

2019 Edition

# COMMON SENSE

## RVing

Tips & Tricks for Every RVer

THIS IS A  
**FREE  
GIFT**  
FOR YOU

**National General**   
Auto, Home & Health Insurance

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# FORWARD

## **Welcome from National General**

RVing is a rapidly growing lifestyle. These days, it seems that everyone wants to hit the road and experience the freedom that recreational vehicles embody.

Whether you're a seasoned RVer or new to the pastime, this ebook is for you. In it, we share tips, tricks, and suggestions to help you stay safe.

In our 2019 ebook, we've included a brand new cheat sheet designed to help you plan your first RV trip, and make those initial campground reservations with ease. This guide is short, sweet and to the point. Feel free to read it on your phone, tablet or computer. Take it with you for whenever you may need a little help.

At National General, we believe the more you know the safer you will be. To that end, we have included an important chapter on hurricane and wildfire preparedness that every RVer should read.

It is said that "Life is better around a campfire." If so, what are you waiting for?



# SPRING CLEANING MADE EASY

The birds are singing and spring has sprung. Now is the time to get your RV ready to explore the world! This easy to follow checklist will have you back on the road in no time.

## Essential Steps for Spring Cleaning Your RV:

### Check your maintenance manuals and records?

- Do tires need rotation?
- Should brakes be checked?
- Is it time to replace filters?

### Wash the exterior of your RV and look for any areas that need to be re-caulked.

- Check windows for small cracks where water seeps in.
- Check vents and seams.
- Examine your rooftop. Recaulk as needed.

### Wash and dry your awning.

- Are there any holes or frays?
- Is it tightly connected to the RV?
- Are the tension springs correctly set?

### Inspect your tires.

- Check the tire pressure.
- Examine the tread wear.
- Are there any bulges?

### Evaluate your RV batteries

- Are they holding a full charge?
- Is there corrosion?
- Do they need fluid?

### Connect your propane tanks.

- Have you turned on your LP detector inside your RV?
- Do you smell any leaks?\*
- Are your tanks expired? (check dates on tanks)

### Open your windows.

- Inspect for water damage and leaks.
- Vacuum and dust window seals.
- Clean the windows and screens.

### **Check your storage bays.**

- Inspect for evidence of rodents.
- Clean and repack as needed.
- Look for leaks or stains.

### **Inspect your water heater.**

- Set your hot water bypass to normal.
- Close faucets and connect RV to fresh water.
- Fill water heater.
- Double check pressure, safety valve and drain plug for leaks.

### **Sanitize your freshwater tanks.**

- Google the sanitization process and follow instructions.
- Check your water pump and replace if needed.
- Flush your tanks thoroughly.

### **Inspect your dump hose.**

- Do you see any tears, holes or cracks?
- Do your fittings connect properly?
- Do you have a supply of disposable gloves?

### **Check your fire extinguishers.**

- Replace batteries in both fire and carbon monoxide alarms.
- Test system.
- Check online for any recalls.

### **Inspect your radiator hoses.**

- Hoses deteriorate on the inside. Replace every 3-5 years.
- Note the date of replacement in your RV manual.

### **Check your generator.**

- Follow manual instructions.
- Does it have the proper fluids?
- Does it start?
- Does it connect properly with your RV?

### **Check your Motorhome engine.**

- Have you followed your guide for specific instructions?
- Did you start your engine at least once a month while in storage?
- Do you need to switch on your engine pre-heat before turning the ignition?
- Have you checked your gauges for proper function?

### **Check your hitch.**

- Is everything in order?
- Do you need to lubricate the connections?

Each RV is unique. Always check your manual and perform regular maintenance as needed. If you have questions ask your manufacturer or dealer for suggestions. Record the date anytime you replace a part or perform maintenance. These notes will come in handy next season.

Remember a spring check-up is the easiest way to avoid a crisis hundreds of miles from home. Take the time now and save hours later.

\*Always wear gloves and protective eyewear. Seek professional help as necessary.

\*\*If you smell gas be sure to turn off the propane and consult a professional.

\*\*\*The incidents described in this book may not be covered by your policy. Nothing in this RV e-book is designed to represent your coverage. Please contact your National General Insurance agent to verify that you've selected the proper coverages for your RV and your lifestyle.



