

RV Consumer e-Magazine

July 2015
Volume 5
Issue 7



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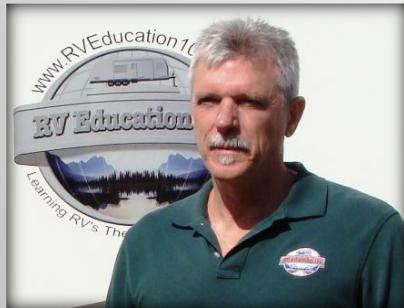
- Devin T., Georgia

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Happy Birthday America!

I don't know about you, but I cannot believe 2015 will soon be half over. We have not used the RV as much as we would like this year, but the open road is calling. As soon as I get caught up on a few projects and deadlines we are hitting the road in the RV, starting with our annual trek to the Outer Banks later this month.

I hope you are enjoying the warm weather and the 2015 camping season in your RV.

Have a wonderful Fourth of July and enjoy this month's issue. If you have RV friends and family tell them to subscribe too, and to like us on [Facebook](#)

Happy Camping,
~ Mark

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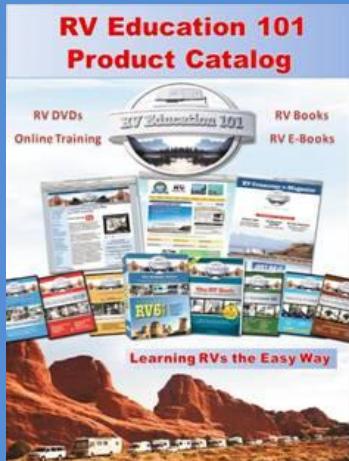
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Our digital RV Product Catalog puts all of our RV training products in one place, and we separate what products apply to what type of RV. For example if you own a travel trailer you can browse through the single DVD titles or go directly to the DVD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

Wherever it takes you

Is your RV Ready for the Summer Heat, Inside & Out?

By Mark Polk



Hot temperatures can take a toll on your RV, inside and out. In this article I would like to offer 10 hot weather tips to help make sure you and your RV are ready to deal with the summer heat. Let's start outside the RV.

Outside the RV:

It doesn't matter if it's a motorized RV or a truck towing a trailer, the vehicle needs to be ready for the heat.

Hot summer temperatures affect the vehicle's tires, cooling system and the transmission. If the vehicle isn't prepared for hot temperatures there is a possibility you won't reach your camping destination.

1) Checking Fluid Levels

For starters it's a good idea to check all the fluid levels in the vehicle and make sure all service intervals are followed. This includes generators too. Engine oil lubricates moving parts and helps components run cooler. When the temperature increases the engine, transmission and axles are subjected to more heat than normal. Used oil and transmission fluid loses its lubricating qualities and the ability to help keep moving parts cool. Replacing fluids and filters can prevent heat related problems with your vehicles drive line components.

2) RV & Tow Vehicle Tires

Tires are directly affected by hot temperatures, especially underinflated tires. An underinflated tire creates a tremendous amount of heat and when you factor in hot summer temperatures the results can be disastrous. Inflate the tire pressure based on the load, and if a tire is overloaded try to redistribute some weight to correct the problem. Always check and adjust tire pressure when the tires are cold, and/or before traveling more than one mile.

3. Vehicle Cooling System

Hot temperatures affect a hot running engine. The vehicle's cooling system is designed to prevent the heat producing

engine from overheating and quite possibly seizing up. If you don't maintain the vehicle's cooling system rust, scale and corrosion build-up in the radiator, water pump and engine coolant passages resulting in an overheated engine. Flushing the cooling system and replacing antifreeze at scheduled intervals can save your engine. Don't forget to inspect the radiator and heater hoses too. Soft and/or brittle hoses can indicate potential problems.

4) Vehicle & RV Batteries

When temperatures increase lead acid battery life decreases. Heat is a battery's enemy. Hot temperatures contribute to battery corrosion and to water evaporating from the electrolyte. Keep the battery connections clean and during hot weather or periods of high use check the battery frequently. Checking the water levels and adding distilled water as required can save your engine starting battery and your RV batteries. **Caution:** When working on batteries remove any jewelry, wear protective glasses and gloves, and avoid getting battery acid on your skin or clothing. If you are not comfortable working on or around batteries have the work done by a qualified repair facility.

