

RV Consumer e-Magazine

May 2015
Volume 5
Issue 5



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Polk's Top 5 RV Emergency Items

Tips to a Successful RV Trip

RV
Safety
Tips



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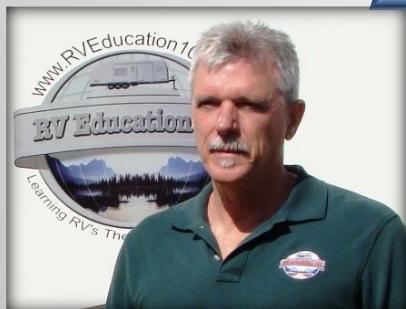
- Devin T., Georgia

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Camping season is in full swing and that means getting out and enjoying some well deserved time off, whether it's for a weekend excursion or a month-long trip.

RVs are designed and intended for enjoyment and relaxation, but it's important we keep safety in mind too. RV safety is paramount when it comes to using and enjoying our RVs. From pre-trip inspections to setting-up and actually using the RV there is always an element of RV safety involved.

In this month's issue we will discuss some safety stuff and look at some tips to help plan and enjoy successful, fun and relaxing RV trips.

Enjoy this issue, and if you have RV friends and family tell them to subscribe, and to like us on [Facebook](#)

~ Mark

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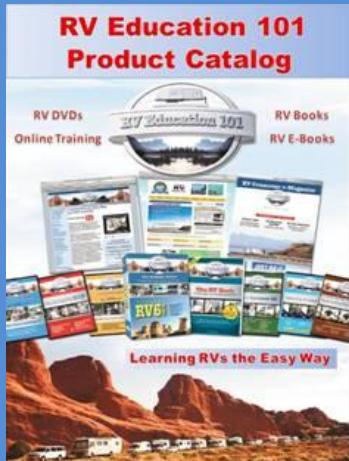
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RV Education 101 Product Catalog



Our digital RV Product Catalog puts all of our RV training products in one place, and we separate what products apply to what type of RV. For example if you own a travel trailer you can browse through the single DVD titles or go directly to the DVD value sets that apply specifically to travel trailers.

This helps accomplish two things; it eliminates the guess work as to which DVD titles go together, and it saves the RV consumer a significant amount of money with our DVD box set discounts. Our goal at RV Education 101 is simple, to help RV owners until they are comfortable operating and using their RV, and to make their entire RV experience safe, fun and stress free. [Browse the product catalog now](#)



Enjoy the RV Journey

Planning = a Good RV Trip

Simple preparation and planning can go a long way in making your RV trips more enjoyable. For example, after prepping the RV for another great camping season I decided to review some of the paperwork I keep in the RV. I'm glad I did because I noticed that our Emergency Roadside Service (ERS) plan expired in December of last year.

I thought about what a pain it would be to have a flat tire in the middle of nowhere and no ERS plan to assist in getting the tire replaced. It just goes to show you how easy it is to overlook things sometimes. With that said, and another adventure packed camping season right around the corner I thought a good topic for an article would be to offer some RV trip planning reminders.

The first step to a successful RV trip is to plan the trip you are taking. Travel guides, magazines, state tourism boards and Internet sites offer valuable information to help plan your RV trip. Route your trip using an Internet trip planning site or with a GPS designed for RVs. Here are a couple helpful links for fuel cost calculations too.

[Fuel Cost Calculator](#)

[Local Gas Prices in the USA](#)



Driving or towing an RV can be stressful, especially if you don't know the route you will be traveling. A GPS designed for RVs can make traveling much less stressful.

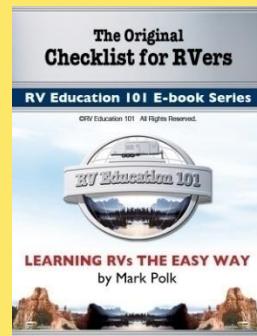


Here are my top RV trip planning reminders:

- Plan your itinerary and give a family member or friend a copy of your itinerary along with contact information.
- Make campground reservations in advance especially during the busy travel season.

- Try to limit your daily driving to 350 miles a day or less. Not only will your trip be more enjoyable, but this will allow plenty of time to get set-up at the campground before it gets dark and more time to enjoy some of the amenities the campground has to offer.
- Make sure your emergency roadside service plan is up to date. If you don't have one you should get one prior to leaving on your trip.

Conduct pre-trip checks on your RV each day you travel in your RV. Check out our [Checklist's for RVers e-book](#) for all kinds of useful RV checklists and reminders.



