

RV Consumer e-Magazine

DEC 2014
Volume 4
ISSUE 12

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Top 5 RV Cold Weather Maintenance Tips

Stocking
Stuffers &
Gift Ideas
for the RVer
on your List



plus: RV Storage Tips
Top 5 Mistakes RV Owners Make
& RV Winter Safety Tips

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When you read this issue of RV Consumer Magazine I'll be headed to the National RV Trade Show in Louisville, Ky. You can like us on [Facebook](#) to get my daily updates from the show on what's new for 2015 in the world of RVs.

It's hard to believe another camping season has come to an end. But just because we are parking the RV for a couple months doesn't mean we can't think about all the fun we had using our RVs this past year. With Christmas quickly approaching I am including some fun stocking stuffers and gift ideas for the RVer on your list.

Be sure to check out my top 5 cold weather maintenance tips & some important information on a major RV safety concern during the colder months, carbon monoxide safety.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from us to you.

Mark

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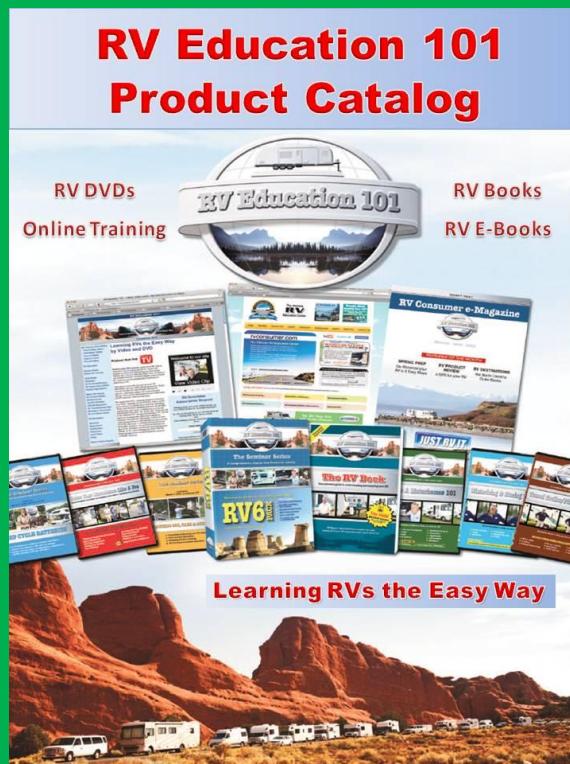
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Stocking Stuffers & Gift Ideas



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My RV storage to do list

By Mark Polk

It's time to park the RV for the winter, but where do you start and what do you do to make sure it is prepared properly for cold weather storage? Here are a few helpful tips.

- ✓ Wash the RV & clean the interior.
- ✓ Don't forget to cover the tires.
- ✓ Defrost the freezer and clean the refrigerator. Put baking soda in compartments and leave the doors cracked open.
- ✓ Remove all dry-cell batteries from devices like smoke alarms and clocks. Don't forget to re-install them next spring.
- ✓ Inspect the roof seams, body seams and sealants. Reseal as needed. Use the proper sealants.

[Watch Video for More Tips](#)

- ✓ Remove all consumables that would attract mice and other rodents, and anything that can freeze.
- ✓ Turn the LP gas off.
- ✓ Clean & dry the awning fabric prior to storing.
- ✓ Look for anywhere that mice or other rodents can get in the RV and seal as necessary.
- ✓ Clean the air conditioner filters.
- ✓ Check and fill the water levels in all lead acid batteries.
- ✓ Charge all batteries. Keep the batteries charged during storage. A discharged battery will freeze much quicker than a fully charged battery. If the RV is in long-term storage it's better to remove the batteries and store them where they will not freeze.
- ✓ Change the engine and generator oil and oil filter.
- ✓ Fill the fuel tank and add a fuel stabilizer. Run the engine and the generator long enough for the stabilizer to get through the fuel system.
- ✓ If you cover the RV use a cover that is breathable.
- ✓ If the RV is in long-term storage, and won't be plugged in to electricity, it's a good idea to turn off the main breaker in the distribution panel.
- ✓ Place something like a piece of

