

RV Water Leak Hunt Checklist

How to Find an RV Water Leak Before It Ruins Your Trip

Use this checklist to track down fresh water, drain water, exterior leaks, or condensation before a small issue becomes a major repair.

1. Identify the Type of Leak

Ask first: Does it happen on city water, water pump only, both, only when draining, only when it rains, only while driving, or does the pump cycle by itself when no faucet is open?

- Fresh water leak
- Drain water leak
- Rain / exterior leak
- Condensation
- Not sure yet

2. Quick First Checks

- Turn off water and inspect the affected area
- Dry the area completely before testing
- Look for drips, stains, swelling, or soft spots
- Check for musty smells or damp compartments
- Decide whether the water looks clean, gray, or like rainwater

3. City Water vs. Water Pump Test

Your water pump can act like a leak detector. If it cycles on when no faucet is open, the system is losing pressure somewhere.

- Connect city water and pressurize the system
- Check under sinks, at the toilet, around the pump, and at the water heater
- Fill the fresh tank and turn on the pump
- Listen for pump cycling when no faucet is open
- Inspect the pump strainer and suction line
- Note whether the leak happens on city water only, pump only, both, or neither

4. Common Fresh Water Leak Points

- Kitchen sink: faucet supply lines, faucet base, water filter connections
- Bathroom sink: supply lines and faucet base
- Toilet area: supply fitting, water valve, around the base
- Water heater: hot/cold connections, drain plug or anode, relief valve, bypass fittings
- Water pump: inlet, outlet, strainer, fresh tank line
- Other points: low-point drains, outside shower, city water inlet, washer / ice maker lines if equipped

5. Check the Drain Side

A drain leak may only show up while water is draining.

- Fill the kitchen sink, then drain it while watching underneath
- Check basket strainers, P-traps, and drain fittings
- Repeat for the bathroom sink
- Run the shower and inspect the drain connection or access panel area
- Check visible gray and black tank drain connections

6. Check for Exterior or Rain Leaks

- Inspect roof seams, vents, and skylights
- Inspect windows and window frames

- Inspect marker lights, corner trim, and moldings
- Inspect slide seals and entry door seals
- Look for interior wall or ceiling stains

7. Rule Out Condensation

- Check windows for heavy moisture
- Check under the mattress
- Check inside cabinets on exterior walls
- Check around the air conditioner area
- Think about ventilation and humidity levels

8. Use Simple Leak Detection Methods

- Wrap suspect fittings with dry paper towel
- Place cardboard or paper towel under suspect areas
- Check after pressurizing the system
- Check again after using sinks or shower
- Recheck after driving
- Use a flashlight to inspect hidden corners

9. Fittings and Repair Check

- Tighten loose threaded fittings carefully
- Do not overtighten plastic fittings
- Hold the line while tightening the nut
- Look for cracked fittings from freeze damage
- Identify the correct fitting type: PEX crimp, Flair-It, SeaTech / push-to-connect, or threaded swivel

10. Emergency Leak Repair Supplies

- Flashlight or headlamp
- Paper towels
- Adjustable wrench
- PEX cutter
- Spare plumbing fittings and a short section of tubing
- Thread seal tape for appropriate fittings
- Zip ties, catch pan, and basic hand tools
- Water pressure regulator

11. When to Stop and Get Help

- The leak appears to be inside a wall, floor, or ceiling
- The floor feels soft or spongy
- The water heater tank appears to be leaking
- You cannot find the source
- Damage is widespread or mold is present
- You are not comfortable making the repair

12. Notes

Leak Found: _____

Likely Cause: _____

Repair Needed: _____

Parts Needed: _____

Follow-Up Check: _____