

## Does Your RV Have Slideouts? Tips for keeping out of trouble.

How do you keep your slideout happy? A little bit of maintenance and forethought will go a long way to making sure your RV experience doesn't get unhappy when your slideout room won't slide like it should.



Are you putting out the slide? First check to make sure your rig is level. If it isn't you run the risk of "binding" the slideout, which can jam it, even damage it. Going either direction, out or in, check the floor. Sand, grit, or other "foreign" substances can get under the slideout and scratch the flooring. Doesn't make Mama happy, and if she ain't happy--well, you know the rest. Got pets? It's best to corral them safely, more than one RVer has had the misfortune of closing a slide on a beloved pet. Others have reported crunching valuables like laptop computers – do a "look-see" before retracting your slides.

Before retracting the slideout, check up topside. Branches, leaves, bird nests, all manner of odd things can wind up on the outside of your slideout, even if you have a retracting slideout awning. If this "junk" gets trapped in the retraction process, you can be in a world of hurt. Make sure there are no lurking pools of water. If there are, get them off the roof, better outside than in.

Know your individual slideout requirements. It should be a no-brainer – read the book. Some hydraulic slide mechanism builders suggest you keep the extend/retract button pushed for a few seconds after the slide has made the full travel--somehow keeping the hydraulic system pressurized. Others simply tell you to get off the button when the room is in or out. Others are "death" on changing room movement direction unless the slideout has gone full cycle. In other words, if you're in the middle of retracting the room and change your mind, they don't want you to try and extend the room until after you've retracted it all the way. In any event, have somebody stand near the control button whenever the slideout is moving in case something comes up requiring a STOP! call.

And yes, your slideout needs regular attention. Seals can dry out leaving you without protection from the elements. What does your manufacturer recommend? There are some commercial nostrums available, but we'd suggest you be careful of something that contains silicone. We've been on this lectern before, silicone can dry rubber out.

Advice on slideout mechanisms gets contrary. Nearly everyone agrees that slides should be lubricated regularly, but with what? One prominent RV technician says you should never use a "wet" lube like WD-40. He feels that the lube may well attract dust and dirt to

the mechanism. Others suggest using silicon sprays. Ach! Again, what's your manufacturer recommend? If you're under warranty, best to use what they call for in case you develop a problem that they'll need to fix.

Keep an eye on your hydraulic reservoir if so equipped. If they're low, why? System leaks can be tracked down by following the lines from the hydraulic fluid reservoir, through the pump, out to the actuating cylinders. If you need to 'filler'up' then again, be sure to use what the factory calls for. Some slideouts call for transmission fluid, others specialty hydraulic fluids. Know what you need before you pour!

Finally, this golden rule applies to ALL types of slideouts. **KEEP THE BATTERY CHARGED!** There's nothing more difficult than being in the middle of nowhere and having that slide refuse to go back in because your battery is low or kaput. Cranking that slideout back in by hand is a long, and slow process. Many RVers find it good to power up the generator, have the ignition running, or be hooked up to shore power when deploying or retracting slideouts.

High on the list of, "Hate that!" is finding your slideout won't come in or out when on location. Before leaving on your next trip, make sure you know how to manually operate your slideout, maybe even giving it a bit of a trial run. And if you ever have to crank in your slideout, **DON'T** overdo it – get the slideout in far enough for safe travel and move on to a service center. Pulling the slideout in too far can result in costly damage.

Copied from a Posting by RV Bloggers [Russ and Tiña De Maris](#)