

Emergency Retraction Procedures for Slides

by Mark Nemeth

Just about every RV built in the last 15 years comes equipped with at least one slide-out. In fact, larger rigs can have three or four! While slide-outs add a lot of livable space to any RV, they can also be a real problem if they get stuck in the extended position. After all, you can't drive your RV with a slide hanging out!

Thankfully, most manufacturers provide for some sort of manual retraction in case the slide mechanism fails. The methods vary for different types of slides, so check your owner's manual for the manual retract procedure for your slides.

Do it now! Don't wait until you are faced with an already stuck slide, because problems like that inevitably seem to happen when the weather is bad, or you are already in a hurry to get somewhere.

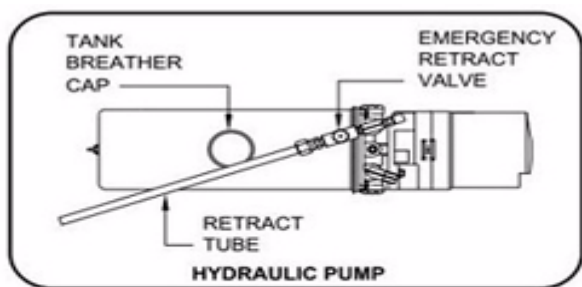
Three Basic Slide Systems

There are three basic slide systems in use today: Hydraulic, worm-gear and rack-and-pinion. Emergency retract procedures vary a great deal for each type of slide installation, but in general:

Hydraulic systems: Most hydraulic systems will either have a manual pump lever on the hydraulic power assembly, or will require you to open a bypass valve or loosen a hose in order to retract the slide manually. (pic1)

Worm-gear slides: Most worm-gear slides will have an access hole on the outside of the slide where you can insert a hand crank and turn it to retract the slide. Most RVs will come with the special crank that is needed, but in many cases, you can use a common socket wrench and an extension to retract the slide. (pic2)

Rack and pinion slides: Rack and pinion slides generally require you to crawl under the RV, find the slide motor, and actuate a release lever. Then, the slide can be retracted using common hand tools, like an adjustable wrench or a socket and a ratchet. (pic3)



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