# THE DAILY WALK ROUND

Your RV will experience an earthquake as it travels down the road. With a million parts shaking all at once, our daily checklist just makes sense. Use this list to discover anything that may need repairs or adjustments prior to your journey.

## Examine the Following Areas:

- Inspect the belts and fluid levels in the engine compartment.
- Check your battery for a snug connection.
- Test your headlights, flashers, turn and tail lights. If you are towing make sure your trailer lights connect properly.
- Check your tire pressure and fill tires as needed.
- Inspect the axle if your wheels are leaning or have an excessive squat.
- Verify your hitch is properly connected and locked.
- Inspect your tow vehicle, dolly or cargo trailer.
- Tighten straps on anything that is connected to your RV or your trailer.
- Check your brakes.
- Are you completely disconnected from all hookups?
- Did you put down your RV antenna?
- Have you rolled in your awning?
- Adjust your mirrors and clean your windows.
- Walk around your RV, checking for anything that could puncture a tire when you pull out.

## Remember:

### Your RV Weight Is Key

Bridges and roads have weight restrictions. Always know the gross weight of your vehicle. Know your ideal RV weight, and use a truck stop scale to check it against your current RV weight.

### **Your RV Height Is Important**

Avoid trouble by using an RV GPS. Enter the height, weight and width of your rig, and the GPS will automatically direct you away from unadvisable routes.

### **Your Width May Matter**

Roadside construction is often narrow. Be sure to know your RV's exact width to avoid trouble.



# RV DRIVING SIMPLE STEPS TO SUCCESS

New to driving an RV or simply need a refresher? Our driver checklist will give you the tools you need.

## Turns

Always buy something you feel confident maneuvering, then be sure to practice.

- Decide how much space you need to turn with ease.
- Identify a reference point on your RV to enable you to track your rear wheels.
- Determine what types of turns you can make in your rig.

## Backing Up

Many RV sites will require the driver to back up into the space. Practice your parking before you get the campground.

- Practice in a large empty parking lot using traffic cones. Use the cones to mark off different types of parking areas.

- Practice backing into narrow spaces.
- Practice pulling into and out of parking spaces.

## Towing

Whether you are pulling a travel trailer, towing a fifth wheel or pulling a tow car, the first time can be daunting.

- Invest in a hitch that offers sway control, weight distribution or hydraulic pistons.
- Make sure that the class and weight of your trailer match your hitch.
- Be prepared to upgrade your hitch for safety.

## Uphill/Downhill

Drive at your own pace. Over time you will build confidence to use your RV often.

- Stay in the right lane when going up or down a slope.

- Step on your brake each time your speed reaches five miles over the speed limit.
- Lower your speed five miles below the limit before removing your foot from the brake.

We also recommend checking into an RV driving school, which can help you save money and avoid claims.



# TIRE SAFETY

Your tires are the foundation of your roaming home, and this RV friendly checklist will help you take care of them before every trip.

## Check Your Tread

**Is there a sawtooth appearance on the edge of the tire?** This may mean you need to have your tires aligned.

**Is there more wear on the outer edge of the tire than the middle?** If so, your tires may be improperly inflated.

**Are your tires wearing faster in the front than the rear of the RV?** This may suggest you need a tire rotation.

**Is one side of the tire wearing more than the other?** If so, your tires may need to be realigned.

**Does your tire tread have any dips?** If so, you may need to have your RV suspension checked by a professional.

## Check the Age of Your Tire

**When was your tire manufactured?** Your tire number starts with a DOT and is followed by a series of numbers and letters. The first two digits after DOT are the week of the tire and the last two digits are the year of the tire, and the last four digits show the actual manufacture date. Example: 5217 means the tire was made during the final week of December in 2017.

### Have you changed your tires recently?

Rubber breaks down with time. Always have a professional inspect your RV tires and change them every five to seven years.

## Know the Correct Tire Size

**Is your RV tire the correct size?** Always buy the ideal size tire and ply as suggested by your manufacturer.

## Check the Pressure

**What is the ideal pressure for your RV tire?** Check your tire pressure before and during each trip. The ideal tire pressure will be noted on the tire sidewall and the best readings are taken when the tire is cold.