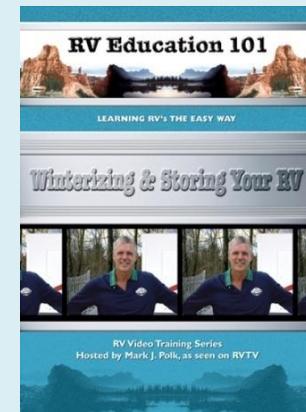
- ✓ treated wood between the ground and the tires. Frozen ground and petroleum based surfaces, like asphalt, can damage tires over time. Make sure that whatever you use to block the tires is larger than the footprint of the tire. No portion of the tire should hang over the edge of the tire block; this can cause internal damage to the tire.
- ✓ Close the window blinds to avoid sun exposure to the carpet, drapes and upholstery. Leave doors drawers and cabinets open.
- ✓ For trailers, chock the wheels front and rear. If you are storing a pop-up outdoors angle the tongue downward to assist in snow and water run-off.
- ✓ If the RV has a generator exercise the generator for at least two hours every month with a minimum of a $\frac{1}{2}$ rated load on it. Consult your generator owner's manual for load ratings.
- ✓ Ideally you should try to store your RV under a covered area and on a solid surface like pavement or concrete. If this isn't possible avoid parking under trees and in tall grass, fields or wooded areas.
- ✓ Service all locks with a spray lubricant and lubricate all hinges.
- ✓ Insects are attracted to the odorant added to LP gas. You may want to cover LP gas appliance vents to prevent insects from making their winter home inside these vents. If you do cover the

vents, remember to remove the cover next spring.

Possibly the most important step to the is to protect the RV water system from potential damage caused by exposure to freezing temperatures. Frozen and damaged water lines are a major concern. For all the RV do-it-yourselfers there are a couple ways to get the job done. If you are confident you can do the job yourself, but could use some basic guidelines go here to [read one of my winterizing articles](#).

If you would like to see how it's done prior to tackling the job you can purchase our [Winterizing & Storing DVD](#).

If you aren't sure about doing it yourself take it to a authorized repair facility to have the job done. The important thing is the RV is properly prepared for winter storage so it will be ready to go next spring. ~ **RV 101**



Want to DIY but could use some help? Check out our [Winterizing & Storing DVD](#)

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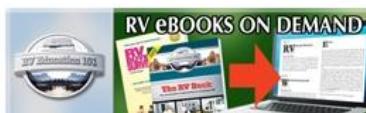
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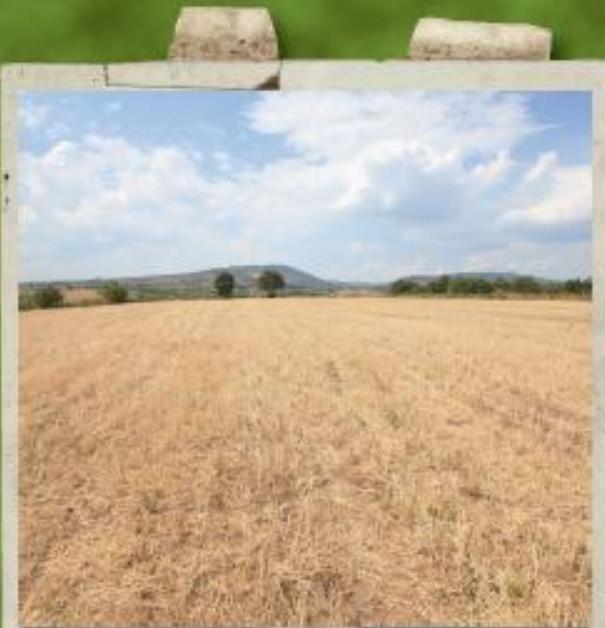
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your travels?



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*Cook's Field, the week after we
missed the Bluegrass Festival.*



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I would like to offer some simple preventive maintenance procedures you can follow to not only help prepare your RV for cold temperatures, but to also help prevent untimely breakdowns as a result of the colder weather.