- Check and refill any medications you will need. If you are under a doctor's care take a copy of your medical records with you.
- Make sure you have the following with you: credit card, ATM card, cell phone, emergency contact numbers, a spare set of eyeglasses or reading glasses, a spare set of keys, RV owner's manuals & warranty information and passports if necessary, p.s. check the expiration dates.
- Check the weather conditions where you will be traveling each day. Take a weather radio receiver with you or upload a weather app for your smart phone. Don't travel with RVs in bad weather or during periods of high winds.



Now, double check that everything is loaded in the RV and hit the road. Have a great time exploring this wonderful country we live in. ~ **RV101**

Clean Out the Junk!



Before your first RV trip of the season remove everything from the RV's exterior storage compartments for a good cleaning and inventory.

If there are items in the storage compartments that you did not use during the last six months of camping chances are you don't need it. Clean out the junk to help reduce weight and free up valuable space for something you really do need!

RV Quick Tips

RV Water Connection Tip



If you connect the pressure regulator directly to the city water connector on the RV high campground water pressure can cause the hose to expand and burst. Always connect the regulator directly to the water source.

RV Battery Maintenance Tip

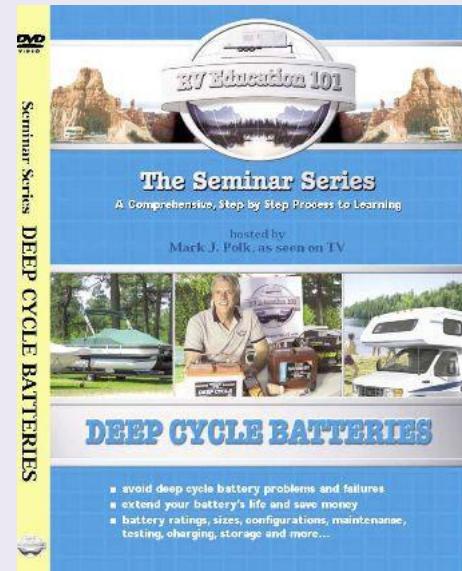
Hot temperatures and overcharging kills batteries. During hot weather or during high usage check the batteries frequently. Checking the electrolyte levels and adding distilled water as required can save your lead acid batteries. **But keep safety in mind when you work around batteries.** Lead acid batteries contain sulfuric acid which is extremely corrosive and can cause severe burns or even blindness. The hydrogen gas that batteries produce when they're charging is very explosive. When you work around batteries you need to wear goggles and gloves, remove all jewelry and do not smoke or use any open flames.



Q&A with Mark

Q: Mark, I have seen all the videos but still find the 12-volt system frustrating. Recently I was getting my coach ready for the season. The batteries were left in and the coach hooked up to electric for the winter. I checked the rig regularly. When I checked the batteries they were reading no charge. I added some water and decided I needed two new batteries. (two 12-volt batteries) I came back two days later and rechecked and the batteries were fully charged. I hooked up a battery minder to keep them charged and hit the battery disconnect button. The batteries are the originals probably three years old.

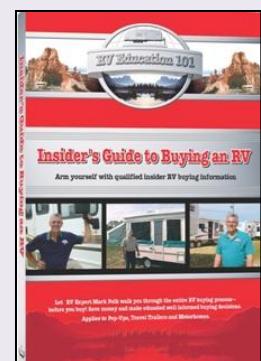
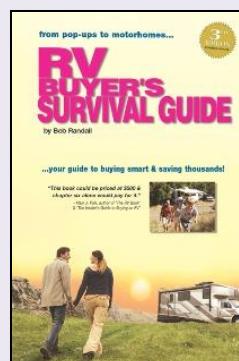
A: Batteries that are undercharged or overcharged won't last long. When you leave the RV plugged in and the batteries charging for long periods of time the charger needs to be a good three-stage charger to prevent overcharging, which results in a loss of water and dead batteries. I check my batteries monthly and as soon as they show any sign of discharging (which is normal for batteries in storage) I hook the Battery Minder up for several days to recharge and desulfate the batteries. Our RV is a 2006 model and we are on our second set of batteries. The key to longevity is to prevent undercharging and overcharging the batteries.



Deep Cycle Battery Care & Maintenance DVD

For more great RV information
between magazine issues
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Camping Season - RV Safety Tips

By Mark Polk



It's a new year and a new RV camping season is upon us. When you hit the open road one very important aspect to keep in mind is RV safety. Safety is paramount when it comes to using and enjoying our RVs. From pre-trip inspections to setting up and actually using the RV there is always an element of RV safety involved.

