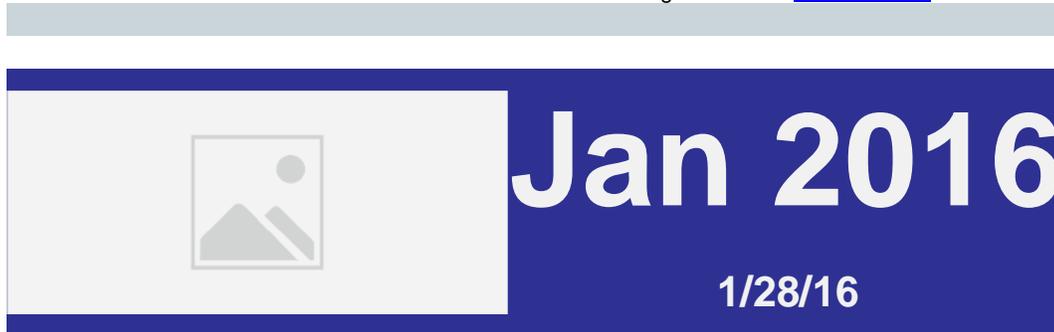


Subject: January 2016 Newsletter from Air Safe Hitches

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5 Destinations for Winter Weather RV Camping

While many RV owners around the Pacific Northwest have already buttoned up and winterized their RVs for the season, other adventurous families and retirees alike are just getting ready to head south for the winter. If you're not quite ready to put your RV into hibernation but are unable to take a lengthier trip like your snow birding kin, you can still enjoy a winter "getaway" in your RV right here at home.

With year-round outdoor recreation opportunities across the state, many area RV parks and resorts stay open during the winter months, providing local RV owners ample opportunities to enjoy their natural surroundings from the comfort of their very own RVs. Make your next RV outing a true "staycation" by heading to Thurston County RV parks like [American Heritage Campground](#), [Washington Land Yacht Harbor](#), and [Offut Lake Resort](#), just to name a few, or, if you would prefer to get out of town without going far, there are countless RV park and resort options within a two-hour drive (or less!) of Olympia, all well worth the journey.

Before you step on the gas, there are a few things to consider to ensure a safe and comfortable journey. Use the checklist below to help you prep your rig for your next winter adventure, or have one of the professionals at [Awesome RV](#), located at the [Olympia Auto Mall](#), do it for you. Whether you need parts, accessories or a full-on service, the experienced staff at Awesome RV in Olympia can help you with all of your RV parts and service needs.

Winter RV Camping Checklist

- Make sure all windows are sealed and properly caulked.
- Check weather stripping and replace if necessary.
- Empty water tanks and add one quart of RV antifreeze to each to protect your dump valves from freezing.
- Insulate drainage pipes to prevent freezing.

- If you have a fresh water hook-up, consider investing in a heated water hose.
- If your water pump is located in an exterior storage area, a space heater can help prevent it from freezing in colder conditions.
- Seal roof vents and skylights for added warmth and insulation.
- Test your furnace before you hit the road. If it's not clean, clean it.
- If you use propane to heat your rig, stock up on a few extra tanks. You will burn through the propane fast in chilly weather.
- Prevent your refrigerator's refrigerant from freezing and turning to gel by removing the outside refrigerator access cover and inserting round pipe insulation into two of the refrigerators three vents.

Once you've checked these items off your list, you're most likely ready to plan your next winter weekend (or weekday) getaway.

Basic Precautions for Transporting a Safe and Healthy Horse on Short or Long Trips

From "*The Hawkins Guide: Equine Emergencies on the Road*"

by James Hamilton, DVM and Neva Kittrell Scheve

Each time a horse enters a trailer he is at risk. He may receive minor bumps and bruises just from being loaded onto the trailer. He may injure himself during the trip because he becomes frightened or loses balance. Illness or a trailer accident can create a life threatening situation. Anytime the horse is loaded into a trailer, whether for a short or long trip, these fundamental measures should be taken:

TRAINING. The best defense against injury and illness is good training. Train your horse to load calmly and to accept the trailer as non-threatening. Forceful training will only teach your horse that the trailer is a bad thing and he will never be able to completely trust it.

MAKE SURE YOUR TRAILER IS SAFE. Once your horse has been trained to trust you and the trailer, don't let him down. Only use the proper hitch, make sure your brakes and lights are working and that they conform to legal safety standards. Check the trailer floor and frame. Check for sharp edges and potential hazards inside and out.

