Winterising your Go-Pod

"Winterising" is an important process to follow to make sure that your Go-Pod is ready for the winter months, particularly when it is out of use.

Diligently completing the winterisation process to the best of your ability will ensure the longevity of your Go-Pod and its readiness for use in the next camping season.

We've prepared a list of winterising tips & tricks, as well as a checklist that you can print out to keep things organised. Tasks with a **red title** are critical and should not be skipped, while those with a **yellow title** are advisory but will ensure the maximum protection for your Go-Pod over the winter months.

Suitable storage

Finding a safe & suitable storage place for your Go-Pod is incredibly important.

A storage position under shelter is preferable but we understand this may not always be possible. Go-Pod owners are particularly lucky in that their Pods are unobtrusive and can often be stored at home in their garages/on driveways - the vast majority of caravan owners are unable to keep their vans within arms reach when not in use, and have to pay to use storage facilities.

Storing your Go-Pod at home makes it easier to complete the winterisation process and perform regular checkups to ensure that everything is in order.

If you don't have a garage or permanent structure to store your Go-Pod beneath, we recommend finding a safe place, on level ground and not under trees to reduce the risk of debris falling onto and damaging your Pod during periods of inclement weather.

When using an external storage facility, it's important to ask as many questions as possible and to check the T&Cs in your contract to cover any eventualities. A few questions you may wish to ask include:

- What is the size of the pitch that I will be allocated?
- Is it a hard standing pitch or gravel/grass?
- What facilities do you offer? *(will they park your Go-Pod for you, do they have battery charging & cleaning/valeting facilties, is there a vermin control programme in place)*
- What are the terms of access? *(opening hours - some sites operate limited hours during the off-season - do you need to provide notice to visit, is a code required for access, etc)*
- What security systems are in place?
- How will I be notified in the event of any issues?

You will also need to advise your insurer of your chosen storage facility - if you don't and any damage occurs while it is in storage, this can void your policy in many cases.

Winterising your Go-Pod

Washing exterior/gel coat protection

The external finish of Go-Pods is more akin to a boat than a traditional caravan, with a gel coat applied atop the fibreglass shell structure. Gel coats provide a glossier finish and are longer lasting than the painted panels typically used in other caravans, but require a little extra maintenance to ensure their longevity and prevent fading/bleaching/other damage.

To protect your Go-Pods gel coat over the winter months, you should begin by washing it in the usual manner *(by hand, with a bucket of warm, soapy water and a soft sponge)*. Give it a once-over and rinse down by hand with a bucket of fresh water and a clean sponge. You can then dry the shell using a microfibre towel to prevent streaking.

If using an external storage facility, this process is best completed before arriving as you may not have the space to access the entirety of the outside of your Go-Pod, depending on the size of the pitch that you are allocated.

If the storage facility offers a cleaning & valeting service, make sure that they understand that your Go-Pod has a gel coat applied atop the fibreglass shell, and as such some of the cleaning products that they use on traditional caravans may not be suitable.

You should also stress the importance of not using a hose/jet washer to rinse the Go-Pod down after washing.

If in any doubt, *do not* use their cleaning service and complete this yourself instead.

Applying a protective wax

Once this is done, you may wish to apply a coat of overwintering wax to seal the gel coat and prevent water/condensation damage. Gel coats are porous by nature and a process called "oxidation" can occur over time if not sealed properly - this is caused by repeated exposure to UV light, water and temperature changes.

Farecla G3 wax is used by many industry professionals specialising in the maintenance & repair of boat hulls. It is formulated for use with gel coats.

You may wish to lightly polish/buff the gel coat before applying the wax, either by hand *(which can be quite laborious)* or using an electric motorised buffing tool, sold at most DIY outlets. The wax can be applied either by hand with a soft cloth/chamois leather or if using an electric buffer, be sure to use a soft woolen polishing pad with a thick pile.

Apply a thin coat of the wax evenly across the entire gel coat of your Go-Pod, making sure to thoroughly buff out any parts where it is visibly thicker than other areas.