**Are you driving the speed limit?** Most RV's should not travel over 65 MPH on their tires.

If your tire blows there's just one other very important thing to remember: hang onto the actual tire. If you're insured by National General Insurance, the actual tire is necessary to process all claims.

# THE ULTIMATE SLIDE OUT SAFETY CHECKLIST

Maintaining your slide-outs can help avoid future insurance claims. Use this Easy to Follow Checklist to Help Protect Your Investment:

- **Check The Seals.** Rubber seals prevent air from seeping through the crack of your slide. Use a silicone spray each month to extend the life of the seals. Be sure to check the manufacturer's recommendation for your personal RV.
- **Pull In Slides When Not In Use.** Slide outs are not designed to be permanently extended. Move your slides in and out every few weeks and continue to lubricate both the seals and gear mechanisms. NEVER store your RV with the slides out.
- **Maintain Your Power Source.** Most slide-outs need battery power. Check your connections and battery fluids on a regular basis.
- **Check Your 12-Volt System.** If your slide-out isn't working, check for a blown fuse or a tripped circuit breaker.
- **Inspect Your Appliances.** If your RV has appliances within the slide-out, be sure that water tubing, propane lines and electrical cables are free of obstruction. If you have an absorption refrigerator, make sure your exterior vents are clear.
- **Check Fluid Levels.** Hydraulic slide out systems should not leak. If it looks like you need to add fluid, contact your RV mechanic immediately.
- **Watch For Wear Patterns.** Abnormal wear patterns on the floor or on exterior components may mean that you need to realign the slide.

National General Insurance believes in prevention, and a little can go along way! If your rig has a slide-out, regular upkeep may eliminate the need for serious repair.

## **Here Are a Few Simple Ways to Stay Safe when Working on Your RV Slide-Out**

- Make sure the RV is level prior to extending the slide.
- Make sure your batteries are charged and ready.
- Remove the lock or bracket used in travel mode.
- Check around your RV and make sure you have adequate clearance to extend your slide outs.
- Keep pets away from the slide when extending.
- Slides have weight limits that should not be exceeded.
- Never store cargo on the roof near your slide-out.
- Check your top awning and make sure it is free of debris.
- Never force your slide open or closed.
- Always retract your slides before driving or storing your RV.



# HOW TO AVOID AN ELECTRICAL MELTDOWN

Common Sense RVers use surge protectors to keep their RVs safe. Here are a few key concepts about AC/DC power you should know.

1. **RV's use two kinds of power.** AC is received when you plug into the campground pedestal. DC runs your in-house RV batteries.
2. **Normal voltage stays constant for at least 10 seconds.** An aftermarket gauge will allow you to track this.
3. **Many campgrounds have inadequate power.** When demand is high, your power can sag or dip. An exterior surge protector (in addition to your built-in protector) adds an extra layer of protection. It will warn you if there are problems and shut down power surges that could cause damage.
4. **Faulty campground wiring, lightning strikes and utility grid switching can all create power spikes in your RV.** Always use a quality exterior surge protector and replace as necessary.

## Tips & Tricks To Avoid Electrical Meltdown:

- Before a storm, unplug from shore power and use your RV batteries.
- Check your electrical connections and your wiring regularly.
- Place a piece of duct tape above the area where your surge protector plugs into the pedestal. This simple hack will keep raindrops from seeping into your power connection.
- Keep your National General Insurance claim info handy, and rest assured that in an emergency, we are ready to help!



# FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST

If your RV burst into flames, how would you react? Could you save your family or your RV? Use this checklist to help you avoid fire dangers.

1. **Inspect Your RV**—Regular mechanical inspections can help address issues before they become problems.
2. **Plan Ahead**—Always have an exit strategy, and always make sure to inform the whole family. An emergency could happen at any time!
3. **Keep It Clean**—Grease in the engine or transmission cause your electrical system to run hot. Make sure to keep the inside and the outside of your RV clean.
4. **Inspect It**—Electrical systems should be inspected regularly.
5. **Avoid Smoking**—Smoldering ash causes fires. Avoid smoking anywhere near your RV.
6. **Address Recalls**—If your RV has a recall, make an appointment with your nearest dealer. Don't wait!
7. **Avoid Friction**—If anything is dragging or pulling, stop immediately. Resistance leads to sparks, and sparks cause fires!
8. **Propane Safety**—Propane tanks must be legally re-certified every few years. Check your tank connections, and make sure your propane is always off when you are driving.
9. **Check The Batteries**—Make sure your batteries have good ventilation and are inspected on a regular basis.
10. **Listen To The Beep**—Test and replace batteries on your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors as needed.
11. **Avoid Leaving Appliances Plugged In**—Unattended appliances cause fires. Don't leave cell phones, coffee pots, space heaters and even crock pots plugged in when unattended.



