

RV Waste Systems

There are two distinct types of RV waste systems: the "grey" system and the "black" system. The grey system is typically waste from the kitchen sink, the lavatory sink, and the shower or tub.

The black waste system is the solid waste associated with the toilet. The black and grey systems should not be inter-connected, that is, they must each have a dedicated method of storing the waste in holding tanks and each must have its own waste termination or dump valve. For all practical purposes, the two systems should remain separate.

Many different chemicals were formulated to aid in this dual task of masking the odor and breaking down the tissue and solids in the holding tanks. For many years, formaldehyde-based chemicals seemed to work the best. As the dangers of formaldehyde poisoning came to be understood, other options became available. Today, formaldehyde and other alcohol-based chemicals are no longer recommended and many park systems prohibit the dumping of formaldehyde laced holding tanks into their systems.

Experts recommend using a biological additive, one that employs live bacteria to literally absorb and eradicate the odor-causing molecules. Avoid using any chemical in the holding tank, especially containing formaldehyde. Also avoid using home brews or other concoctions. Once you switch over to the live "bugs", using other types of deodorants, chemicals, or detergents will kill the good bacteria and defeat the purpose.

Be aware that the tank odors are not exclusive to the black water holding tank. Oils, soaps, and other residue commingling and fermenting in the grey tank can also produce their own olfactory objections.

Dumping Facilities in Sweetwater County

City of Rock Springs (no fee to dump)

Wastewater Treatment Plant
2300 Sunset Drive
Open 24 hours a day

Flying J Travel Plaza (fee)

650 Stagecoach Drive
I-80 Exit 104
Rock Springs
\$10.00 or \$5.00 with Flying J Card

KOA CAMPGROUNDS- (free for registered guests)

86 Foothill Blvd.
Rock Springs
KOA – \$15.00 dump fee non registered guests

Green River - (free for registered guests)

Tex's Travel Camp
360 Washington Street
Open year round
\$5 fee/unregistered guests

City of Green River

210 East Teton Blvd.
Open - 24/7 – year round
No fee
Potable water available for a fee

How Long Does it Last?

Packing out trash is increasingly important as greater numbers of people visit the backcountry.

Here are some estimated life expectancies for different kinds of litter:

PAPER – TWO TO FOUR WEEKS

BANANA PEEL – THREE TO FIVE WEEKS

WOOL CAP – ONE YEAR

CIGARETTE BUTT – TWO TO FIVE YEARS

RUBBER BOOT SOLE – 50-80 YEARS

TIN CAN – 80-100 YEARS

ALUMINUM CANS – 200-400 YEARS

PLASTIC SIX-PACK HOLDER – 450 YEARS

DISPOSABLE DIAPER – 10-20 YEARS

HARD PLASTIC CONTAINER – 20-30 YEARS

GLASS BOTTLES – THOUSANDS OR MILLIONS OF YEARS!

Contact Information

Sweetwater County Conservation District
79 Winston Dr. Ste 110
Rock Springs, WY 82901
Phone: (307) 362-3062 ext 107

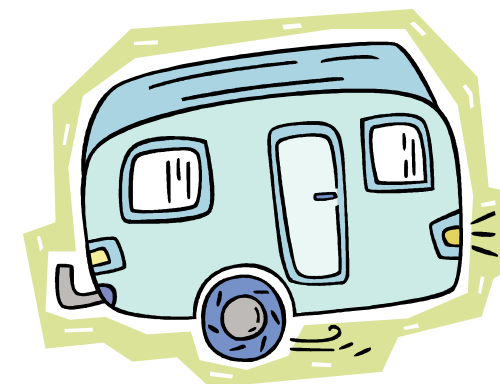
Email: admin@swccd.us

Website: wwwswccd.us

Sweetwater County Conservation District

A Guide for proper

RV/Camp Waste Disposal



As an American, I Will Do My Best to:

Be clean in my outdoor manners.
Be careful with fire.
Be considerate in the outdoors.
Be conservation-minded.