By Mark Polk

Top 5 RV Cold Weather Maintenance Tips



1) RV Tire Tips: During the warmer months of the year I constantly remind folks not to check tire pressure when the tires are hot, meaning after the RV was driven more than one mile. Hot weather and hot tire temperatures cause tire inflation to increase. But something seldom discussed is what happens to your tire pressure when the mercury plummets? The answer is, when it's cold outside the air pressure in your tires drops 1 to 2

pounds for every 10 degree drop in temperature. This means if you have not checked the tire pressure in your RV tires since that trip you took last August your tire pressure could be dangerously underinflated when you head out for the holidays. The best advice I can offer is to get in a habit of checking and adjusting tire pressure monthly, so it is correct regardless of the temperature. This applies to your automobiles as well.

2) Automotive Antifreeze Tips:



When you talk about RVs and antifreeze most folks think about the RV antifreeze used to protect the RV water system from freezing. We will talk about that type of antifreeze in a minute but first I want to talk about the automotive antifreeze used in the RV or tow vehicle engine coolant system. Glycol antifreeze does several things to help protect your engine:

- a.** When it's cold out it helps lower the freezing point of water.
- b.** The corrosion inhibitors that are added to the antifreeze help prevent scale and rust build-up in the cooling system.

c. It provides protection against boiling during the hot summer months.

d. It helps keep the engine operating at its most efficient temperature regardless of operating conditions and outside temperatures. Just like engine oil the antifreeze in your RV or tow vehicle automotive cooling system needs to be replaced at regular intervals. If you have not had this service performed in the last few years check your vehicle owner's manual for the recommended intervals and schedule an appointment to have it done.

3) RV Battery Tips:



Batteries are no different than tires and antifreeze when it comes to being affected by weather. In cold temperatures it's important that both the starting battery and coach batteries remain fully charged. A discharged or partially charged battery will freeze much faster than a charged battery. Batteries in storage will lose a percentage of the charge while they sit idle. It's not uncommon for a battery to discharge up to 10% a month when it is in storage. Cold temperatures slow this natural

discharge process down and warmer temperatures speed the process up. You should test the stored battery state of charge every month and charge batteries that are at or below an 80% state of charge, which is 12.4 volts for a 12-volt battery. If your RV converter charges the battery(s) at a constant rate, around 13.5 volts, this is too high for a float charge and can deplete the electrolyte over a period of time. In this situation plug the RV in periodically during storage and allow the converter charger to charge the battery(s) for 8 to 12 hours. Some RV converter multi-stage chargers and aftermarket chargers are designed to maintain a float charge on the battery after the batteries are charged and will not deplete the electrolyte. Remember, for the converter charger to operate the RV needs to be plugged into electricity. The other option is to remove the batteries and store them in a cool dry place to prevent them from freezing, but you should still check and recharge batteries that drop below an 80% state of charge.

Tip: If you remove the batteries take a picture, or draw a diagram of how they are connected to assist with installing them again next spring.

4) RV Fuel System Tips:



Number four on my list is adding a fuel preservative to the fuel system, especially if you have an on-board generator. **Tip:** This applies to other gas powered engines too, like lawnmowers, weed eaters, and portable generators that tend to sit in storage for months at a time. The fuel that sits in the small needle valves of a carburetor can begin to breakdown and gum up in a very short period of time. The result is the engine may not start, or run properly next spring when you take it out of storage. A fuel preservative can prevent this from happening. Add the recommended amount of fuel preservative to the fuel tank and run the vehicle engine and generator long enough for the preservative to get through the entire fuel system. Another good idea is to change the oil and oil filter on the vehicle engine and the generator prior to storage. Acids accumulate in used engine oil and can corrode engine bearings, especially while sitting for long periods of time. I also recommend starting and running the

generator every month for an hour or two with at least a half- rated load on it. Moisture build-up can cause damage to your generator. When you exercise the generator it heats up the generator windings and eliminates this moisture build-up. This monthly exercise regime also lubricates all of the engine seals and components and helps prevent carbon build-up. Consult your generator owner's manual for generator load ratings.



