, washing dishes and clothes, making coffee and brushing teeth. Therefore, it is important to install water filtration systems on RVs to satisfy all their water needs.

Not all water filtration systems are created equal. There is a range of products on the market, so choosing the right one can be a daunting task. Here are the top four things to consider when evaluating a filtration system.

## Point of use vs. point of entry

Under sink cartridges only filter water drawn from the sink; these are called "point of use" systems. The other system is referred to as "point of entry" because it filters all water used in the RV. Tip: A point of use product may be best suited for an RV used only for overnight or weekend journeys. A point of entry system can make longer adventures far more comfortable.

## Installation

RVers should consider whether they want to attempt installation themselves or have a dealer do it for them. Tips: Choose a readily accessible location because the filter cartridge will need to be replaced periodically. When attempting the DIY versions, make sure the filtration system comes with all the proper tubing and attachments. A bargain system may not be a great deal if buyers find themselves at the hardware store looking for the right attachments.

## Level of Filtration

Some systems only filter dirt and grit, providing cleaner looking water, while others improve the water's taste, but do not necessarily produce water that's drinkable. Due to the uncertainty of the water supplies and storage systems

onboard, preferred systems perform those tasks and help catch harmful waterborne organisms, (such as bacteria, cysts, mold spores and or algae) as well. Some are less expensive than others, but they also may need to be changed more frequently than a product with a higher initial expense.

Depending on the model, some cartridges produce the equivalent of as many as 60,000 16-ounce bottles of water and can last the whole season. Tip: No matter what contaminants the product claims to reduce, the key is to look for certification from a reputable third-party agency like the Water Quality Association (WQA), Underwriters Laboratories (UL), or NSF International. These groups certify products and write standards for food, water and consumer goods.

## Ease of maintenance

All systems must be maintained periodically. Check the manufacturer's recommended service life. Changing the filter cartridge can offer a whole new challenge and experience that can be made simple and effortless depending on the type of system chosen.

Some cartridges can be installed and replaced almost effortlessly with one quarter turn. Referred to as "drop-ins," some may require wrenches to remove the outer housing to expose the filter inside. Thorough cleaning of the outer housing is required before replacing the filter. Others referred to as "inline" models can be quite complicated, as users attempt to disengage piping from the filter. Tip: The most maintenance-friendly versions require no cleaning, are easy to change and have built-in by-pass or shut offs so filters can be changed without interrupting water service to the vehicle.

Having a water filtration system should be viewed as a way to enhance water quality and protect against specific contaminants. RVers should never draw water from a source they know to be contaminated just because they have a filter system on board.

A water filtration system ensures

cleaner, great tasting water as well as piece of mind while traveling. ■



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