Let's take a look at my top RV safety reminders for a new camping season.

Number one on my list is tires. I wrote an entire book on this topic, but I will try and sum it up in a few sentences. There are many reasons for tire failure on RVs. In addition to overloaded and under-inflated tires there is the concern for aged tires. Tires are designed and built to be used. The rubber used in tires ages faster when they are not in use, so more use results in longer tire life.

The problem is lots of RV tires don't get used as often as the tires on our automobiles do. When tires are manufactured compounds are added to help protect the rubber from weather cracking and sun damage. For these compounds to work effectively the tire needs to be rolling down the road, heating up and flexing, so the compounds can work their way to the surface of the tire and help protect the rubber from damage. When tires sit idle for periods of time they start to dry out, causing them to age faster. If your RV tires show signs of weather cracking or checking, or if the tires are more than 6-years-old you should have them inspected by a tire professional. A simple tire inspection could save you lots of time, money and headaches.

Number two on the list is weight issues and concerns. This is another topic I could write an entire book on. Lots of RVs traveling down the road are overloaded, especially older motorhomes. To avoid becoming a statistic, in relationship to overloaded RVs, it is important you understand how to properly weigh your RV. Always keep in mind that weighing your RV is a snapshot in time. Weights can and

do change according to how you load and distribute the weight in your RV, and based on many other factors.

You should get in the practice of weighing your RV periodically to stay within all weight ratings, and whenever an overload condition exists resolve the problem before using the RV. The easiest way to sum this important safety topic up is to direct you to a site where you can download some informative brochures with easy to understand worksheets on weighing your RV.

[Go here to download](#) important information on your RV tires and then head to a set of scales and weigh your RV.

Number three on my list is Carbon Monoxide safety. Carbon Monoxide (CO) gas is invisible, odorless, and deadly. Carbon Monoxide is created when any fuel is burned; this includes gasoline, propane, natural gas, wood, & coal. It is extremely serious when combustion by-products are not vented outside. Carbon Monoxide is the number one cause of poisoning deaths in the United States each year. As for RVs CO gas can result from exhaust leaks from the vehicle engine or generator, improper use of portable gas powered heaters, improper adjustment of LP gas fired appliances and/or somebody else's vehicle or generator when camping

in close proximity to you.

Some important reminders about Carbon Monoxide:

- 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 portable heaters.
- Never use the range burners or oven to heat the RV!
- When cooking with the range burners use the range fan & always leave a window cracked open for fresh air and ventilation.
- Have the LP gas system inspected by a professional annually, or whenever a repair is made to the LP gas system.

Number four on my list is RV fire safety. For starters it's a good idea to have more than one fire extinguisher available in your RV. I keep an additional fire extinguisher in an outside compartment of our RV just in case. Try to get in a habit of inspecting your fire extinguishers periodically and before each trip. Look to see if the arrow is pointing in the green area in the sight gauge. If it reads empty or needs charging replace it or have it recharged immediately. Inspect all components of the extinguishers to make sure they are in proper operating condition. Inspect the safety pin, handle or trigger, sight gauge indicator, inspection tag, and hose or nozzle, tank and labeling.

Once a month you should turn dry powder extinguishers upside down, tap on the bottom of the extinguisher and shake it so any powder that settled on the bottom is released. If the powder is packed in the bottom of the extinguisher it may not discharge properly, or at all, when you need it.

Some important reminders about RV fire safety:

- If a fire starts get everybody out of the RV and away from the fire safely and have someone call 911 for help.
- Most importantly, do not risk your personal safety. If you cannot extinguish the fire in the first minute or so let the professionals handle it.
- Remember the word PASS. PASS is an easy way to remember how to use a fire extinguisher, especially during an emergency. **PASS stands for Pull, Aim, Squeeze and Sweep.**
- In the event of a fire always remember you save lives first & property second!
- Test your smoke alarms monthly & before each trip.
- Replace the battery in smoke alarms twice a year 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.

Number five is LP gas safety. Your RV has an LP gas leak detector to assist in leak detection. LP gas leak detectors are located close to floor level because LP gas is heavier than air. Before each trip make sure the LP gas leak detector is operating properly.

If you ever smell LP gas or if the leak detector audible alarm goes off you should:

- Extinguish any open flames & pilot lights.
- Do not smoke or touch electrical switches.
- Evacuate the RV & turn off the main gas supply.
- Leave the door open & do not return until the odor clears.
- Have the system checked out by a qualified technician before using it again.