This process can be repeated at the start of the season when you take your Go-Pod out of storage, to protect it from UV light during the summer months.

Winterising your Go-Pod

Checking the integrity of seals

There are a few external seals that you'll need to check to ensure their integrity and prevent leaks from occurring before storing your Go-Pod away for the winter.

Front & door windows

The rubber seal/profile around the front & door windows of the Go-Pod should be checked for any signs of perishing/cracks. If any damage is evident, the seal will need to be replaced. Speak to the Go-Pod dealer in your country to have the seals replaced as this is a specialist job that should not be performed at home yourself.

Side wall vents

The side wall vents fitted to Go-Pods are a generic product used in many small caravans. They are called "MPK hit and miss side wall vents". The vents sit in rectangular holes cut out of the Go-Pods shell and are held in place using a pair of screws & a couple of layers of caravan-grade silicone sealant ("Sikaflex 522").

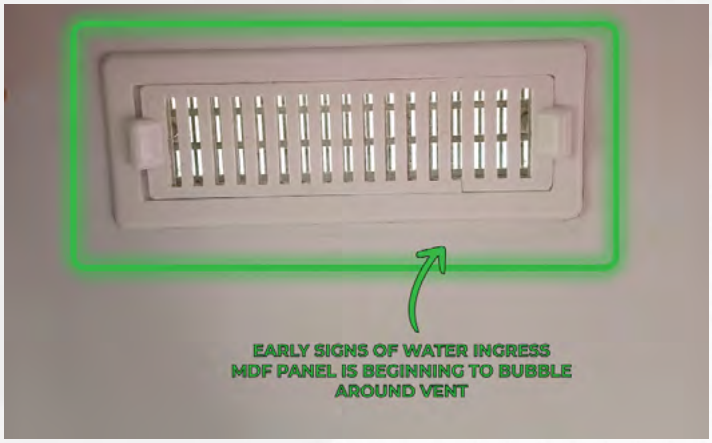
As is the nature of all silicone sealant products, repeated exposure to UV light, water and temperature changes can cause them to perish over time and the silicone seal should be replaced at semi-regular intervals to protect against water ingress damage. While this may seem a cumbersome job, when you compare Go-Pods to traditional caravans with silicone seals running along the entire length of the body, it puts it in perspective a little.

Inspect the sealant around the outer portion of the vent for signs of cracking/perishing, as this will indicate that the integrity of the seal has been compromised and will need to be replaced. There is a further layer of sealant around the inner portion of the vent but this is unlikely to need replacing as often, as it is less exposed to the elements.

Your caravan service technician can replace the seal during your annual service, or you can perform this as a DIY job at home yourself - a future help doc specifically covering the replacement of the side wall vent seals will be uploaded in due course.

Winterising your Go-Pod

Checking the integrity of seals (cont'd)



Side windows

The side windows installed in Go-Pods are from the Dometic Seitz range and are used in a wide variety of leisure vehicles manufactured around the world. The seals are unlikely to fail, but it's worth checking around the inside of the window surround for evidence of water ingress. Dometic Seitz windows have a 24 month warranty.

Pop-top

Raise the pop-top inside your Go-Pod and check for any signs of leaks/water ingress around the top and bottom of the canvas skirt, where it attaches to the underside of the pop-top and top of the Go-Pods shell. Contact your dealer for advice if leaks are present.

Winterising your Go-Pod

Cleaning the interior

Giving the interior of your Go-Pod a thorough clean and checking over will prevent any nasty surprises when you come to use it again in the next season.

Most of this can be approached in the same manner as you would when cleaning at home, with a few additional considerations.

Laminated cabinetry & worktops: Remove dust/debris with a damp, clean cloth. Mild dishwashing soap and warm water is recommended. Do not use steel wool, scouring pads or abrasive cleaners.

Walls & panelling: The walls can be wiped clean with a damp, clean cloth and mild diswashing soap. Do not use abrasive cleaners, scouring pads or steel wool as this will remove the white lacquer from the MDF wall panels.

