

# MOTORHOME CARE

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# Motorhome Care

## MODIFICATIONS - DIY WORK

Owners need to be aware that carrying out DIY modifications to your motorhome may in certain instances, invalidate the warranty cover and could also affect the safety and structure of the vehicle.

### **WD40 IS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL USE**

WD40 attacks paintwork and sealants. If a lubricant is required for Interior hinges, Sliding door tracks, Bottle box hinges, Exterior door hinges, Plastic tracking etc. We recommend "Ambersil 40+" this is readily available from most DIY/Automotive retailers including Halford's

Before carrying out any DIY work within the warranty period, please check with your nearest Swift Group dealer for advice.

## EXTERIOR

### **Aluminium Panels**

The stove enamelled paintwork is very durable and easy to clean owing to the high gloss properties.

### **Plastic Panels (GRP/ABS)**

These are used for front and rear panels and, in some cases for the roof.

## Cleaning

For both aluminium panels and plastic panels.

1. Wash the vehicle regularly with mild detergent. Rinse with cold water and leather off.
2. For better protection a similar coloured good quality car wax may be applied.

When cleaning sealant sealed areas, use Domestos/water.

**WARNING: Under no circumstances use any abrasive cleaning agents or solvents on the exterior panels.**

**Care should be taken as the silicon in some polishes can attack the rubber used on the exterior for seals and gaskets.**

## Mouldings

All mouldings are anodised aluminium and will retain their lustre for a long period if no abrasive materials are used on them. If your motor home is subject to constant changes in temperature, mastic may seep from the joints between the mouldings. Excess mastic that appears can be removed by wiping with a soft cloth.

## Acrylic Windows

The windows in your motorhome are fully double glazed and, with care, will remain sparkling and scratch free.

## CONDENSATION

### **What is condensation?**

Condensation is the change of water from its gaseous form (water vapour) into liquid water. Condensation generally occurs in the atmosphere when warm air rises, cools and loses its capacity to hold water vapour.

As a result, excess water vapour condenses to form droplets.

### **Why condensation occurs**

Condensation occurs when warm moist air meets a cold surface. The risk of condensation therefore depends upon how moist the air is and how cold the surfaces of the vehicle are. Both of these depend to some extent on how the vehicle is used. In a Caravan or Motorhome with a cold outside wall, if the temperature of the wall falls below the dew point temperature, it is quite normal for condensation to occur predominantly on the external walls.

### **When condensation occurs**

Condensation occurs usually in winter, because the Caravan or Motorhome is cold and because skylights, windows and doors are opened less and therefore the moist air cannot escape.

### **How condensation occurs**

Condensation occurs often for short periods in bathroom and kitchen areas because of the steamy atmosphere, and quite frequently for long periods in unheated areas; it also occurs in cupboards or corners of rooms where

ventilation and movement of air is restricted.

## What is important

Two things are particularly important:

- To provide ventilation so that moist air can escape.
- To use the heating reasonably.

## How can you prevent condensation

Provide ventilation so that moist air can escape.

- a) Good ventilation of kitchens when washing, cooking or drying damp clothes is essential. Use the electric element of the space heater will help, when washing, cooking, or drying damp clothes, and particularly when the windows show signs of misting up.
- b) If there is no mains electric supply and therefore you cannot use the electrical element of the space heater, open the skylights or windows slightly, but keep the door closed as much as possible.
- c) After showering, keep the bathroom window or skylights open, and shut the bathroom door long enough to dry off the room.
- d) In all other areas provide some ventilation. Fixed ventilation is provided in accordance with BS EN 721: 1998 this is through skylights and 'heki roof lights' in the roofs and from ventilators through the floor under cookers, motorhome step well, doors and in bed boxes it is important not to block these.

Too much ventilation in cold weather is uncomfortable and wastes heat. All that is needed is a very slightly opened window or skylights. Opening a skylight or 'Heki; rooflights partially or windows opened to about 1cm opening will usually be sufficient.

## Provide reasonable heating

- a) Do not use portable paraffin or flueless gas heaters at all.
- b) If drying damp clothes or towels, open a window enough to ventilate the area and turn on the electric element of the space heater but do not hang items over the heater.
- c) Try to make sure that all areas are at least partially heated. Condensation most often occurs in unheated areas.
- d) To prevent condensation, the heat has to keep room surfaces reasonably warm. It can take a long time for a cold Motorhome to warm up, so it is better to have a small amount of heat for a long period than a lot of heat for a short time.
- e) Motorhomes are left unoccupied and unheated and can get very cold. Whenever possible, it is best to put the heating on at a low level before setting off on a journey in the winter to pre heat the vehicle.
- f) In houses, the rooms above a heated room benefit to some extent from heat rising

through the floor. In Motorhomes this does not happen.

Motorhomes use only carefully selected insulation materials but unlike most rooms at home they have all outside walls, so they lose heat through all walls as well as the roof and floor.