Number six is your emergency escape plan. What do you do in the event of an emergency, and everybody has to get out of the RV quickly and in an orderly fashion. 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.

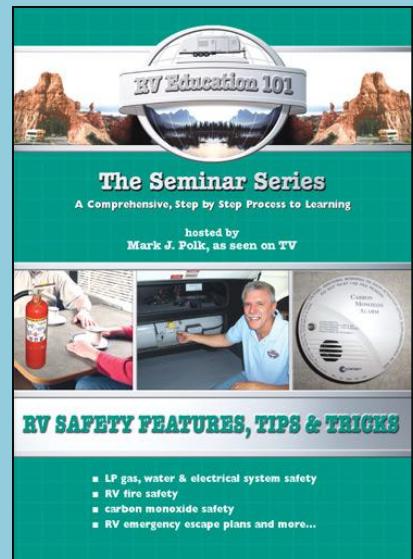
Emergency escape plan safety reminders:

- Time is your biggest enemy. It only takes one minute for smoke to fill the RV.
- Design an escape plan specific to the needs of the individuals in the RV.
- Sketch your plan on paper and indicate which windows and doors can be used to escape.
- Review the plan with everybody.
- Instruct people on where the emergency escape window is located and how to use it.
- Practice your escape plan so everybody can get out of the RV in case of an emergency.
- Designate a meeting place outside where everybody will meet.

Understanding and practicing these safety tips and reminders can save lives and make all of your RV trips be what they should be, safe, fun and stress-free.

~RV101

For more information on RV safety check out our
[RV Safety E-book](#) and
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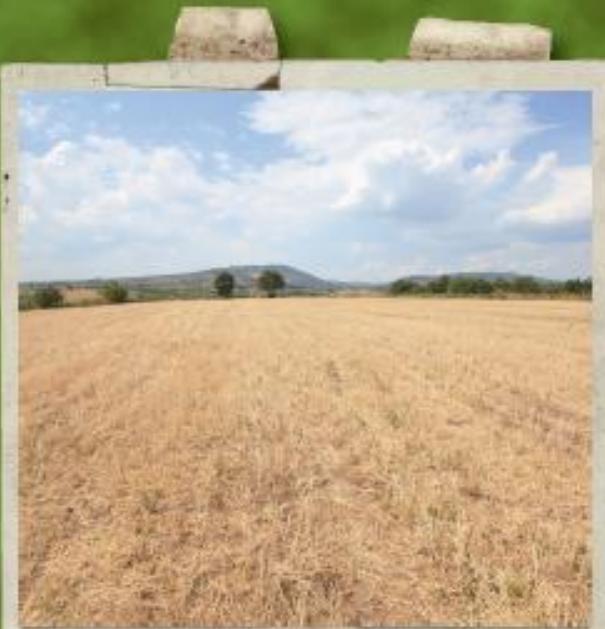
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How will you
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your travels?



*The laptop we would've used to
keep in touch with the kids.*



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



*The guy from Ed's Towing.
Spent three hours with him.*

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Polk's Top 5 RV Emergency Items

By Mark Polk

We purchase RVs to travel the country and build lasting memories with family and friends. RVs are meant for rest, relaxation and fun, but what happens in the event of an emergency? When you travel to a different camping destination in your RV, on a regular basis, you need to be prepared for an emergency that can happen at anytime and anywhere.

This list could certainly be longer, but I want to offer my top 5 RV emergency items for RV owners.



1) The first item on my list is a portable weather radio. In today's world of modern technology some folks think a smart phone with a weather app is all you need to stay informed of weather updates. The problem with that thinking is we often travel through remote parts of the country in our RVs, where you don't always have a good signal on your phone. A good portable weather radio can operate on batteries or 120-volt AC power and will warn you of potential weather hazards in and

around the area where you are camping. Don't forget some spare batteries.

2) Next on my list is a reputable RV Emergency Roadside Assistance Plan. There are lots of these plans available so take time to research and select a plan that fits your particular needs. Look for a plan that is designed for RVs, and see what other folks have to say about a particular plan on some of the RV forums. When you breakdown in the middle of nowhere on your vacation you will be glad you invested in a good plan. The plan can pay for towing expenses, lodging while the RV is being repaired, fuel, getting in a locked RV or tow vehicle, and to repair a flat tire. Some RVs have tires that weigh in excess of 100 pounds and require special equipment to change. It can be dangerous to change a tire on any RV, and with a roadside assistance plan you don't need to worry about it.