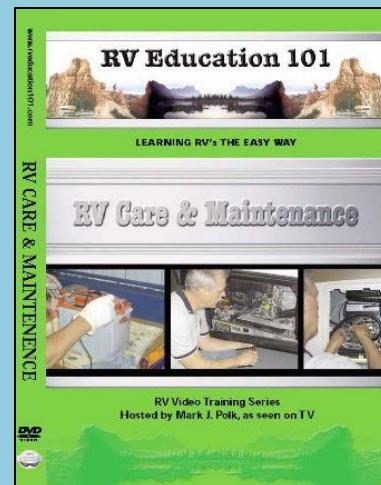
5) RV Winterizing Tips: Last but certainly not least is winterizing the RV water system. The RV plumbing system is the most vulnerable system to damage from plummeting temperatures. To protect it from freezing you need to add non-toxic RV/marine antifreeze to all of the water lines in the RV. It's not that difficult to winterize the water system yourself, or you can schedule an appointment with a RV repair facility to winterize the RV for you. The important thing is to have it done before temperatures drop below

freezing. If you are interested in winterizing the RV yourself we offer a [winterizing and storing DVD](#) to show you exactly how it's done.

A couple more cold weather maintenance quick tips are to make sure your windshield washer fluid has an antifreeze additive to prevent it from freezing and be sure to pack some extra blankets!

Well there you have it, my top 5 cold weather maintenance tips. If you are not comfortable doing any of these preventive maintenance procedures yourself have the work done by a reputable repair facility. You will be glad you did next spring when the RV is ready for the first camping trip of the new year.

~RV 101



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Extended Stay RV Maintenance Checks for Snowbirds

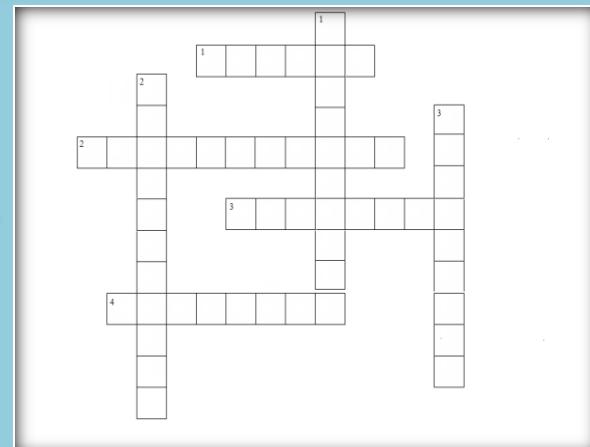
When winter weather approaches each year some folks like to leave the colder climates in search of warmer temperatures. In RV terms these folks are referred to as snowbirds. Snowbirds usually seek out a campground or RV resort where they plan to stay put for weeks or months at a time.

This is a great way to escape from the cold weather, but it can present some maintenance considerations you are not accustomed to. Normally when you plan a trip in your RV you conduct some type of pre-trip checks to make sure the RV is properly prepared for travel. When it's time to leave the campground you perform these checks again for the return trip. But what happens when you find that perfect campground or RV Park and stay put for extended periods of time? Do you conduct routine maintenance checks on the RV to make sure it is in a safe and operable condition while it's parked? To help you out we produced a video offering some extended-stay maintenance checks to keep your rig in tip-top shape while it is parked at the campground. **Enjoy the video.**

[Watch Extended Stay RV Maintenance Checks Video](#)

RV Play & Learn

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[Cold Weather RVing Crossword](#)



By Mark Polk

RV Carbon Monoxide Safety

Every year, when the cold weather arrives, I like to remind folks about the dangers of carbon monoxide gas. Carbon monoxide (CO) gas is invisible, odorless, and deadly! It is produced by the partial combustion of solid, liquid and gaseous fuels. This includes gasoline, propane, natural gas, oil, wood, & coal.

It is extremely serious when combustion by-products are not vented outside, or when you are exposed to any source of CO gas. Carbon Monoxide is the number one cause of poisoning deaths each year. Carbon monoxide poisoning is toxic and can be deadly to both humans and animals. CO poisoning occurs after enough carbon monoxide gas is inhaled. The severity of the CO poisoning depends on the level of CO gas you are exposed to and the duration of the exposure.

The good news is the threat of CO

poisoning can be lessened through awareness and education.

Let's take a look at what we can do to prevent the danger of carbon monoxide poisoning, especially when we are camping and using our RV.