Now that the vehicle is ready for the hot summer temperatures we can concentrate on staying cool when we arrive at our destination. Here are some more helpful hot weather camping tips.

Inside the RV:

6) Take Advantage of Shade

Strategically park your RV to take advantage of any shade that is available, especially on the side where the refrigerator vent is located. Don't be afraid to ask for a shady site when you check-in at the campground. This will not only help keep the RV cool, but your refrigerator and roof air conditioner will work more efficiently too.

7) Air Conditioner

You can improve your air conditioners efficiency by keeping the A/C filters clean. In most cases you can wash the filters in warm soapy water, rinse thoroughly and allow them to dry before reinstalling. Another option is to clean the filters using a small hand held vacuum cleaner. I recommend you keep a new set of filters on hand in the event the old ones have seen better days.

8) RV Awnings

Use your main patio awning and any window awnings to assist in keeping the RV cool. In addition to using the awnings use your window blinds, or day/night shades to help keep the sun out and the cooler air inside. Proper ventilation helps prevent excess heat in your RV too. You can install vent covers, like Maxx Air vents, over the roof vents to allow for ventilation and air circulation. They are inexpensive, easy to install and they let the fresh air in, even when it's raining.

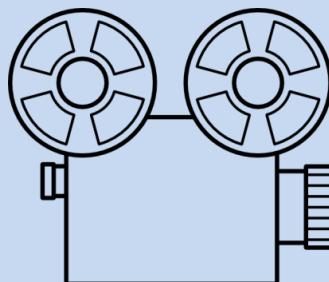
9) Electrical Surge Protection

Campground voltage can fluctuate, especially during the hot summer months when all the campers are running their air conditioners. You should use a surge protector designed to protect your RV from improper wiring and in the event that voltage drops below 105-volts or spikes above 130-volts.

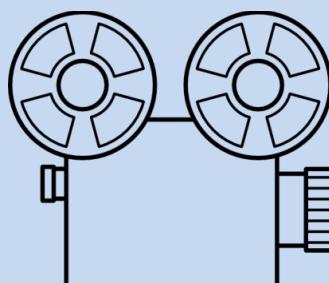
10) Refrigerator Efficiency

RV refrigerators are affected by outside temperatures too. To help the refrigerator work more effectively in hot weather try parking the RV with the side the refrigerator is on in the shade. Leave room between the foods for air to circulate. Avoid leaving the refrigerator or freezer door open for extended periods of time and use an inexpensive battery operated refrigerator fan to help circulate air.

Well there you have it, 10 quick and easy steps you can take to help prepare your RV for hot summer camping trips inside and out. ~ **RV 101**



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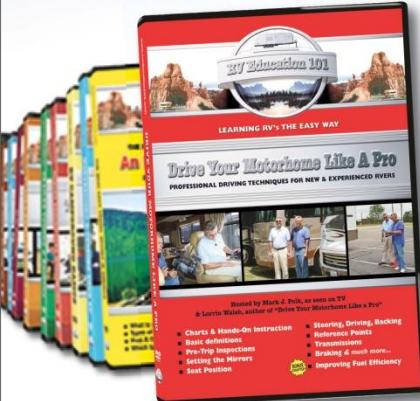
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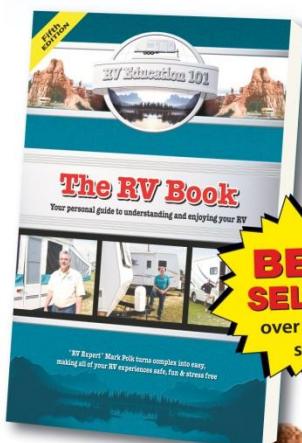
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Downsizing RVs



I like to pride myself on the fact that I can do any type of camping imaginable. I have camped under the stars, in pup tents with the boy scouts, in less than desirable conditions throughout my military career, in good and bad weather, and in almost every type of RV manufactured. But as we get older we tend to enjoy more creature comforts when it comes to camping.