DRIVE CAREFULLY. Remember that you have live cargo in the trailer and drive accordingly. Don't jostle your horse around. Turn corners carefully and give the horse warning by GENTLY braking a few times before you are going to make a turn. Accelerate and decelerate slowly so he can keep his balance.

INNOCULATIONS. Current inoculations will protect your horse from exposure to other horses. Have a current health certificate if you are crossing state lines and a current certificate of negative EIA (Coggins)

WRAP ALL FOUR LEGS. Just walking onto the trailer can result in injury if the horse scrapes against something, so wrap his legs every time your horse gets on the trailer. Commercial shipping wraps are easy to put on and can guard against a costly vet bill. Properly applied standing bandages give more support if the trailer is bumpy or the trip is long. The pastern and coronet band should be covered. Make sure you know how to wrap correctly because a bad wrap can cause injury or come undone in the trailer. (Note: Some people believe that they should not wrap a horse's legs because commercial shipping companies do not allow the horses to be wrapped for shipping and they believe the shipping company has a reason for it. They do have a reason - the shippers do not want to be held responsible for a wrap that comes undone, or a wrap that is improperly applied and causes injury, not because it is best for the horse.)

VENTILATION. Horses are very sensitive to dust and noxious gasses; i.e., ammonia from urine and manure. Open the vents and windows. If you are afraid he will get cold, put a blanket on him that is appropriate for the temperature. Do not let him get too hot. An overheated horse is susceptible to illness such as dehydration which can lead to heat exhaustion and/or colic.

CARRY AN EMERGENCY FIRST AID KIT. Keep it in your trailer and make sure it is always ready and up to date. Include a splint and know how to use it.

LEARN PROPER FIRST AID OF TECHNIQUES. Learn how to bandage wounds in various locations, control blood loss, and learn to recognize signs of dehydration, heat exhaustion, and colic. Your own veterinarian is your best source of information.

LEARN TO MONITOR VITAL SIGNS IN THE HORSE. Practice taking his temperature, pulse, and respiration rate when you are both relaxed at home so you know what is normal. If your horse is sick or hurt, you can give the veterinarian the current vital signs when you call. This will help him/her assess the situation and give you good advice on the phone.

CARRY BACKUP SUPPLIES APPROPRIATE TO THE LENGTH OF THE TRIP. Water (At least 20 gallons, not only for drinking, but for cleaning wounds, or sponge bathing an overheating horse), plenty of hay and grain, blankets, etc. Having an auxiliary light that plugs into the cigarette lighter and a backup flashlight with working batteries on board is a good idea. Keep in mind that your trip may be longer than planned due to unforeseen circumstances. You may have a mechanical breakdown, get caught in a traffic jam, or you may simply get lost!

CARRY MEDICAL ID. You should always carry durable, visible, medical ID that lists your doctor, your veterinarian, and a contact person. If you are incapacitated in an accident, it can be important to contact someone who knows you and your horses.

For long trips (12 hours or more), you may want to take more specific precautions.

Get to know your horse. His age, condition, temperament, and environmental factors may change the 12 hour rule for taking aggressive precautions to a 6 or 8 hour rule. If, for instance, your horse will not drink water on the trailer you may have to schedule stops along the way where you can SAFELY take him off the trailer for a rest and a drink.

The following are guidelines, not absolutes. Use them as a starting point for a discussion between you and your veterinarian. Your best source of advice is your own vet. Develop a good relationship with him/her.

ELECTROLYTES. Increase 2 to 3 days prior to shipping. This is most important when traveling in warm regions. Some horses may not drink if electrolytes and mineral supplements are added to the water. Adding them to the feed or using a paste formula is a better plan since anything to

discourage water consumption is obviously detrimental to the traveling animal. Follow directions on your particular product label for amounts.

BRAN MASH. Once a day for 2-3 days prior to shipping.

VITAMINS. Add extra for a week prior to shipping.

MINERAL OIL. One pint per day may either be added to feed along with bran mash for four days prior, OR given by a veterinarian via stomach tube the day of shipping 4-6 hours before departure. There are differing professional opinions about this, so discuss this with your veterinarian.

ANTIBIOTICS. When the trip will be over 12 hours, discuss the administration of antibiotics with your veterinarian.

BODY CLIP. When taking your horse from a cold climate to a warm one, a body clip is recommended. However, since clipping is a source of stress for the horse, do it at least a week before departure, and if it's cold, blanket him.

BLANKET. The need for a blanket will depend on the temperature en route. You may need to add or remove it along the way. Do not completely close up the trailer to keep the horse warm, especially if the trailer is insulated. Some vents and/or windows should remain open for ventilation.