When it comes to RVs and camping carbon monoxide gas usually results from:

- Exhaust leaks from a vehicle's engine or a generator.
- Improper use of portable gas powered heaters.
- Somebody else's vehicle or generator when camping in close quarters.
- Malfunctioning or unvented LP gas appliances.

Understanding the threat and some of the causes is the first step to preventing becoming a victim.



First of all, if your RV doesn't have a carbon monoxide detector you need to purchase a battery operated carbon monoxide detector designed for use in RVs.

Test the carbon monoxide detector every time you use the RV. Replace the carbon monoxide detector batteries when you change clocks for daylight savings time.

Here are some important CO prevention tips:

- ✓ Inspect the generator exhaust system before using the generator, every time.
- ✓ Avoid leaving windows down and roof vents open when in close proximity to a vehicle and/or generator exhaust.
- ✓ Follow all directions and safety cautions and warnings when operating gas powered heaters.
- ✓ If you use a portable generator direct the exhaust well away from the camping area.
- ✓ **Never** use the range burners or oven to heat the RV!

- ✓ When cooking with the range burners use the range top fan & leave a window cracked open for fresh air and ventilation.
- ✓ If somebody in close proximity to you is running a generator ask them to turn it off. They might be upset with your request, but it can save lives.

Next, teach everybody with you how to recognize carbon monoxide symptoms. Carbon monoxide symptoms are similar to flu symptoms, but without the fever. CO symptoms include:

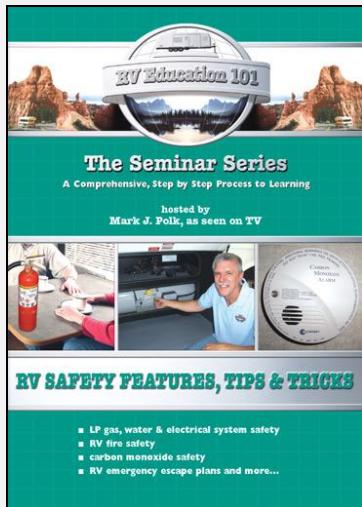
- Dizziness
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Muscular twitching
- Intense headache
- Throbbing in the temples
- Weakness and sleepiness
- Inability to think coherently

If you or anyone else experiences any of these symptoms take the following action:

- ✓ Shut the vehicle, generator or source of the CO gas down and do not operate it again until it has been inspected and repaired by a professional.
- ✓ Get to fresh air immediately.
- ✓ Account for everybody that is with you.
- ✓ Call 911 for emergency assistance

- ✓ Do not re-enter the RV
- ✓ If the symptoms persist seek medical attention immediately.

Understanding what CO gas is and how it can happen helps prepare you to prevent these threats from harming you and others with you. If you witness a potential safety hazard take a minute to educate others on the threat and how they can prevent it. It may save somebody's life. ~RV101



Our [RV Safety DVD](#) addresses safety issues like: fire safety, emergency escape plans, LP gas, water & electrical safety, emergency weather planning and more.

RV Fire Safety Tips:

RV Fire Escapes

The National Fire Protection agency requires that RV's have emergency escape windows. Make sure everybody knows where the escape window is located and how to use it. It's a good idea to practice using it so you are familiar with how to get out of the RV in case of an emergency. You should have an emergency escape plan for the front of the RV and the rear of the RV.

RV Smoke Alarms

In less than 30 seconds a small flame can turn into a major fire & within a minute the RV can be filled completely with smoke. A smoke alarm can save lives. You may want to install additional smoke alarms in your RV.

- ✓ Test smoke alarms monthly & before each trip.
- ✓ Replace the battery in smoke alarms when you change your clocks for daylight savings time.
- ✓ Instruct everybody in the RV on an emergency escape plan in the event of a fire.