When I was selling RVs I remember telling my customers that once they own an RV with a slide-out it is hard to go back to one with no slide-outs. I should heed my own advice when it comes to downsizing RVs, especially when the entire RV could fit in the living room of the RV you have now!

Let me start from the beginning. A year-or-so-ago I was looking for a camper I could use to film some upcoming video projects we were working on, and nobody I knew owned one equipped the way we needed it to be. So, I started looking on Craigslist and ran across an ad for a used Lance truck camper. The owner wanted to get rid of it so it was priced right, and it was equipped with many of the features I needed for the upcoming video projects. The camper's size, dry weight & estimated loaded weight worked with my truck at the time so I drove the 3-hours and picked it up.

It just so happened that Dawn's niece was getting married in Colorado, and between my sense of adventure and dislike for flying this day and age I convinced Dawn it would be fun to take the truck camper to Colorado for the wedding.

Marriage Test: Take 2-adults and 3-dogs on a 3,500 mile cross-country trip in an 8 1/2 foot truck camper.

I checked all the systems on the camper, fabricated some tie downs to secure it to the truck, carefully loaded it, as not to exceed any weight limitations, and we headed out on our RV adventure.

RV Downsizing Considerations:

One of the thoughts I had about taking the truck camper, rather than the motorhome, was saving some money on the cost of fuel. Our motorhome averages 7 ½ miles to a gallon. I thought it would be possible to nearly double that with the truck, but when all was said and done we averaged 11.7 miles to a gallon. We did use the truck's air conditioner for most of the trip which had an impact on the fuel economy.

I definitely think it's more difficult to adjust to a smaller RV after spending a good bit of time in a larger RV. I have always liked small RVs, but you need to seriously consider if a smaller RV will suit your specific needs. We usually travel with 2-adults, 1-teenager and 3-dogs. For our scenario we need a larger RV with the space required to accommodate all of the travelers.

In addition to interior space like the bathroom, sleeping arrangements, sitting space and kitchen area, with a smaller RV you also need to consider things like interior and exterior storage space, the size of the holding tanks, fresh water storage, and LP gas capacity.

We are also accustomed to having an onboard generator when we travel. When you dry camp or spend a night in a Wal-Mart parking lot a generator is a nice feature in an RV.

One of our friends saw a post on Facebook about the truck camper and said, "Nice, a traveling man cave!" When Dawn saw his response she said, that's exactly what this is, your traveling man cave when you go to RV shows and business events by yourself.

We had a great trip and a fun adventure in the used Lance truck camper, but the moral to the story is to select an RV that is suited for you and how you travel. Trust me when I say it will make all your RV experiences the best they can be. The truck camper will be great for 1 or 2 adults, but not so much for 2-adults, 3-dogs and a 3,500 mile cross-country RV trip. ~ **RV101**



RV Tire Tips

What is your Tire Pressure?

Question: Mark, can you tell me the correct pressure that you should inflate a tire to before taking a road trip. My trailer tires say max psi 70lbs. I can't seem to get a straight answer from our local shops, and I want to make sure I don't overheat them. I do know you check them first thing before driving and before the sun hits them. Thanks for any information you can provide.

Answer: It can be a bit confusing, but I'll try and explain. Tire manufacturers publish tire load and inflation tables for tires they manufacture. In a perfect world you would know what the actual load being placed on the tires is, and could go to the load and inflation tables for precise inflation pressure based on that load.

Since we know this isn't always practical, especially with RVs, there are a couple of ways to help determine tire inflation pressure. On the front left corner of the travel trailer you will find a Federal Certification Tag or label. This label displays information on tire inflation pressure, GVWR and GAWR. The tire inflation you see on the label is based on how much the trailer weighed when it was manufactured. If no additional weight is placed on tires this inflation pressure is accurate, but we all add weight to the RV when we load it for a trip. The question is how much weight is added, and the only answer is to have the RV weighed, preferably by individual wheel position.

The inflation pressure molded into the sidewall of the tire is the maximum amount of air pressure you would ever inflate the tire to, if a full load was placed on the tire. You can find the tires max load range on the sidewall too.