12. **Watch Where You Park**—Always park a safe distance away from campfires or propane fire pits. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby; and never leave a fire smoldering or unattended.
13. **Check Your Extinguishers**—Expiration dates and recalls can apply to fire extinguishers. Always keep safe, appropriate size units in key positions throughout your RV.

# EMERGENCY CHEATSHEET (HURRICANES OR FIRES)

Emergency preparedness is essential in today's world. National General Insurance recommends RVers take precautionary steps to protect themselves. Don't be caught off guard. Prepare, respond and take action.

1. Keep important documents with you at all times in a waterproof bag, including your insurance documents, vehicle and title information.
2. Keep all systems operational on your RV, including tires, brakes, lights and windshield wipers.
3. Carry a weather radio, flashlights and a smoke detector.
4. Create a severe weather evacuation plan.
5. Choose an out of area contact to call if your family gets separated.
6. Board up your windows to protect yourself from high winds and debris.

7. Leave the area immediately if a hurricane or tropical storm advisory is issued in your area. Move to a safer location if you are staying in a high-risk wildfire region. Don't "wait and see."

## Top Tips for Evacuation:

1. Turn off your breaker box to avoid electrical surges and fire.
2. Never drive through standing water. Find an alternate route.
3. Protect your RV from flying debris. Secure all outdoor items.
4. Move your RV to a safe storage location or higher ground if possible.

As a National General Insurance policyholder, you can count on our communication. We work hard to keep our customers well informed! Please make sure your contact information is up to date in case we need to get ahold of you.

# AVOID UNINVITED GUESTS

Recreational vehicles can travel almost anywhere. Unfortunately, so can rodents. These helpful tips, tricks and strategies can help you battle infestation and win!

## Mice

- Use an enclosed trap allowing you to catch up to four mice at a time. Be sure to have two traps outside your RV, and preferably near the tires.
- Stuff entry areas under your rig. Use steel wool or simply tape the areas shut. Spray foam works well around drain pipes or vents.
- Use soap shavings, mothballs or spray peppermint oil around the tires to deter mice and squirrels.

## Squirrels

- Squirrels can burrow under your RV. Take action before it is too late.

- Large cage traps catch squirrels alive; the catch is that you must release them miles away from your RV. (Or they will return for another visit!)

## Snakes

- Snake repellent is available on Amazon and works well in desert regions.

## Bees

- If a swarm of bees settles on your rig, do not disturb them. In most cases, they will rest a day or two and then move on.

## Ants

- Mix two cups Borax detergent to one cup sugar. Mix and sprinkle around the outside of your rig. The ants will eat the Borax and die.

## **Spiders**

- Salt is a natural poison. Mix one ounce of salt to a gallon of warm water. Spray on nests or spiders, and they will disappear in no time.

## **Signs You Have A Rodent Infestation:**

- Dry goods that are chewed open.
- Mice droppings.
- Nesting materials in your engine or generator compartment.

If you see any sign of a rodent infestation, clear all contaminated materials from your recreational vehicle. And always make sure your engine compartment is free of evidence before starting your rig.

Remember: Rodent claims are not usually covered by your insurance policy. National General always recommends that you do your part to protect your investment in advance.



# WINTERIZING YOUR RV

Common Sense RVers know how to winterize their rig. This simple process can help avoid unnecessary claims. Use this National General Insurance cheat sheet to streamline the process before temperatures drop.

## DIY Winterizing:

1. Drain all your water tanks.
2. Allow the water heater to cool and depressurize, then drain it. Now replug the water heater and turn off the electrical element.
3. Turn on all faucets, hot and cold and drain. Flush toilet till drained. Open all outside faucets to remove stored water.
4. Pump antifreeze through the water lines in your RV. Check with an RV professional for detailed instructions.
5. Turn off your water pump and open the faucet to release the water pressure. Once the pressure has released, you can re-close the faucet.
6. Pour a few cups of antifreeze down the drain of each sink, toilet and the shower. Make sure all faucet valves are now closed (inside and outside the RV).
7. Consult your owner's manual for winterization instructions for your ice maker, washing machine and dishwasher.

