

Hooking Up and Unhooking Up

Rain or shine, dark or light, cold or hot, you have to manually hook up and unhook your utilities. This is likely the most unpleasant task related to RVing—especially if there is a cold downpour, it's dark, someone left a mess at the campsite, and you are standing in mud! However, there is a correct—and most importantly—**safe** sequence to do this. The very good news is that this safe sequence is also the most efficient. That's really important, especially in that cold downpour.

Safety First!

Connecting and disconnecting your utilities is about the only time you can truly get hurt or cause yourself harm by being careless. Safety is a major factor when plugging in your coach. Virtually every RV has some type of electrical connection where, using an appropriate electrical cord, you plug into the power source at the campsite (typically called shore power—a term borrowed from the boating industry). Doing so provides electricity to the RV. Safety must always be considered when using electricity.

Safety is also a factor when working with potable (drinking) water. You will want it clean and sanitary. You have to run this potable water through a drinking water hose to get it from the campground faucet to your RV.

Safety is always a factor when handling sewage—that most unpleasant task for RVers. There is a correct procedure for dumping holding tanks but here, I will only address the correct—i.e., safe—procedure for hooking up and unhooking all your utilities.

Hooking UP—The Sequence

You are finally parked at your campsite and ready to hook up to your utilities. The process is easy but the sequence is important for safety. Consider this...

Electricity first, potable water second, sewage third, and wash hands fourth.

1. **E**lectricity first because your hands are dry.
2. **P**otable water (white water hose) second because you haven't handled the sewer hose yet so you won't contaminate the good water supply.
3. **S**ewer hose last. Now try to not touch anything until you can wash thoroughly.
4. **W**ash hands immediately and thoroughly. A germicidal soap is best.

Here's why this sequence is safe... Using this sequence, you won't set yourself up to get electrocuted by handling/plugging in the power cord with wet hands if you happen to connect the water or sewage first. If you handle the sewer hose first, you increase the potential to transfer bacteria to your water hose (can you say e-coli?) or onto your electrical plug.

Unhooking—The Sequel

Electricity first, potable water second, sewage third, and wash hands fourth.

1. **E**lectricity first because your hands are dry.
2. **P**otable water (white water hose) second because you haven't handled the sewer hose yet so you won't contaminate the good water supply.
3. **S**ewer hose last. Now try to not touch anything until you can wash thoroughly.
4. **W**ash hands immediately and thoroughly. A germicidal soap is best.

Yes, this is the exact same sequence you used to hook up and all the same reasons apply for safety. Since it is the same, it's easier to remember.

Oh, by the way, after you unhook, **do not** use your water hose for washing out your sewer hose unless you have excellent medical insurance and the location of the nearest hospital. We see this frequently in campgrounds.

Dumping Mnemonics

Some RVers tape a note in their utility compartment to help them remember the correct sequence. However, it's easy and fun to remember this sequence by thinking up a mnemonic: **EPSW**... **E**lectricity, **P**otable, **S**ewer, **W**ash or pick a comfortable one that will be easy for you to recall:

- **E**ggs, **P**otatoes, **S**ausage, **W**affles
- **E**ggplant **P**armesean, **S**alad, **W**ater
- **E**very **P**erson **S**hould **W**in
- **E**scargot, **P**etits-fours, **S**ushi, **W**ine (okay, use this if you drive a million-dollar rig).

Of course, you can make up your own. Remember, it's the same sequence for both hooking up and unhooking.

The Future of Dump

Yep, rain or shine, you have to dump those tanks. You have to manually hook up and unhook your utilities. My often-cloudy crystal ball shows the future of dump and it looks somewhat like this...

You park your RV and with the touch of a button, like a robotic arm, your sewer hose probe senses the connection in the ground (sewer hole), and automatically connects (like the refueling connection on aircraft) and seals. The system will tell you when it's time to dump. The system will automatically dump or you touch one button in the bathroom to activate it. First, the black tank will pump and dump. Next, the grey water will pump into the black tank via a high-pressure spray to a level slightly higher than the black had been. It will pull from the fresh tank if needed. Then the grey water will pump out of the black tank (like a flush). Finally, any remaining grey water in the grey tank will pump and dump. You always have accurate tank readings since sensors are mounted on the outside of the respective tanks. Of course, your probe puts itself away if you put the coach in gear or it detects movement.

That's it. All this takes place while you are sitting inside or headed out to dinner after you touched that one button. Pretty cool! Don't forget, this is my crystal ball.

Back to Earth

Until that time, you are going to have to do this the old-fashioned (manual) way. There are only two groups of people on this planet that have made a conscious decision to carry their sewage with them—boaters and RVers. You have to get rid of it every so often to make room for more. You also have to handle it correctly to be safe and sanitary and doing so could prevent you from spending a small fortune for repair, getting sick, or being hurt. After all, you don't know what you don't know so be safe!