What this means is, if the trailer tires are not overloaded the inflation pressure (depending on actual weights) is somewhere between what is posted on the certification label and what is molded in the tire's sidewall. In other words in some cases it is possible to increase tire load capacity by increasing the inflation pressure in your tires, but you cannot exceed the maximum pressure specified on the sidewall of the tire. You can usually find tire brand specific load and inflation tables on the internet.

It's also important that you use the same inflation pressure on both ends of each axle. If you weigh the RV and the tire loads are different on each axle end the load tables might require different inflation pressures. When this happens you need to redistribute the load. If the load can not be redistributed you would inflate both of the tires on that axle to the inflation pressure required for the tire with the heaviest load. Keep in mind it cannot exceed the max tire pressure molded in the sidewall.

Here are a few general rules for tire inflation I like to use:

- Never pull the trailer with tires inflated to less pressure than required for the load placed on the tires.
- Never pull the trailer with tires inflated to less pressure than what is on the certification tag, no matter what the load.
- Never inflate your tires above the maximum pressure shown on the tire sidewalls.

~RV 101

Check out our [19 minute RV Tire Care & Maintenance E-course.](#)

This online e-course is packed with information on caring for and maintaining your RV tires. Host Mark Polk explains tire inflation, tire inspection, overloading, tire maintenance, how to decipher the tire sidewall and much more in this informative online RV tire e-course. Total Run Time is 18 minutes 40 seconds.

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RV Tip: Replacing one tire on a motorized RV, due to lack of routine maintenance, can cost you **30 times** the price of this e-course.

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Test your RV Batteries Before it's too Late!



The only way to know the condition of your RV batteries is to test the state of charge. All batteries lose charge over time, not to mention the parasitic loads that can drain RV batteries when they are sitting in storage. At a minimum you should test the battery state of charge monthly, and charge any battery that is at or below an 80% state of charge.

Note: An 80% state of charge for a 12-volt battery is 12.5 volts, and 6.25 volts for a 6-volt battery.

Testing the battery state of charge is not difficult, and can help prevent a dead battery when you least expect it. Here are three easy ways to test the condition of your RV batteries.

- 1) You can use the monitor panel in the RV.
- 2) You can measure the voltage with a digital voltmeter.
- 3) You can test the specific gravity with a hydrometer.

The least accurate of the three testing methods mentioned is the RV monitor

monitor panel, but it will give you a general idea of the battery's condition. When you check the condition of your battery using the monitor panel make sure the RV is not plugged in to shore power, if it is you will get a false fully-charged reading.

For the best results check the monitor panel when the RV is not plugged in, and turn some overhead lights on to place a small load on the battery.



Measuring voltage with a voltmeter has its advantages. If you have sealed batteries your only choice is to use a voltmeter, and measuring voltage can give you a quick picture of the batteries depth of discharge, so you know when or if they need to be recharged. To measure

the voltage you need a good digital voltmeter. Set the meter to read DC voltage and connect the red lead to the positive battery terminal and the black lead to the negative battery terminal. A 12-volt battery that is charged should read between 12.5 and 12.7 volts. Readings less than 12.5 volts indicates the battery state of charge is below 80% and the battery needs to be charged.

A 6-volt battery that is charged should read 6.25 to 6.37 volts. Readings below 6.25 indicate the battery state of charge is below 80% and the battery needs to be charged.

Note: *To get an accurate reading the battery should not be tested if it has been charged or discharged in the last 12 hours and preferably 24 hours.*

The preferred method for testing the battery's state of charge is to check the specific gravity reading of each cell. You can purchase a hydrometer at an auto parts store for about ten dollars. The electrolyte in the battery's cells is a solution of acid and water so you need to wear safety glasses and gloves and avoid any contact with your skin.

The first step is to remove the vent caps and check the electrolyte levels. There needs to be enough in the cells for the hydrometer to pick up a

sample. If you need to add any water prior to testing you will need to charge the battery and let it sit for 12 hours before testing the condition of the battery.



