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RV Water-Damage Triage Checklist

10 things to check BEFORE you tear anything apart. Thirty minutes with this list will save you from cutting open the wrong wall.

Water intrusion is the #1 killer of RVs -- and most of the damage people "repair" starts with a wrong guess about where the water came from. Run this triage first. Mark each box as you go.

- [ ] **1 Find the stain, then look uphill**
  Water runs downhill and travels along framing and wiring. The leak is almost never directly above the stain -- start at the stain and work up and outward.

- [ ] **2 Check every roof penetration**
  Vents, skylights, the AC gasket, antenna, ladder mounts, satellite dome. Nine out of ten leaks start at a penetration, not the membrane itself.

- [ ] **3 Press the sealant -- don't just eyeball it**
  Push on every self-leveling bead. Cracked, chalky, or lifting at the edges means it's done, even if it "looks fine" from the ladder.

- [ ] **4 Probe for soft spots**
  Press firmly on the floor around the stain, slide-outs, entry door, and under windows. Soft or spongy means compromised subfloor. Mark the boundary with painter's tape.

- [ ] **5 Sniff the cabinets**
  Open every lower cabinet, drawer, and access panel near the stain. Musty smell plus discoloration means it's been wet a while. Check under sinks and behind the water heater.

- [ ] **6 Pull a vent or outlet cover**
  Fastest non-destructive peek inside a wall: remove an outlet or vent cover near the damage and look at the framing with a flashlight. Dark wood means rot.

- [ ] **7 Inspect the slide-out seals**
  Run the slide in and out. Torn, flattened, or gapped wiper and bulb seals let water sheet straight inside during rain -- a classic misdiagnosed "roof leak."

- [ ] **8 Look underneath**
  Crawl under with a light. Stained or sagging underbelly material, drips on the frame, and soft spots in the wrap tell you how far the damage has spread.

- [ ] **9 Meter it if you can**
  A $30 pin moisture meter ends the guessing. Anything much over ~17% in wood framing is wet. Map the wet boundary before you cut a single panel.

☐ **10** **Photograph everything before you touch it**

Wide shots, close-ups, measurements. You'll need them for parts runs, for insurance, and for remembering how it all goes back together.

Ran the checklist and it's worse than you hoped?

That's exactly what the RV Structural Repair course covers -- slide-outs, roofs, and water damage, fixed right the first time. You're on the launch list. In Central Florida and want it handled? Integrity RV Services comes to you: (352) 557-9847.

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