--The Outdoor Code
Boy Scouts of America



Pack it in, pack it out!

This common saying is a simple yet effective way to get backcountry visitors to take their trash home with them. There is no reason why people cannot carry out of the backcountry, parks, and recreational areas the extra food and packaging materials they carry in with them in the first place. Trash and litter in the backcountry ranks high as a problem in the minds of many backcountry visitors. Trash and litter are human impacts that can greatly detract from the naturalness of an area.

Dispose of Waste Properly

Waste takes many forms. From foil wrappers to apple cores, tin cans to urine, backcountry waste is an issue with which each visitor must cope. At best, handling and disposing of refuse can be an organized, well thought out process. At worst, it can be unsanitary, unsightly, damaging, and dangerous. Properly disposing of waste is challenging, however, positive or negative choices you make will have lasting positive or negative effects on the beauty of the areas you visit.

Wash Dishes Responsibly

Hot water and a little elbow grease can tackle most backcountry cleaning chores; therefore soap, which is harmful to the environment, is unnecessary for most dishwashing jobs. Even biodegradable soap can add harmful compounds to soil, vegetation, and water sources. Dishwater and water used to cook food (i.e. pasta water) is called "gray water" and should be strained for food particles and scattered widely, away from camp. All strained food particles should be packed out.

Proper Disposal of Trash and Garbage

Garbage – defined as biodegradable food waste such as orange peels, eggshells, leftover oatmeal, or coffee grounds – and trash – defined as non-food items such as aluminum cans, plastic bags, candy wrappers, or nylon rope – should be packed out. While most people understand that leaving behind trash is wrong, they sometimes consider biodegradable food waste as benign. It is not.

Garbage left behind attracts animals that, in time, come to depend on humans as a food source. Burning or burying garbage is not an option because neither method will break down the garbage completely. Animals will invariably smell, locate, and eat this food.

Dispose of Human Waste Responsibly

As a general rule, It is highly recommended that campers use the developed restroom facilities in the campground areas or a camper with a self contained holding system.

Folks that choose not to utilize the campground facilities or don't have a self contained RV, they should practice the cathole method explained below if they are few in number or are in the area for a short period of time. If there are numerous people or extended stays are imminent, a portable toilet (with waste bag) should be used.

Proper disposal of human waste – solid and liquid alike – requires special considerations. Human fecal matter contains pathogens and bacteria that pollute water and endanger humans and other animals. Urine, although essentially sterile, can have a severe impact on humans, wildlife, and plants alike. By understanding the effects of human waste in backcountry areas, you will be better prepared to dispose of your wastes properly.

- Below timberline, bury solid human waste in a cat hole. Since solid human waste deposited on the surface is likely to pollute water sources and offend other visitors, it is generally recommended that hikers bury feces below the timberline. To promote decomposition, choose a site in organic soil, rather than sandy or mineral soil. After use, refill the hole with organic soil and debris (exposure to organic soil will speed up the breakdown of the feces) and disguise it with natural materials.

It is inappropriate to deposit human waste under rocks, because rock inhibits moisture and heat, critical factors in decomposition.

- Above tree line, pack out all human waste. Digging cat holes above timberline damages tundra plants. Carry a paper bag containing a small amount of cat litter in a small plastic bag. Pack the entire package out with you and deposit it, minus the plastic bag, in an outhouse, RV waste facility, or septic tank. **Do not deposit in trashcans or dumpsters as it is illegal and unsanitary.** Do not deposit plastic bags in outhouses or toilets because it will clog these facilities.
- Avoid urination on vegetation – animals are attracted to the salt content in urine. This can entice animals to chew on plants or dig up soil. Urine's strong odor can also become a deterrent factor to other campers when concentrated in one area.

NOTE: If the cat hole method is to be used – distances to any live water OR dry swales / draws that would run water during a rain event MUST be maintained!



(Continued on back)