3) When you pack the RV for your next trip make sure you include a basic road hazard kit. At a minimum it should

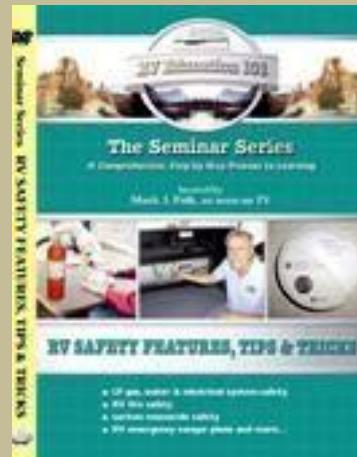
include a good set of jumper cables, a heavy-duty flashlight, one or more reflective warning triangles, some basic hand tools, a fluorescent safety vest, a portable gas can and a good first aid kit if you don't already have one in the RV. A few simple items can get you out of a jam and assist you in staying safe until help arrives.



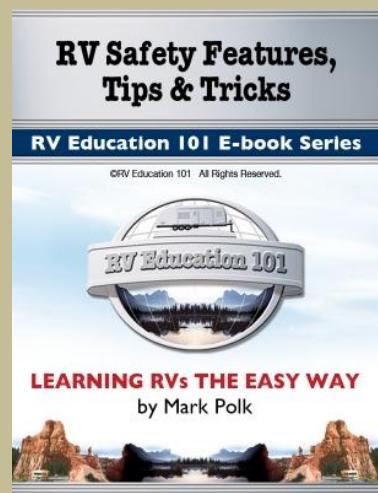
4) I recommend keeping clothing in the RV for all weather conditions. You might be traveling south during the summer months, but you never know when cold or wet weather will hit. And the heat or air conditioner might quit working when you least expect it. It is best to stay prepared by packing warm and cold weather clothing in the RV, regardless of where or what time of year you are traveling.

5) In addition to a good Emergency Roadside Assistance Plan I recommend a reputable RV Extended Service Contract. Again there are lots of these services available so shop around for the best plan prior to

purchasing one. The roadside assistance plan helps in the event of an unexpected emergency and the Extended Service Plan helps pay for necessary repairs when there is an emergency. Nothing will ruin a trip quicker than spending \$500 or \$1,000 of your vacation money on a repair bill when you least expect it. ~RV101



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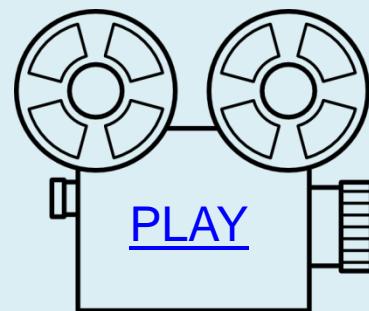
Triple Strawberry Dessert



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

Triple Strawberry Dessert (Makes 18 to 24 servings)

24 large strawberries
1/2 brick Philadelphia Original Cream Cheese
1/2 tub Philadelphia Light Strawberry Cream Cheese
3 tablespoons (45 ml) strawberry jelly powder



- Gently wash the strawberries under running water. Pat the berries dry with a paper towel. Set strawberries aside.
- In a bowl, combine the plain cream cheese with the strawberry cream cheese and the strawberry jello powder. Stir well with a spatula until blended.
- Spoon the mixture into a piping bag that has been set up with a medium-size star-shaped tip. With a paring knife, cut a flat edge on the stem end of the strawberries so they will sit upright on a plate. Make a cross cut at the pointy end of each strawberry, cutting 1/2 to 2/3 of the way through the strawberry.
- Insert the piping tip into the center of the cuts in each strawberry and squeeze until the cream cheese filling begins to burst out of the cuts along the sides of the berries. Gently fill the strawberry with the cream cheese mixture while pulling the piping tip up and out of the strawberry. Finish by piping a star shape on top of each berry.
- Place the berries in the refrigerator until ready to serve.

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Getting to



10 Steps to Keep the RV Ready for the Next Trip

Ok, you just returned home from a great RV trip and you want to make sure the RV is ready to go when it's time for the next RV adventure. Here are 10 things we do to make sure it is ready to go.

1) Clean the interior, and the exterior of the RV. While you are cleaning the RV look for anything that may need maintenance or repairs.

2) If your next trip is in a month or less and there is no threat of freezing temperatures leave any remaining water in the plumbing system. If your next trip is more than a month away I prefer to drain water from the system, including the water heater tank.