Want to avoid this process? RV dealerships also offer a winterization service. Just ask.

Winterizing your RV can save you thousands of dollars in spring repairs. It is one of the easiest ways to avoid an insurance claim when you'd rather hit the road in your RV.



# TIPS FOR STORING YOUR RV

Parking your RV can be just as dangerous as driving it. At National General Insurance, we know just what it takes to keep your RV safe. This easy to follow checklist will help you properly store your recreational vehicle when it's not in use.

- **Wash And Wax Your RV.** A thick coat of wax can protect your RV while in storage.
- **Inspect The Seals.** Look for wear or cracking and replace worn seals.
- **Create Proper Ventilation.** Vent covers allow you to keep your RV roof open without damage. These will prevent damage from condensation, mold and rust.
- **Crack Open A Window.** Allow the fresh air to help reduce moisture.
- **Heat Your Rig.** Even slight heat can help deter condensation.
- **Pull In Your Slides.** Slides should be retracted when storing your RV.
- **Keep Bugs Out.** You should always do what you can to prevent uninvited guests. You can find out how in our chapter on rodents.
- **Disconnect Your Batteries,** which will avoid battery drain.
- **Prepare The Plumbing.** Follow the steps listed in our chapter Winterizing your RV.
- **Keep Your RV Secure.** Use a kingpin, wheel lock or wheel chain to secure travel trailers or fifth wheels. Lock your storage bays. Use security cameras if available. A guard dog is even better!
- **Prepare Your Tires.** Wash your tires and park them on a plank or mat, lifting them off the ground. Cover your tires to avoid UV exposure.
- **Buy RV Storage Protection.** National General Insurance offers peace of mind with our storage option. Policyholders save big when their RV is in storage.

## Don't forget!

- Top off your motorhome fuel tank to prevent storage condensation. Add a fuel stabilizer as necessary.
- Add a fuel stabilizer to your generator. If anything seems damaged, replace it before storing for the winter.
- Fill your propane tanks. In a cold climate, remove external tanks and keep them warm. NEVER store propane inside your RV.
- Turn off your RV's main electrical breaker. Be sure your rig is unplugged from all shore power.
- Prop the fridge and freezer open. Make sure they are empty and dried.
- Close all vents on the ceiling of your R.V.
- Set the parking brake or use wheel chocks for stabilization.
- Use moisture absorbents to avoid mildew.

# HOW TO SUBMIT AN RV INSURANCE CLAIM

At National General Insurance, our policies are designed to take care of you during a crisis, but we also strive to help you avoid problems altogether.

**Let's talk about submitting a claim. It's just six simple steps.**

**Step 1: Contact the National General Insurance Claims Center.**

You can contact a National General Insurance Claims Agent to submit a claim. Call us at 1-800-325-1088, or visit [NationalGeneral.com/Claims-Center](http://NationalGeneral.com/Claims-Center).

We also have a free claims app you can download to your phone.

Note: Don't wait to notify National General Insurance of a claim. The longer you wait, the more likely it is that your claim may be denied. If you see a problem, take action immediately.

**Step 2: Have Your Policy Information Ready.**

You may also want to have your billing address and security information ready.

**Step 3: Describe the Problem in Detail.**

Tell the Claims Agent your situation. If possible, be ready to email photos of any damage.

NOTE: If the claim involves a blown or damaged tire, National General requires that you keep it.

**Step 4: We Will Assign a Claims Representative to Your Claim.**

Within 24 hours, a personal claims representative will be assigned to you, and will follow up with you about your claim as soon as possible.



### **Step 5: Tell Us Where You are.**

As an RV owner, we know you could be anywhere. Help your claims agent by telling them exactly where you are. Include the city and state, as well as whether you are on the side of the road, in a park or at a garage.

### **Step 6: Process the Claim.**

Your agent will create a claims report for you; you simply need to read and verify it. Your agent will investigate the claim coverage. They will also access the damage liability of the incident. With that complete, he or she will help you get your RV back on the road.