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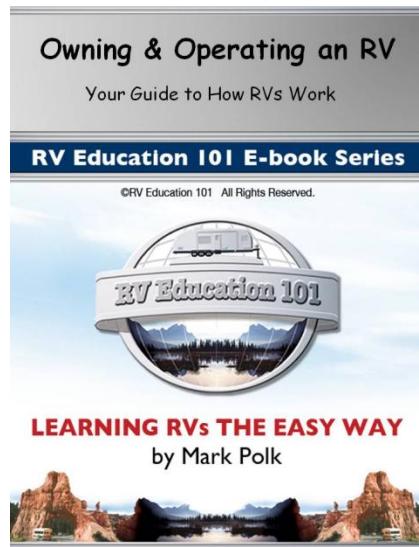
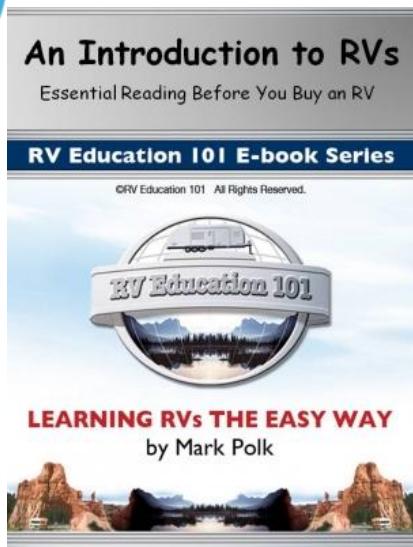


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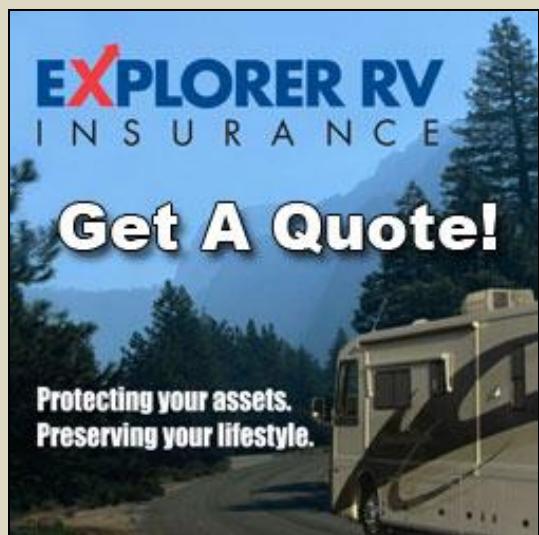
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Hot Orange Chicken Drumsticks



The Cooking Ladies, Phyllis Hinz and Lamont Mackay, are freelance writers, restaurant consultants, cookbook authors, event speakers, and RVers. Please take a minute to visit their website: www.thecookingladies.com

Makes 2 to 3 servings)

6 chicken drumsticks
2 tablespoons (30 ml) orange juice
2 tablespoons (30 ml) hot sauce
2 tablespoons (30 ml) olive oil
1 tablespoon (15 ml) orange marmalade
1/2 tablespoon (7.5 ml) hot sauce

- Trim the drumsticks of any excess fat and place them in a bowl.
- Combine the orange juice, hot sauce, and olive oil in a small bowl. Mix well.
- Pour the marinade into a re-sealable plastic bag or airtight container. Add the drumsticks to the marinade.
- Place the drumsticks in the refrigerator for 12 to 24 hours to marinate.
- Combine the orange marmalade and hot sauce and set aside.
- Oil the barbecue grate and heat the barbecue to medium-high.
- Turn the heat to low and place the marinated drumsticks on the grate.
- Close the barbecue lid. Cook for 20 to 30 minutes.
- Turn the chicken drumsticks once or twice through the cooking time and baste with the marmalade-hot sauce mixture.

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Getting to



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Top 5 Mistakes RV Owners Make

There are lots of things to remember when it comes to owning, operating and maintaining your RV, and sometimes we learn things the hard way. In an effort to help prevent some of these mistakes from happening to you I want to offer my top 5 mistakes RVers make, and how to avoid them.

1) Leaving the steps out or the antenna up while traveling.

I'm sure you have probably seen an RV traveling down the road with the TV antenna up or the steps out just waiting to hit something, resulting in expensive repair bills.

How to avoid it:

The way to avoid this from happening is to follow a pre-trip checklist. It's easy to forget something when you are preparing to leave on a trip in your RV. Using a checklist helps make sure nothing was left out or overlooked. As added insurance I always make a final walk-around of the RV just before leaving in the RV.

2) Not knowing or monitoring the height of your RV.

