

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT CLEANING AGENT

## A guide to the selection of a cleaning agent

### **Very Acidic or Alkaline cleaners can be effective, however...**

Very high or alternatively very low pH cleaners can be very corrosive to a van. Automatic Car Washes often use acidic car cleaners as they are fast and effective, however they can cause premature aging and corrosion to paintwork and may even etch glass.

### **What is a neutral car wash?**

A car cleaner that is balanced or is "neutral" has a pH score similar to that of water, with a pH value of around 7. A pH that is greater than 7 is considered acidic, a pH lower than 7 is considered basic or alkaline.

### **Is dishwashing detergent suitable to clean a van?**

Liquid dishwashing detergents have abrasive components which soften and remove food and grease from dishes. This abrasiveness is too harsh and just not suitable for cleaning the exterior paintwork.

While this might initially achieve a great clean, ultimately the result is a dull surface as the detergent strips the protective coating from the paintwork. This leaves the underlying paintwork exposed to premature aging and vulnerable to UV rays and other harmful elements.

### **Why a pH neutral car cleaner is best**

A cleverly formulated car cleaner with a balanced pH is the safest choice to wash a van. pH neutral car cleaners gently clean away road grime and dirt without damaging the protective coating.

### **Does quality really matter?**

Yes. A quality pH neutral car cleaner should definitely be used to clean the van's surface. Cheaper car cleaners often contain harsh chemicals or fillers which erode the protective coating on paintwork.

Ensure the choice of cleaner has a balanced formula, ideally a pH value of 7.

# CLEANING YOUR CARAVAN OR RV

## Regular Cleaning

Clean your Caravan or RV on a regular basis ideally immediately after a trip or if travelling long-term you should be cleaning it every few weeks, rinsing evenly with clean water at moderate pressure.

Prevent accumulated layers of grime and airborne pollution building up on the surface. There is an old saying "*Where there's muck there's brass*" essentially meaning, if you keep your caravan or RV in tip-top condition then it's going to last longer, look better and prevent paint from aging prematurely.

## Don't use a pressure washer

A regular garden hose with an adjustable nozzle is ideal for wetting down and later rinsing the van rather than a pressure washer. The danger with using a pressure washer is that, unless care is taken with where the spray is focused, there is the risk of dislodging joint sealant and forcing water into places it shouldn't be, resulting in water sitting between crevices or joins and breaking down the paint coating causing premature aging and corrosion.

Cleaning with a garden hose and a bucket/sponge, while it may be more time-consuming, is a much safer choice. Washing by hand will allow for closer inspection of the van's true condition.

An off-road van may need a pressure washer to do the underneath but, again, be aware of where the blast is going.

## How to Wash

Carry out regular washing of the whole vehicle, rinsing evenly with clean water at moderate pressure.

Use a soft sponge and neutral PH Level vehicle detergent, if necessary, but avoid strong solvents which may degrade the surface and ultimately lead to premature aging and corrosion of the paint.

Do not use recycled water as this contains alkaline which may result in staining the paintwork.

## Finishing

Always thoroughly rinse with clean water and dry all surfaces with a micro-fibre cloth after washing.

It is also recommended that an application of protective wax is applied directly after washing to ensure no cleaning agents remain on the surface and to provide longer sunscreen protection for the vehicle.

## Bird droppings, Tree sap and Splattered bugs

Always remove corrosive substances such as bird droppings and tree sap stains immediately, to avoid permanent marking of the surface. Do not leave them until the next time you decide to wash your caravan or RV. Wash splattered bugs off the surface of the paint by hand as soon as possible to prevent any staining of the paint.

## Additional Cleaning Points

- If the vehicle has been exposed to salt spray and seaside mist DO NOT wait for the next time you wash your caravan - clean it immediately afterwards ensuring the above cleaning steps are followed
- Avoid washing the caravan or RV in direct sunlight or in high temperatures
- Avoid drive-in carwashes as they often use high PH level chemicals and recycled water which contain destructive alkaline which can cause premature aging and corrosion to paintwork

# CARE OF YOUR CARAVAN OR RV

## Garaging and Storage

For long-term protection, the caravan or RV should be garaged or kept under shelter or in a carport.

Always cover up your van completely using a caravan cover when not in use, particularly when held in storage for extended periods of time.

This will help prolong the life of the coating and assist with reducing colour fade.

Do not store under trees for long period of time as the trees will drop harmful tree sap onto the caravan or RV which will result in damage of the paintwork.

## Additional Protection

Additional protection can be achieved with the application of a paint protection coating system by an approved professional, however we suggest researching this properly. Even though your caravan or RV may have an additional protection coating, all of the above cleaning procedures are still necessary.

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