If you are a full-time RVer, you may be unable to stay in your rig during repairs. Be sure to talk to your agent about lodging. He or she can confirm the extent of your personal policies hotel coverage.

Our goal is to get you and your RV back on the road as quickly as possible. At National General Insurance, your claims experience is our priority. We work hard to make it the best it can be.

Questions? Feel free to contact your National General Insurance agent at any time.

### **For a quicker, more efficient claims experience, we encourage you to:**

- Always drive with your license, registration, and insurance card handy. In the event of an accident or incident, you will have all the information you need ready to go.
- If an accident occurs, make sure you call authorities right away, then call the National General Insurance Claims Center. You may also report your claim online or through our Claims app.
- Write down the names, license plate numbers and insurance information of everyone involved. Write down any cross streets or landmarks where an accident has occurred.

- Get the officer's name, badge number, and the location of the police department.
- Take photos. These will prove helpful in remembering the details of an accident.
- ONLY discuss the incident with the police and your National General Insurance claim agent!
- Keep your paperwork together. This should include your police report, claim agent contact information and insurance information.

Please note: National General Insurance processes claims as described above. Each insurance company may have their own process. Be sure to check with them before filing a claim.

# ASSETS EVERY RVER SHOULD OWN

**RV Roadside Assistance**—Many roadside assistance programs include fuel replacement, RV mobile mechanic dispatching, towing services and coverage for your auto, motorcycle or trailer. At under \$100 a year, this service is an important safety item that every RVer should own.

**Extended Warranty Plans**—An extended warranty may be available for your RV. Our friends at The Good Sam Insurance Agency offer several policies that come with mechanical breakdown insurance for peace of mind protection.

**Travel Assistance**—In case of an emergency medical evacuation, this policy offers medical transportation, prescription assistance, RV return (to get your rig home) and transportation of loved ones as needed.

**RV Insurance**—National General Insurance has been offering recreational vehicle insurance as long as RVs have been around. Policies include optional replacement cost coverage for your rig, storage discounts, and full-timers coverage.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Many of the terms used to describe parts of an RV are foreign to our everyday language. This simple glossary will instantly boost your confidence and help you understand RV-related topics.

**Amp**—Amp is short for ampere, which is the way the electrical current is measured. Most RV sites will offer electric hookups that support 20,30 or 50 amps, and you must use the appropriate plug for the amp rating.

**Adjustable Ball Mount**—A ball shaped trailer connection where the tow vehicle and the travel trailer connect. An adjustable ball mount lowers or tilts to fine tune the connection between the vehicle and the trailer. An adjustable ball mount will help overcome the tendency for the vehicle to “squat” down.

**Airstreaming**—Towing an Airstream travel trailer.

**Auxiliary battery**—Extra battery used to run 12-volt equipment. If solar is used, an RV may have multiple auxiliary batteries to store the charge.

**Awning**—A canvas-like shade that extends from the roof of the RV over the entrance. An awning system can be manual or automatic.

**Back-In**—An RV space that only has one entrance and is created for the RV to be backed into in order to connect with the hook ups.

**Back-up monitor**—Video camera mounted on the rear of the RV and connected with a dash screen that allows the driver to monitor the parking process.

**Basement**—A large storage area usually found underneath Motorhomes and Fifth Wheels.

**Black Tank**—Sewage waste from the toilet to a tank below the floor of the RV.

**Boondocking**—Camping in an RV without electricity, fresh water and sewer hookups.

**Bumper-Pull**—Slang term regarding the hitch or towing method for a conventional travel trailer or popup travel trailer.

**Bunkhouse**—An RV that features bunk beds.

**Cabover**—A sleeping area over the top of the cab. This is usually used when referring to a Class C or Truck Camper.

**Caravan**—RVers traveling together and watching out for each other.

**Chassis**—The frame of a vehicle or a motorhome.

**Class A Motorhome**—An RV with living accommodations that often look like a bus.

**Class B Motorhome**—Or a camping van. These RVs are built within the dimensions of a van, but with a raised roof to provide additional headroom.

**Class C Motorhome**—Built on a truck or van chassis, these motorhomes extend over the top of the cab. Models range from 25-40 feet.

