

Information sheet

Damp & Moisture Ingress Testing

You have invested a lot of money in your camper van, motor home or caravan and for its long term protection, it is extremely important to ensure that it remains dry and that moisture cannot penetrate into the structure or frame work of the vehicle.

Serious problems arise when sealing is breached and moisture leaks in.

This becomes most noticeable if it remains unchecked for a period and may be seen as softening or blistering of the inner wall surfaces to discolouration or blackening where the problem has become more advanced, roofs and floors can be similarly affected.

Unfortunately, when these signs are visible deterioration has already occurred however, in most cases the deterioration can be halted and cost effective repairs made if the damage has not become extensive.

Damp caused by moisture leaking into wall and roof panels can produce bad odours and also creates conditions where fungal growth arises which poses risks to the health of users.

Where decay has commenced in framing, structural members or wall surfaces it must be completely removed to be replaced with new material.

Many leaks are not apparent in the early stages and cannot be detected visually, for that reason specialist moisture measuring equipment is necessary.

*At **Southern Spirit Campervans** we use the latest European type moisture detection and measuring equipment so that no probe marks or other damage will mar surfaces.*

During performance of this check, every sealed edge on each of the sides, back, front, floor, ceiling, wall or roof vents, roof lights, doors and windows is checked for sealing integrity.

If an area is found to have elevated moisture content it is examined to determine the reason and the source.

Note: *If you are buying a motor home or caravan and wish to be certain that there are no issues with leaks, which can lead to costly repairs, this test should be seriously considered.*

Water leaks

Water leaks in motor homes and caravans can cause major and costly damage if not diagnosed promptly and correctly repaired.

On older vehicles especially, sealing mastics can become hardened, the movement and flex that occurs whilst travelling also deterioration caused by the elements all conspire to cause failure of the sealing that is supposed to prevent water from entering the structure of our vehicles.

Storing your vehicle under cover helps but it only slows down the inevitable, everything produced has a service life and sealing is no different. Eventually, some part, or parts, of the extensive sealing carried during manufacture of your vehicle will fail. It's a fact, and that is why it should be checked from time to time.

Most leaks that occur through breached sealing cannot be detected visually until the damage has advanced sufficiently to be apparent as softening, bulging or blistering of the inner wall or ceiling surfaces or where it has advanced further still, discolouration or blackening becomes visible.

When discolouration or blackening appears on inner surfaces, you can be certain that the leak that caused it has gone unchecked for a considerable period of time, almost certainly more than a year and possibly much longer. Generally the visible damage to interior surface sheeting

is only the tip of the iceberg because when examined underneath there is usually significant decay in the wooden framing structure. If the vehicle is **skinned with aluminium** sheeting the dampness will cause corrosion of the aluminium skin, from inside, in all areas where the dampness has penetrated. In as little as two years or less after the corrosion has started it will be noticeable as small bubbles in the outer panel surface which close inspection will reveal as tiny holes. Over time as the corrosion advances more bubbling and holes will appear. Once the process has started it can be difficult to halt. The dampness which is trapped in the structure acts as a driver to fuel the corrosion which continues to eat through from the inside. The problem is further exacerbated as holes appearing on the outside allow more moisture to enter the structure accelerating the process.

Where surface corrosion is detected on any external surface of aluminium skinned vehicles immediate action should be taken to deal with the problem.

If the vehicle is **skinned with fibreglass** sheeting from outside, the water leaks usually do not appear from the outside. The damage inside and in between the inside and outside walls can be detected with measurement equipment from inside or/and visual checking.

Newer vehicles are not immune from water leaks as we have encountered leaks in motor homes and caravans less than two years old from various manufacturers.

Leaks can occur at any location where panels join or where windows, vents, roof lights, luggage hatches and doors are installed.

The vast majority of motor home and caravan under bodies are made of plywood.

If this material is properly maintained and sealed from moisture it can last pretty much indefinitely however, if not, it can deteriorate rapidly.

We provide a very comprehensive solution where damage or deterioration to the underbody or chassis has occurred.

Where plywood sheeting or floor structural members have deteriorated or even if decay has commenced we can remove affected areas and insert new material, joining old to new, ensuring that sealing is restored. The entire area is then thoroughly cleaned in preparation to receive a tough rubberised coating which will provide protection for long service life and also restore the original appearance.

Where Steel chassis components show deterioration or damage we can make repairs and remove any rust. After thorough cleaning a primer coat is applied to the affected areas before coating with a tough rubberised material developed specifically for the purpose and which provides very long service life.

Periodic" moisture ingress testing" ensures that if water has leaked into a panel structure the elevated moisture level that it creates can be detected by specialised moisture detection and measuring equipment. The source can then be traced and sealed. If it is detected early, no other action may be necessary.

If further action is required, earlier intervention will reduce the damage caused and therefore lower the cost of any repairs.

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