Damage to the top of RVs is one of the top claims RV insurance claims that get filed. Your RV has what is referred to as soft and hard clearances. An example of a soft clearance would be a radio antenna. If something hits the radio antenna there will be little or no damage to the RV. An example of a hard clearance would be a roof mounted air conditioner. If something hits the air conditioner there could be significant damage to the RV.

How to avoid it:

Park the RV on a level surface and measure the height from the ground to the tallest hard clearance item on the RV. Record this information where it will serve as a constant reminder of how tall the RV is. When you are at the campground always use a spotter to watch for low hanging tree branches and other obstacles that could hit the top of the RV.

3) Backing the RV into a site or parking spot at home without a spotter.

I can pretty much guarantee if you don't use a spotter you will eventually

Top 5 Mistakes RV Owners Make

hit something. RVs are large and it is nearly impossible to monitor what is happening behind the RV without a spotter.

How to avoid it:

The way to avoid backing incidents is to always use a spotter. You need to establish hand signals you both understand and always keep the spotter in view when backing. Never use two spotters at the same time and always do what the spotter tells you to do. When in doubt stop get out and look.

4) Not properly matching the tow vehicle to the trailer.

It's extremely important that you understand weight ratings and how much your tow vehicle can safely tow. An improper match between a tow vehicle and trailer is extremely dangerous.

How to avoid it:

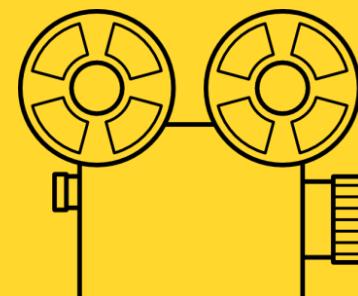
A simple rule I use is, the tow vehicle's towing capacity should equal or exceed the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of the trailer you are towing. This way, even if the trailer is loaded to full capacity the truck is still rated to tow the weight.

5) Neglecting the RV batteries and battery maintenance

Poor battery maintenance results in short battery life. It's easy to forget to use battery disconnect switches, or to charge a discharged battery in a timely manner, or to check and add water to lead acid batteries. But, replacing 2 or 4 batteries at a time can get very expensive.

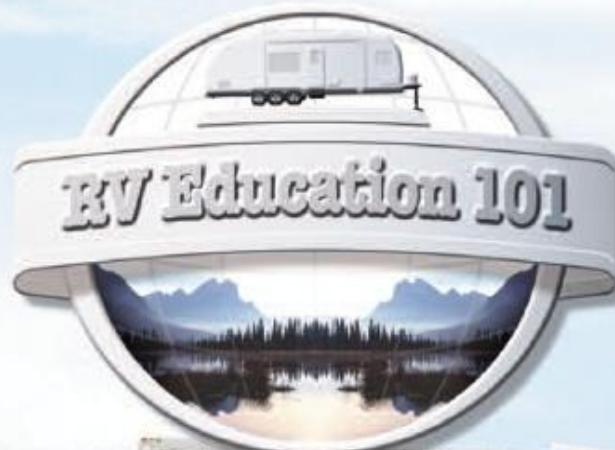
How to avoid it:

Battery maintenance is an integral part of using and owning an RV. It is important you get in a habit of using disconnect switches, checking water levels in lead acid batteries and testing and re-charging discharged batteries. Establish a preventive maintenance program for your RV that includes routine battery maintenance and your RV batteries can last for 6 plus years. ~RV 101



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Our goal with RV Consumer E-Magazine is to provide you with helpful information to make all of your RV experiences more enjoyable. I left my position as an RV Sales and F&I manager in 2000 to start RV Education 101.

We produce RV educational videos & DVDs and publish books and e-books on how to safely & properly use and maintain your RV. The reason I left my job was because of my concern about the lack of educational and safety awareness material available to the RV consumer, in other words you.

My wife Dawn left her position in RV sales to help start the company, and is our Sales and Marketing Director. We currently have a 35-foot Class A motor home. We have two boys, Tyler 17 and Josh 23, both avid RVers and two dogs, Roxie and Gracie.

If you would like to learn more about us and about RV Education 101 please visit www.rveducation101.com

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