**Converter**—An electrical device for converting 120-volt AC power into 12-volt DC power.

**Diesel Puller**—Term for front engine diesel motorhome.

**Diesel Pusher**—A motorhome with a rear diesel engine.

**Dinette**—A booth-like dining area with a drop-down table that can convert into a bed.

**Dump station**—An area designated for draining your gray and black water tanks.

**DW**—Dry weight. The manufacturer's listing of the approximate weight of the RV with no supplies, water, fuel or passengers.

**Fifth-Wheel Trailers**—Designed to be coupled to a special hitch that is mounted over the rear axle in the bed of a pickup truck. They are like travel trailers, only they extend over the bed of the truck, adding additional space and storage.

**Freshwater**—Water suitable for human consumption; often labeled as "potable water."

**Full hookup**—Term for campground accommodations offering water, sewer/septic, and electricity.

**Full-timing**—Living in one's RV all year long. A full timer may or may not be traveling.

**Gas Pusher**—Slang for rear gasoline engine mounted chassis on a motorhome.

**GAWR (Gross Axle Weight Rating)**

—The manufacturer’s rating for the maximum allowable weight that an axle can carry. GAWR applies to the tow vehicle, trailer, fifth-wheel and motorhome axles.

**GCWR (Gross Combination Weight Rating)**

—The maximum allowable weight of the combination of tow vehicle and trailer/ fifth-wheel, or motorhome and tow car. It includes the weight of the vehicle, trailer/fifth-wheel or tow car, cargo, passengers and a full load of fluids (fresh water, propane, etc.).

**Generator**—An electrical device powered by gasoline, diesel fuel, or propane that generates your 120-volt AC power.

**Gray Water**—Used water that drains from the sinks and shower into an RV holding tank.

**GTWR (Gross Trailer Weight Rating)**

—The Maximum allowable weight of a trailer, fully loaded with cargo and fluids.

**GVWR (Gross Vehicle Weight Rating)**

—The total allowable weight of a vehicle, including passengers, cargo, fluids, and hitch.

**Hitch**—The fastening unit that joins a movable vehicle to the vehicle that pulls it.

**Hitch Weight**—The amount of weight imposed on the hitch when the trailer/fifth-wheel is coupled. Hitch weight for a travel trailer can be 10-15% of overall weight; fifth-wheel hitch weight is usually 18 to 20% of the overall weight.

**Holding Tanks**—Tanks that retain waste water when the RV unit is not connected to a sewer. The gray water tank holds wastewater from the sinks and shower; the black water tank holds sewage from the toilet.

**Hookups**—The ability of connecting to a campground’s facilities. The major types of hookups are electrical, water and sewer. If all three of these hookups are available, it is called a full hookup.

**House Battery**—Battery or batteries in motorhome for operating the 12-volt system within the motorhome, separate from the chassis.

**Inverter**—A unit that changes 12-volt direct current to 110-volt alternating current to operate everyday electronics when an RV is not hooked up to electricity.

**Jackknife**—90° angle obtained from turning/backing fifth wheel or travel trailers with tow vehicles. Jackknifing can cause serious damage to the truck cab, including possibly breaking out the back window of the truck when the truck and fifth wheel collide.

**Leveling**—Positioning the RV so that it will be level, using ramps or levelers under the wheels, as well as built-in scissor jacks or power leveling jacks.

**LP Gas**—Propane; abbreviation for liquefied petroleum gas, which is a gas liquefied by compression, consisting of flammable hydrocarbons and obtained as a by-product from the refining of oil or natural gas. Also called bottled gas, LPG (liquid petroleum gas) and CPG (compressed petroleum gas).

**Non Potable Water**—Water not suitable for human consumption.

**Part-timers**—People who use their RV for longer than normal vacations, but less than a year.

**Payload Capacity**—The maximum allowable weight that can be placed in or on a vehicle, including cargo, passengers, fluids and fifth-wheel or conventional hitch loads.

**Pop-out**—Term for room or area that ‘pops-out’ for additional living space. This type of expanded living area was more common before slide-outs became popular.

**Popup/Pop-Up**—Folding camping trailer.

**Primitive Camping**—Also known as “dry camping” or boondocking. Camping without the modern convenience of full-hookup facilities like city/well water, sewer/septic and electricity. Primitive campers rely on ‘on-board’ systems for these conveniences.