Flooring: Vacuum clean or sweep the floor to remove dirt & debris. Use a damp mop or cloth with warm water and mild dishwashing soap/household floor cleaner products. Use a conservative amount of water to avoid soaking the floor - drenching the floor may cause the linoleum to bubble and lift.

Sink & hobs: Stainless steel sinks manufactured by Dometic are fitted in all new Go-Pods. Use a glass cleaner or cleaning product specifically formulated for use on stainless steel to wipe clean as necessary. Do not use abrasive compounds, scouring pads or steel wool to clean as this will scratch the steel.

Side windows: The side windows of the Go-Pod (from the Dometic Seitz range) should be cleaned with a soft, damp cloth and an acrylic glass cleaner product. Dometic stockists sell an acrylic glass cleaner specifically formulated for use with their window products.

Front & door windows: Use a soft, damp cloth and warm soapy water to wipe the polycarbonate windows clean. Dry with a microfibre cloth to remove streaking.

Upholstery: Use a soft brush tipped vacuum or dust wand to remove dust/debris on a regular basis. The foam inserts can be removed from the cushions by unzipping the covers. The covers can be machine washed at 30°C as required. Do not tumble dry.

Refrigerator: Ensure that the refrigerator is turned off. To clean the inside, use a soft damp cloth and mild dishwashing soap and dry with a microfibre cloth/towel. If mould is present inside, remove the shelves and drawers and spray white vinegar inside to remove the mould. Once the mould is removed, clean the inside with mild dishwashing soap and dry with a microfibre towel before re-inserting the shelves and drawers.

Cleaning agents: Consult the product label and manufacturer website before using any cleaning agents. If you are unsure of the suitability of a product, perform a patch test on an inconspicuous area of the Go-Pod before full application. Contact your dealer for advice if required.

Winterising your Go-Pod

Additional checks - interior

Turn off all electrics

To prevent your leisure battery from discharging below the recommended limit, ensure that the master switch of your control panel is OFF. Try turning on the lights or turning the tap on to check that the panel is definitely switched off.

Switch off the refrigerator & prop open

The refrigerator has an independent on/off button - make sure that it is turned off and prop the lid/door open. The new 12v front-opening compressor fridges have a latch at the top of the door that will prevent it from closing. In older Go-Pods with the 240v top-opening fridges, use an ice tray or something similar to prevent the lid from closing. This will prevent the buildup of mould should there be any condensation present inside.

Turn off other components

Certain other components fitted to Go-Pods have independent controllers that will need to be checked, to ensure that they are fully switched off. Go-Pods with blown air heating systems have a control panel with dials in the footwell - check that the upper dial is set to the "O" (off) setting.

If your Go-Pod has a motor mover unit fitted, ensure that the isolator switch *(typically fitted beneath the RH seat or in the small cupboard beneath the fridge)* is switched off. Failing to do this can cause your leisure battery to fully discharge, damaging it and ultimately requiring replacement.

Ensure that the side wall vents are open

The inner part of the internal vent assembly (the part that slides left to right) should be set to the "open" position to allow for adequate airflow inside the Go-Pod and prevent the build-up of condensation.

Turn off gas bottle

Make sure that the valve of your gas bottle (if fitted) is firmly closed. The arrows on the top of the valve will indicate which way to turn to close (usually clockwise).

Zip mesh vents closed, lower the pop-top and secure

Before lowering your pop-top, make sure the mesh vents are fully zipped closed and then carefully lower the roof making sure that the canvas does not catch in the scissor mechanism. Secure the pop-top in position with the straps.

Close windows

Make sure the side windows of your Go-Pod are closed and securely latched in place - the 2 side latches and bottom latch should all be in the closed position and locked in place.

Winterising your Go-Pod

Final preparations - interior

Drain the tap

This one is absolutely critical. Go-Pods are fitted with the Truma Ultraflow water pump system (or similar alternative) which will need to be purged of water before storing your Go-Pod away for winter, to prevent water becoming stuck in the pipes and freezing over winter.