Next, fill and drain the hydrometer at least twice in each cell before taking a sample. Take the reading and record it and drain the electrolyte back into the cell you are testing. Test all of the cells and replace the vent caps when you are finished.

Specific gravity readings for a charged battery should read between 1.235 and 1.277. Specific gravity readings below 1.235 indicate the battery state of charge is less than 80% and the battery needs to be charged. If there is a .050 or more difference in the specific gravity reading between the highest and lowest cell, you have a weak or dead cell in the battery.

If you put your RV in long term storage it's a good idea to remove the batteries and put them in storage too. This is quite simple to do. When you remove a battery always remember to remove the negative terminal first and then the positive terminal. Label the battery cables so you remember how to make the connections. Knowing the battery state of charge and re-charging a discharged in a timely manner will extend the life of the battery. **RV 101**

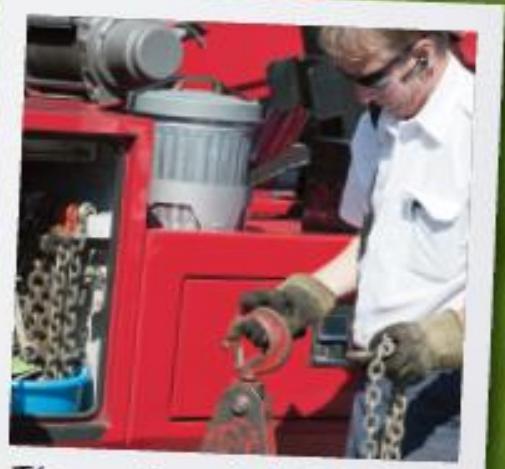
How will you
Remember
your travels?



*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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(Makes 2 to 4 servings)

2 small green zucchini
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freshly ground sea salt
freshly ground pepper
balsamic glaze
Parmesan cheese

- Slice each zucchini in half, lengthwise. Trim the ends.
- Cut the tomatoes in half, lengthwise. If necessary, trim a small portion of skin from the bottoms of the tomatoes so they will stand upright on a serving dish.
- Brush the cut sides of the zucchini and tomatoes with olive oil and sprinkle with sea salt and pepper.
- Lightly brush the barbecue grate with olive oil. Preheat the grill to medium-high.
- Place the zucchini and tomato halves cut side down on the grate.
- Cook until the zucchini and tomatoes are browned, tender, but still firm.
- Set the zucchini and tomato halves on a serving plate with grill-marked sides up.
- Drizzle balsamic glaze over the surface of the vegetables.
- Finely grate Parmesan cheese over the vegetables.

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It's a great place to sharpen up on your RV skills and learn more about how to use and maintain your RV.

Getting to



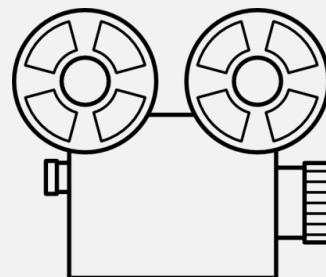
How-To Avoid Accidents at the Gas Pump

Today I want to discuss and demonstrate how you can avoid one of the most common reported RV accidents, accidents at the gas pump.

Most RV related accidents are a result of the length, width or height of the RV, because it is longer, wider and taller than you are accustom to when you drive an automobile. But if you take a minute to learn more about tail swing and pivot points you can avoid the most common RV accident. Let's check it out.

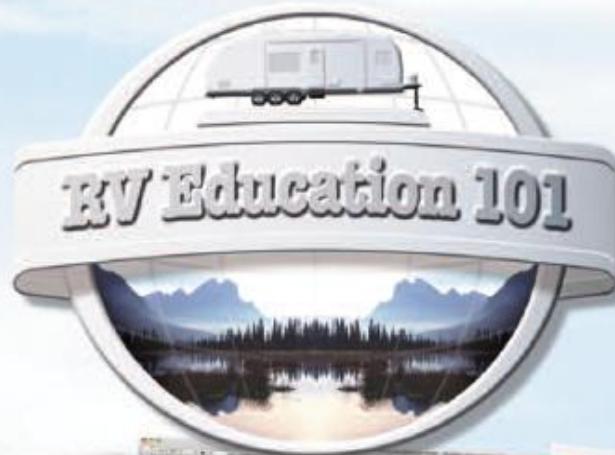
For starters when it's time to refuel look for an exit where there are several gas stations available. This gives you a better selection for finding the easiest one to navigate in and out of. The two most common incidents at the pump are when you turn into or away from a concrete island or pole at the gas station. If you are turning away from the pole tail swing is the culprit. If you are turning towards the pole your pivot point is the culprit.