**Propane**—LPG, or liquefied petroleum gas, used in RVs for heating, cooking, and refrigeration. Also called bottle gas, for the manner in which it is sold and stored.

**Pull-through**—A campsite that allows the driver to pull into the site, then pull out the other side when leaving, without ever having to back up.

**RIG**—what many RVers call their units.

**RV**—short for Recreational Vehicle, a generic term for all pleasure vehicles that contain living accommodations. Multiple units are RVs and persons using them are RVers.

**Self-contained**—An RV that needs no external connections to provide short-term cooking, bathing, and heating functions and could park anywhere overnight.

**Shore Cord**—The external electrical cord that connects the vehicle to a campground electrical hookup.

**Shore Power**—Electricity provided to the RV by an external source other than the RV battery.

**Slide-out**—Additional living space that “slides-out” either by hydraulics, electricity or manually, when the RV is setup for camping.

**Sway**—Fishtailing action of the trailer caused by external forces that set the trailer’s mass into a side-to-side motion. The trailer’s wheels serve as the axis or pivot point.

**Tail Swing**—Motorhomes built on chassis with short wheelbases and long overhangs behind the rear axle are susceptible to tail swing when turning sharply. As the motorhome moves in reverse or turns a corner, the extreme rear of the coach can move horizontally and strike nearby objects. Drivers need to be aware of the amount of tail swing in order to prevent accidents.

**Three-way Refrigerators**—Appliances that can operate on a 12-volt battery, propane, or 110-volt electrical power.

**Tongue Weight**—The amount of weight imposed on the hitch when the trailer is coupled.

**Tow Bar**—A device used for connecting a tow vehicle to the motorhome when it’s towed with all four wheels on the ground.

**Tow Rating**—The manufacturer’s rating of the maximum weight limit that can safely be towed by a particular vehicle. The manufacturer determines tow ratings according to several criteria, including engine size, transmission, axle ratio, brakes, chassis, cooling systems and other special equipment.

**Towcar**—A car towed by an RV to be used as transportation when the RV is parked.

**Toy-hauler**—Term for fifth wheel, travel trailer or motorhome with built-in cargo space for motorcycles, bikes, etc.

**Trailer Brakes**—Brakes that are built into the trailer axle system and are activated either by electric impulse or by a surge mechanism. The overwhelming majority of RVs utilize electric trailer brakes that are actuated when the tow vehicle’s brakes are operated, or when a brake controller is manually activated. Surge brakes utilize a mechanism that is positioned at the coupler that detects when the tow vehicle is slowing or stopping, and activates the trailer brakes via a hydraulic system (typically used on boats).

**Transmission Cooler**—A heat exchanger similar to a small radiator through which automatic transmission fluid passes and is cooled by airflow.

**Travel Trailer**—These types of rigs have an A-frame and coupler, and are attached to a ball mount on the tow vehicle. Travel trailers are available with one, two or three axles. Depending upon tow ratings, travel trailers can be towed by trucks, cars or sport-utility vehicles.

**Triple Towing**—Term for three vehicles attached together; usually a tow vehicle pulling a fifth wheel and the fifth wheel pulling a boat.

**Umbilical Cord**—The wiring harness that connects the tow vehicle to the trailer, supplying electricity to the trailer’s clearance and brake lights, electric brakes and a 12-volt DC power line to charge the trailer’s batteries. An umbilical cord can also be the power cable that is used to connect to campground 120-volt AC electrical hookups.

**Underbelly**—The RV’s underfloor surface, which is protected by a weatherproofed material.

**UVW (Unloaded Vehicle Weight)**—Weight of the vehicle without manufacturer’s or dealer- installed options and before adding fuel, water or supplies.

**Wet Weight**—The weight of an RV with all storage and holding tanks full.

**Wheelbase**—Distance between centerlines of the primary axles of a vehicle. If a motorhome includes a tag axle, the distance is measured from the front axle to the center point between the drive and tag axles.

**Wide Body**—Designs that stretch RVs from the traditional 96-inch width to 100 or 102 inches.

**Winterize**—To prepare the RV for winter use or storage.

# COMMON SENSE

RVing

Tips & Tricks for Every RVer