The typical way to do this is to simply open the mixer tap, with the control panel & water pump system turned off. Ensure the pump that connects outside is disconnected and use a pen/pencil to push in the rubber seal inside the housing to release any water remaining in the system.

You can also purchase a "Floe Caravan Drain Down Kit" for the Truma Ultraflow system which will enable you to perform a thorough purge of the water lines, using a hand/foot or 12v electric pump.

Wipe down condensation & use moisture traps

Wipe down any condensation that may have accumulated on the windows/walls while cleaning. Place moisture traps inside the Go-Pod to dehumidify while not in use.

Keep the drop vents clear

Make sure that the "drop vents" are not covered *(the circular holes in the floor of the Go-Pod with a mesh covering, beneath the seats)* to ensure airflow.

Lightly coat hinges for added protection

Apply a light coating of thin oil or water dispersant (such as WD-40) to the door hinges of the furniture units in your Go-Pod for added protection.

Remove the seating cushions & cover

To aid airflow and prevent the buildup of condensation/mould, the seating cushions can be removed. If you have space, store them at home in the warm as this is the best way to protect them from condensation and mould. If you don't have space at home, store them in the footwell, ideally standing upright.

To protect from dust, the seat cushions can be covered with a thin sheet *(preferably cotton or other breathable material).*

Leave window blinds open

The side window blinds should ideally be left open. This may seem counterintuitive from a security point of view, but leaving the blinds up can cause the springs to stretch over time.

As a theft deterrent, you can create cardboard cutouts for the window and hold them in place with painters tape or a similar tape with gentle adhesive.

Winterising your Go-Pod

Final preparations - exterior

Lower the corner steadies (stabilisers) & level your Go-Pod

Make sure to lower the corner steadies evenly and level your Go-Pod as much as possible by adjusting the height of the steadies & jockey wheel. This will prevent gas blockages in your refrigerator. Use a spirit level to help.

Apply security devices

Most insurers will stipulate that you need to fit a wheel clamp & hitch lock to your caravan as a bare minimum, when it's not in use. This is especially important if you are storing your Go-Pod in public view or an external storage facility.

Lubricate the corner steadies (stabilisers)

To ensure the longevity & proper operation of the corner steadies, apply a liberal coating of copper grease. First, fully extend the steadies (so they are touching the ground), apply copper grease along the thread with a brush or applicator, then wind the steadies up and down 2 or 3 times. An electric drill with a nut attachment can make this process easier.

Use tyre savers

To protect your tyres against wear & tear when not in use, you can rest them on tyre saver blocks. These are typically plastic, semi-cylindrical blocks that the tyres of your Go-Pod sit on top of to prevent contact with the ground.

Alternatively, if not using tyre savers, it is recommended to rotate the wheels at least once every 6 to 8 weeks. You can also raise the pressure of the tyres to help maintain their condition, but will need to make a note to reduce the pressure to the recommended PSI (35) before taking your Go-Pod on the road again.

Apply WD-40 to the towing electric plug

To protect the metal pins of your Go-Pods 7 or 13-pin towing electric plug, spray a light coating of WD-40 inside. This will prevent water gathering inside the plug.

Cover your Go-Pod

While not "critical", it is heavily recommended to cover your Go-Pod during the winter months to protect it from the elements. The tailor made Go-Pods winter cover is perfect for this, as it is specially fitted to the shell of a Go-Pod, has clips to secure it to the bottom lip of the shell, a clear panel above the pop-top to expose the solar panel to sunlight and a velcro opening to provide easy access to the door should you need access to the inside.

Other covers that are not specifically manufactured for a Go-Pod will have excess material that can flap in the wind and scratch the gel coat. Damage of this kind will not be covered by your Go-Pods warranty.

Winterising your Go-Pod

Battery care

Go-Pods are fitted with a 12v, 85Ah/110Ah[1] lead acid leisure battery as standard.

Lead-acid leisure batteries should not be allowed to discharge below a reading of 12.4v, as dropping below this level can cause irrepairable damage to the battery and reduce its capacity to hold charge.

