

End of Season and Frost Damage FAQs

1. Do I need to drain down my caravan during the winter months?

Yes. Even if you come down at weekends, it only takes a hard frost or two and you stand the risk of burst pipes, the associated mess and expense. You should ensure that the gas, electricity and water supplies are turned off

The gas should be turned off at the gas bottles to ensure there are no leaks (see Q6 if you have gas central heating). Your gas bottle must always be used and stored in the upright position. Refer to the leaflet "Using Calor Gas Safely" for detailed instruction on your cylinder and regulator.

Electricity should be turned off at the fuse-board, which is usually found in a wardrobe. The "Test" button on your fuse-board will trip out the RCD, turning off all the electricity. Remember this will also turn off your refrigerator and freezer (see Q8 below for further details). Your supply comes via an underground cable from the supply box situated usually in the front or rear of your pitch. There is an overload trip switch within the supply box, which is for your own caravan and may be turned off when necessary. Be careful not to switch off your neighbours electricity in the same box.

With regard to water, the underground stopcock, which turns off all water to your pitch, should only be used at the beginning and end of the season. An under caravan stopcock should be used to turn the water off after each visit.

2. What do I need to be aware of during the winter months?

Propane gas will work during the winter, so you are able to use your room heaters, cooker etc (plus shower or boiler if you are going to re-connect and drain down each visit). Butane will freeze up in the winter and become unusable. Gas appliances can be dangerous in confined spaces because:

- a) they use up the oxygen supply
- b) they increase CO2 levels
- c) they also create a lot of moisture causing damp and mildew

Please remember that if you have re-connected your water supply, it can still freeze up even if you are staying there.

3. What is the minimum I need to do to winterise my caravan?

Water piping in the caravan is very vulnerable to frost damage and we suggest the following procedure be adopted as a minimum:

- a) Both stopcocks must be turned off and the caravan stopcock also disconnected from the joint above the stopcock if possible.
- b) All drain cocks should be left open. These are usually situated under the caravan. There will be at least two - one for the hot water and one for the cold water systems. In some makes the drain cock is under the kitchen sink. Caravans fitted with central heating systems should contact the Office for instructions.
- c) All taps should be left open and the toilet cistern drained.
- d) Anti-freeze or salt should be placed in the toilet pan after the cistern has been emptied.

- e) There is always a drain plug in your water heater. This must be removed. Refer to the manufacturers handbook.
- f) Where possible we suggest blowing through your pipe work and heater to remove the water lying in the pipes.
- g) Do not forget to check your shed and drain accordingly.

We would point out that this procedure is not a guarantee against frost damage but will certainly reduce any damage from bursts. On request we will drain your caravan for you and also reconnect in the spring – a charge is made for these services.

4. How do I use my caravan at weekends once it's been drained down?

There are two options:

- a) Re-connect and drain down every time you come down (approx 30 minutes each)
- b) Get water from the stand pipe (see overview map for location) with a bucket and use as required.

Also after using the WC, pour the bucket of water down the pan to flush it away or top up cistern before using to flush in the usual way. Before leaving the caravan ensure cistern is empty then add more antifreeze to the pan.

5. My caravan has central heating does it have to be drained down?

The central heating side of the boiler and radiators are a closed system and assuming the correct level of antifreeze is present this does not need to be touched. The domestic water side of the boiler must be drained down as with a conventional caravan boiler.

Some systems may have thermostatic radiator valves so the temperature of each radiator can be changed. With central heating you need an automatic change-over valve on your gas bottles so that the valve, switches to the second bottle without the boiler running out of gas. With a change-over valve the wheel valves on each gas bottle need to be left turned on.

6. Can I leave on some appliances?

Yes. To leave a refrigerator on, the 'Test' button should not be pressed as this turns off the entire electrical supply. Instead you should turn off individual switches and leave the selected appliances (e.g. fridge, a lamp on a timer etc) switched on.

7. Can I obtain ground and river conditions?

Yes. We have an information line 01628 511689 that is updated regularly. This is a pre-recorded message about the river levels, the conditions of the ground and other relevant information.