Even in a well insulated motorhome with reasonable ventilation it is likely during cold weather if the temperature is less than 10°C that condensation will occur. Ideally the temperature should be kept about 20°C although this is not always possible.

## Mould growth

Any sign of mould growth is an indication of the presence of moisture and if caused by condensation gives warning that heating or ventilation, may require improving.

## New vehicles

New Motorhomes often take a long time before they are fully 'dried out' because of moisture in the materials used in the manufacture. While this is happening they need extra heat and ventilation. At least during the first winter trips and may require more heat than they will need in subsequent winters journeys. Allowance should be made for this.

**WARNING: Do not wash your Motorhome with a high pressure washer as these can permanently damage the seals of your vehicle.**

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## Changing Exterior Bulbs ALWAYS REPLACE LIKE FOR LIKE

For individual replacement bulb specification, refer to your Specification Handbook.

Generally road lighting bulbs can be easily replaced by unscrewing and removing the lens from the exterior of the caravan or motorhome.

## INTERIOR

Follow these guidelines to ensure your investment is receiving the very best attention.

### Windows/ Roller Blind

In case of prolonged exposure to the sun roller blinds should not be completely closed as this could cause excessive heat concentration at the top of the window, due to characteristics of the glazing material the windows could be adversely affected.

Roller blinds that shade from the bottom upwards it is necessary to leave a gap of a few centimetres open at the top, this way the heat between window and blind can escape. A fly screen does not cause an obstruction.

Roller blinds that shade from the top downwards must be kept completely open, or be opened regularly to allow the heat to escape.

Keeping the windows in ventilation position allows heat to escape. Never fully close a roller blind system when storing the vehicle or when

not in use for longer periods!

Therefore for optimal window life it is recommended blinds starting at the bottom of the window a gap should be provided for ventilation at the top with the window in its ventilation position.

For vehicles containing blinds from the top downwards or with other types of reflective blinds / curtains, please make sure that these blinds are also ventilated or not fully closed.

Ensure that all windows and roof vents are closed when the vehicle travels on the road.

### Side Walls, Roof Lining

A simple wipe over with a damp cloth and a very mild detergent is all that is needed.

### Soft Furnishings

Should be vacuumed occasionally to remove grit and sand and help to keep its smart appearance and ensure long life. The upholstery can be cleaned with a mild, reputable upholstery cleaner. It is recommended that the curtains and pelmets are specialist cleaned only. The foam used in cushions are manufactured to meet fire regulations. It requires time to return to its normal position after prolonged use.

Clean and dust the upholstery and if possible remove before placing the Motorhome into winter storage. Alternatively, stand the cushions on their edges to allow circulation of air. This

will reduce the possibility of dampness from condensation. Keep curtains or blinds closed, to minimise fading of furniture.

If the blinds and/or flyscreens remain down for a prolonged period of time, re-tensioning of the springs will be necessary before re-use.

### Work Surfaces

You should not stand very hot items on any of the work surfaces.

### Cupboard Catches

It is advisable to lightly oil all cupboard catches, sliding bolts and hinges from time to time.

### Bathroom, Shower Room and Kitchen Equipment

All the Thermoplastic parts in these areas have easy clean surfaces. To ensure long life and prevent damage you must not use any cleaning materials at all and ensure water temperatures do not exceed 70°C, (putting cold water in first is suggested). After every use, it is essential that you rinse with clean water only and wipe with a soft damp cloth.

Failure to follow these simple instructions may result in premature failure or cracking which will not be covered by any guarantees (including extended warranties).

### Furniture

A simple wipe over with a damp cloth should be all that is required. Polishing with a proprietary brand of wax polish enhances and

maintains furniture in showroom condition.

It must be remembered that because the frames of some doors are made of ash, which is a natural product, they can be affected by temperature and humidity and may bow under certain conditions. As conditions change they should revert to their original positions.

### **Kitchen Drainer and Cutting Board**

You should not stand hot items on to these items. To wash use only warm soapy water, do not use chemicals and bleach.

### **Changing Interior Bulbs**

Remove the lens or lamp shade to access the bulb.

### **ALWAYS REPLACE LIKE FOR LIKE**

For individual replacement bulb specification, refer to your Specification Handbook.

## **WINTERISATION/STORAGE**

This is probably an opportune moment to arrange for the Motorhome to have its annual service at your appointed dealer.

The following applies whenever your Motorhome is stored particularly during the winter months.

Do not park near trees or larch type fences, due to possible wind damage.

Keep any grass around the floor of the

Motorhome short, to maintain air flow and stop any possible damp getting into the Motorhome.

It is advised that the Motorhome is ventilated regularly throughout the winterisation /storage period, opening windows, doors and rooflights when possible.

### **General**

**For care of the vehicle battery please refer to the Fiat/Peugeot handbook in section 'Correct use of the vehicle' particularly 'Vehicle inactivity'.**

All moving parts should be checked for free operation.