You can use a plug-in voltage reader in the 12v socket of your Go-Pod to provide a reading, or a multimeter with the pins touching the positive & negative terminals of your leisure battery. The control panel will also provide an approximate reading using a series of LED lights.

A healthy leisure battery will give a reading of between 12.6v - 12.7v when fully charged. To get an accurate reading & indication of your leisure batterys health, charge it for 24 hours on mains electricity, disconnect it and wait at least 8 hours before taking a reading.

When winterising your Go-Pod, there are a few different options to maintain and ensure the continued optimal performance of your leisure battery:

1. Disconnect and remove the battery[2]

The first option is to disconnect and remove the battery from your Go-Pod entirely. You can then take it home and connect it to a trickle charger unit to provide a steady charge and keep it topped up. This is the best option as it will allow you to keep a close eye on the battery and inspect it in regular intervals during the winter months.

2. Connect your Go-Pod to mains electricity

You can also connect your Go-Pod to mains electricity, as you would at a campsite (or using a 3-pin adapter if plugging in at home) to provide power to the battery charger unit.

If using a storage facility, you will need to check if they offer this facility. If they do, they will likely stipulate that your Go-Pod can only be plugged in while you are present.

If you do opt to plug your Go-Pod into mains power, ensure the mains cable is fully uncoiled as failing to do so can cause it to overheat and catch fire.

3. Use a solar panel

The third option is to connect a solar panel to your leisure battery. Your Go-Pod may have a solar panel affixed to the top of the pop-top, which feeds directly to your leisure battery and will help to trickle charge it.

Solar panels should not be relied upon to keep your battery topped up, particularly during the winter months when their effectiveness is reduced due to a lack of sunlight.

[1] Dependant on model. Pre-2023 Go-Pods will all have the 85Ah version as standard, whereas 2023-onward Pioneer models have the 110Ah version installed.

[2] If your Go-Pod has a smart tracker fitted, do not remove your leisure battery as the tracker requires power to operate. You should instead periodically connect your Go-Pod to mains power to charge the battery.

Go-Pods

WINTERISING CHECKLIST

EXTERIOR

WASHING:

- [ ] OUTSIDE WASHED
- [ ] WAX APPLIED TO PROTECT GEL COAT

SEALS:

- [ ] WINDOW SEALS CHECKED
- [ ] SIDE WALL VENTS CHECKED
- [ ] SIDE WINDOWS CHECKED
- [ ] POP-TOP CANVAS CHECKED

OTHER:

- [ ] CORNER STEADIES LOWERED & POD LEVELLED
- [ ] SECURITY DEVICES APPLIED
- [ ] STEADIES LUBRICATED
- [ ] WHEELS ON TYRE SAVERS
- [ ] WD-40 APPLIED TO TOWING ELECTRICS PLUG
- [ ] WINTER COVER FITTED

Go-Pods

WINTERISING CHECKLIST

INTERIOR

CLEANING:

- [ ] FLOORING VACUUM CLEANED/SWEPT & WIPED
- [ ] CABINETS WIPED DOWN
- [ ] WALLS WIPED DOWN
- [ ] SINK & HOBS WIPED DOWN
- [ ] WINDOWS WIPED
- [ ] FRIDGE CLEANED & PROPPED OPEN

CHECKS:

- [ ] CONTROL PANEL SWITCHED OFF
- [ ] FRIDGE SWITCHED OFF
- [ ] HEATING CONTROLS OFF (DIAL SWITCHED TO “O”)
- [ ] MOTOR MOVER ISOLATOR SWITCH OFF
- [ ] WATER SYSTEM DRAINED
- [ ] DROP VENTS CLEAR
- [ ] SIDE WALL VENTS IN “OPEN” POSITION
- [ ] HINGES COATED/LUBRICATED
- [ ] CUSHIONS REMOVED/PLACED IN FOOTWELL
- [ ] WINDOWS LATCHED SHUT
- [ ] WINDOW BLINDS LEFT OPEN
- [ ] POP-TOP STRAPS SECURED
- [ ] DOOR LOCKED