Caution: never drain the water heater when it is hot or under pressure. This is also a good time to flush any debris from the water heater tank if you haven't done it in awhile, and to inspect the anode rod if you have a suburban water heater.

3) Make repairs to anything on the RV you noticed was broken or not working properly during your last trip.

4) Empty the refrigerator and freezer compartments and leave the doors propped open to prevent any mold or odors.

5) Check all the batteries on the RV (coach and chassis). Make sure they are fully charged, and if they are lead-acid batteries check and adjust the water levels in all cells as required. If you are not comfortable working on batteries have the work done by a qualified service facility.

6) Check the inflation pressure in the tires and adjust the air pressure according to loads. Always check tire pressure when the tires are cold, before traveling more than a mile.

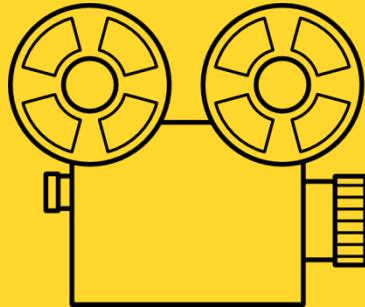
7) Restock any supplies, like coffee, canned goods, holding tank treatments or toilet paper that you used during your last trip so it is ready to go the next time.

8) Wash bed linens, towels and other items you used during the trip that stay in the RV at all times.

9) Check all safety devices in the RV to make sure they are in proper operating condition.

10) Always conduct pre-trip checks prior to leaving on your next trip

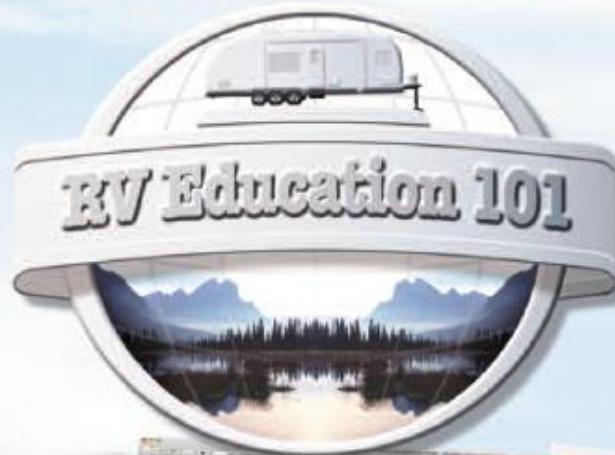
You can add more items and tailor this list to your specific needs, but by following these 10 simple steps your RV will be ready to go again when you are. To discover some great camping destinations for your next trip visit www.koa.com and to learn more about your RV visit www.rveducation101.com
~RV101



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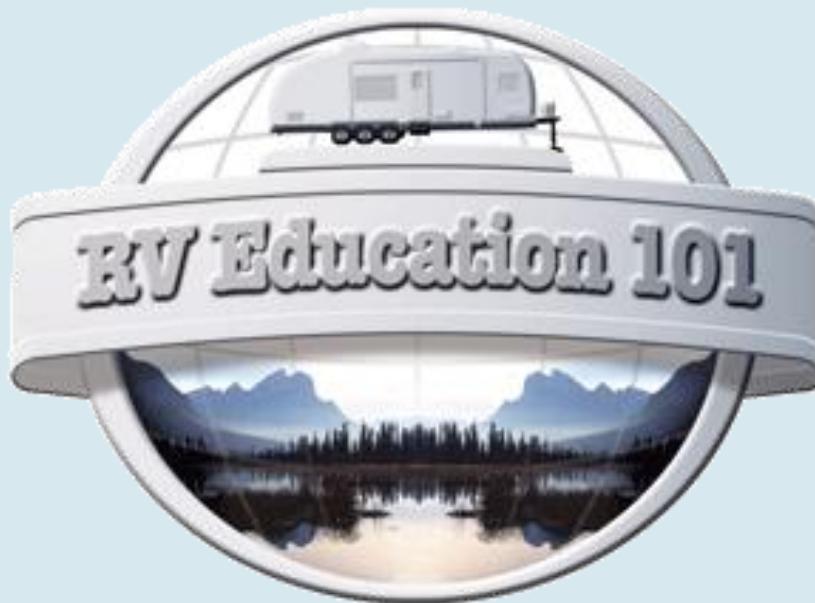
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Our goal with RV Consumer E-Magazine is to provide you with helpful information to make all of your RV experiences more enjoyable. I left my position as an RV Sales and F&I manager in 2000 to start RV Education 101.

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 18 and Josh 24, 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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