Clean all cooking appliances and refrigerator. Lubrication should be carried out at the points illustrated in the general notes on chassis maintenance.

Charge up the on-board battery every 2 months.

Leave the refrigerator door open. Leave furniture doors and lockers open to allow air to circulate fully.

### **Soft Furnishings**

Clean and dust the upholstery and if possible remove before placing the Caravan or Motorhome into winter storage. Alternatively, stand the cushions on their edges to allow circulation of air.

This will reduce the possibility of dampness from condensation.

Keep curtains or blinds closed, to minimise fading of furniture.

If the blinds and/or flyscreens remain down for a prolonged period of time, re-tensioning of the springs will be necessary before re-use.

### **Wheels and Tyres**

Do not store in one position with partially deflated tyres. The tyre walls will suffer and do present a real danger of blow outs, especially when travelling at faster speeds than are allowed in the UK.

The wheels should be turned every couple of weeks. If you are removing the wheels, follow the jacking procedure for changing a wheel. Check your tyres regularly for signs of age and deterioration, particularly wear, cracking and blistering. If in doubt consult a reputable tyre fitter.

### **Water System**

Remove chopping board from bowl. All taps should be opened. Single lever mixer taps, including the shower mixer, should have the lever moved to the central position and lifted to the open position for hot and cold.

**Drain water heater:** Open yellow handle on in line valve normally adjacent to water heater. Valve is open when handle is vertical.

**Drain water tanks:** Fresh tank: either remove the water dump plug in the base of the tank accessible via the cleaning hatch or by the drain tap situated below the skirt panel

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(model specific).

Waste tank: open in line valve adjacent to the tank. Valve is open when handle is in line with body of valve.

With valves and switches set as previously described to run taps from the fresh water tank, the pump can be run momentarily to assist purging the water tank and pipes.

Remove shower head. Let the shower hose drain into the shower tray and then return to holder.

The Motorhome may be left in this condition over winter or until ready to use. It is recommended to leave the drain taps in an open position during storage. Before recommissioning the system, reverse all above actions.

Before recommissioning the system, reverse all above actions.

The Thetford Cassette toilet is easily winterised for storage.

Empty remaining fresh water into the bowl by activating the flush handle up and down or by pressing the flush button (model dependant).

Once pump has been cleared and water flow has stopped completely, release into waste tank. Remove waste tank and empty contents in normal way.

To evacuate any remaining water from the fresh water tank, place a container underneath the drainplug and remove drainplug.

When the procedure has been completed replace drainplug and waste holding tank. Clean the seals and grease them if necessary after drying, with acid free vaseline.

Leave the blade of the holding tank open.

Do not replace cap on the pour out spout, to ventilate the holding tank.

## Recomissioning the Water System

Fill the fresh water tank on the Thetford Cassette porta potti (model specific) using a hose or jerrycan until the water in the funnel reaches the neck. Tank capacity is 15 litres. Aqua Rinse may be added to improve cleaning of bowl and flushing of unit.

Replace cap. Swing back the water fill funnel until it touches the water tank.

Add Aqua Kem (100 ml) into the Cassette (or 120 ml if using Aqua Kem Bio) through the pour out spout. Add small amount of water through the pour out spout and replace the cap. Close the cold taps and ensure all the drain taps are closed.

It is advisable after storage to flush the water system initially with a sterilising agent (such as Milton), and then with water repeating until the system is well flushed through.

Connect the pump.

Fill the system with water until water flows freely from the hot taps. About 2 gallons of water will be required. Close the hot taps.

## Appliances

Before starting motor caravanning after storage, check all gas appliances and electrical points.

Note: Preferably not less than once a year, the electrical installation should be inspected and tested by a qualified electrician.

After storage it is advisable to air the Motorhome and clean throughout, especially cooking appliances and the refrigerator.

Replace the bedding if they were removed for storage.

**Important: Always follow the manufacturers recommended procedures after use of fitted equipment in the Motorhome, before storing for any length of time.**

## **CHASSIS AND REAR AXLE**

Some models are built on Fiat/Peugeot base vehicles, the chassis of which has been converted by AL-KO. This conversion provides a hot dipped galvanised steel chassis coupled with a wide track rear axle utilising steel torsion bar suspension, imparting vastly improved stability and road holding.

## **AL-KO EXHAUST SYSTEM**

A standard Fiat/Peugeot exhaust system is fitted, utilising an AL-KO modified tail pipe, available through your approved dealer. A standard Fiat/Peugeot exhaust system is fitted to all other models, with the addition of a Swift Group tail pipe.

## **CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

After many years of service you may decide that your motorhome has become beyond economic repair and should be disposed of. Please ensure that you comply with the end of life vehicle legislation and take it to an authorised treatment facility where it will be properly dealt with to minimise any negative environmental impact. The transaction will be logged at the DVLA, identifying that you are no longer the owner of the vehicle.