Tail swing is when you turn the RV in one direction and the rear of the RV swings out in the opposite direction. Depending on the RV, tail swing can be more than 30 inches. The pivot point of the RV is the center of the rear axle(s). If you turn in the direction of an object before the pivot point reaches the object you will hit it. If you turn in the direction of an object after the pivot point reaches the object you will clear it. This RV driving tip is an excerpt from our drive and tow like a pro DVDs.

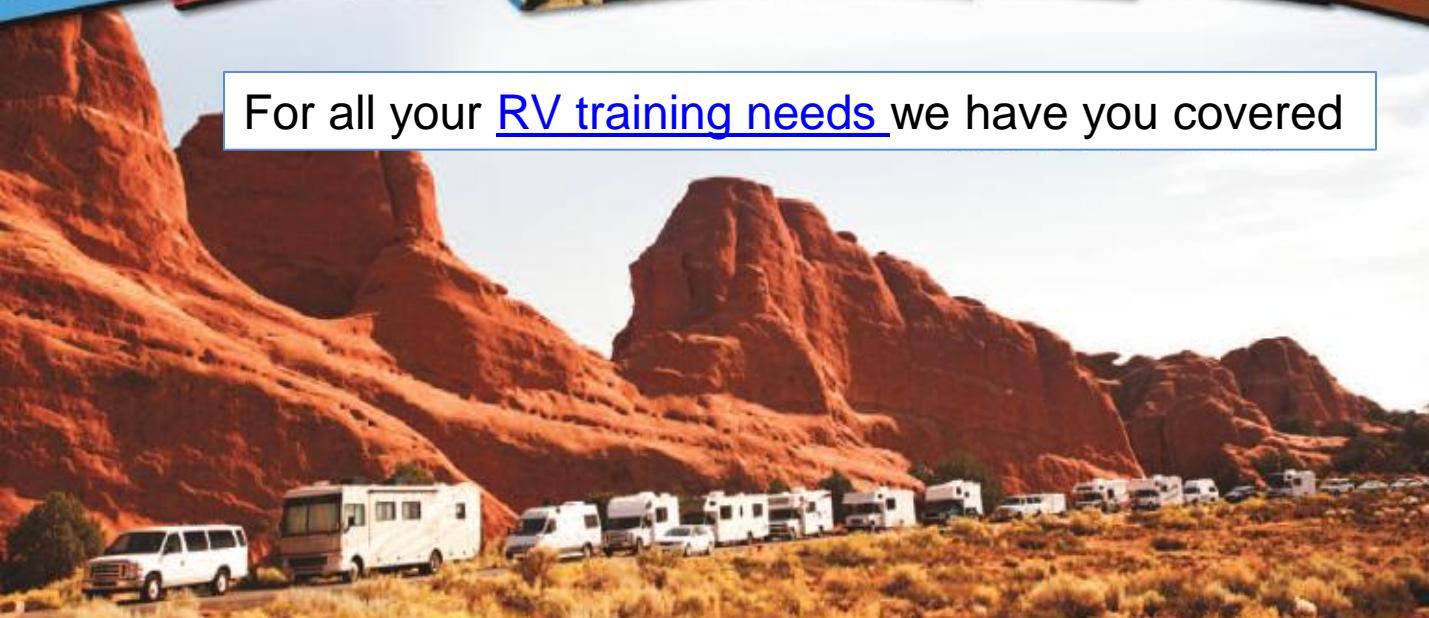


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We produce RV educational videos & DVDs and publish books and e-books on how to safely & properly use and maintain your RV. The reason I left my job was because of my concern about the lack of educational and safety awareness material available to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

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