Why You Shouldn't Miss the Winter RV Shows

January 7, 2016 by [Steve Fennell](#)

For many RVers winter signifies the end of the season until the blossoming of spring, where warmer winds and bright sunshine prevail. However, when one opportunity is lost (temporarily) another is gained.

RV associations and regional event producers across North America spend months preparing for the highly-anticipated RV show season – usually held from early autumn to late spring – and they are events you don't want to miss. One of the strongest indicators of an exciting show season stems from the annual National RV Trade Show in Louisville, KY., where RV manufacturers from every sector of the industry roll out their best and brightest, working with dealers in preparation for the new selling season.

If you're a newbie or a veteran roadster, the winter shows is where it's all at. Whether you want to shop the new RV models and floorplans, or inquire about upgrading to a new hitch system, you will undoubtedly find what you are looking for. The RV trends for 2016 will definitely be the hook, line and sinker to get you show shopping.

"Units are continuing to be lighter in weight and where trailers are concerned, they are very competitively-priced for 2016," said Kevin Broom, Director of Media Relations for the Recreational Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA). "We are also seeing technology and features that were once only offered in higher-end motor coaches coming into all types of units. These include multiple slideouts, flatscreen TVs, and DVDs. All of these features now run throughout pretty much the entire line of RVs."

With the added value, manufacturers are also presenting a diverse range of floorplans, ensuring they have a range of product to meet the demands of just about any activity an RVer wants to enjoy.

"If a consumer likes to tailgate, go off-roading with an ATV or take family and friends on a trip, there are different floorplans available that can accommodate all of these activities," says Broom. "That is just one of the key ways manufacturers are effectively meeting the specific needs of the

customer.”

Manufacturers are also continuing their efforts of offering units that are lighter and easier to tow, making them ideal to haul with cross-over SUVs, light trucks, and minivans. A perfect example is the popular compact tear-drop-style and conventional hard-sided trailers that have become popular due to their ease of towing. Further simplicity is provided by the increased use of digital technology, which is now featured in many trailers and motorhomes across the spectrum.

Even if a consumer is not looking to upgrade to a new unit or is not ready for the RV lifestyle yet, visiting the shows this season is the ideal means of collecting information. Many events throughout the U.S. and Canada offer special show incentives, increased online interaction, along with a range of seminars, plus after-market product and tourism exhibitors that can further enhance your time on the road.

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Getting Steamy? RV Humidity Problems Can Cause Serious Damage

JANUARY 27, 2016

If things are getting steamy in your RV, you'd better find a fix, fast.

Whether you're camping in the summer or winter, humidity inside your RV

motorhome can cause real problems that lead to structural damage and even health issues.

Humidity rises when the temperature changes, or when you're cooking, showering, or washing. Even breathing at night can raise humidity levels in small enclosed areas. In each of these cases, water vapor is released into the air. When the vapor cools, condensation forms. The condensation clings to the windows, settles on the walls, and even seeps between joints.

If you don't have a way to reduce the humidity, mold and mildew will start to form, and metal structures can start corroding — posing health risks for you and reducing the life of your recreational vehicle. Mold and mildew create a nasty stench and ruin upholstery. If the issue continues, you could end up with an infestation of termites or other pests.

As an RV owner, it's essential that you stay on top of the moisture issue.

How to Control RV Humidity Problems

In the summer, you can easily control moisture in your motorhome by using the air conditioner or increasing ventilation by opening the windows. But in cooler months that's usually not an ideal solution, if you want to stay warm and comfortable.

For most recreational vehicles, the best solution is using a dehumidifier. Dehumidifiers circulate the air and pull out water, without changing the air temperature. Water is extracted and collected, and dry air is returned. Dehumidifiers work quickly, too — you'll notice a difference in humidity in just a few minutes.

What's the Best Dehumidifier for an RV?

Don't take the dehumidifier that's sitting in your basement on your next camping adventure. The best dehumidifiers for recreational vehicles are small enough for your limited space and won't be so noisy that you can't sleep at night.

You have several types of dehumidifiers to choose for your motorhome:

- Non-electric — silent operation, lower capacity for pulling moisture
- Electric with compressor — high capacity, some noise
- Electric with Peltier thermal technology — high capacity, lower power consumption, quieter than compressors

Be sure to do your research and read plenty of RV dehumidifier reviews to determine what option will fit your needs best.

Beating Humidity in Storage

Mold and mildew can also grow in your recreational vehicle when it's in storage. Covering your RV in tarps and plastic is a great preventive maintenance measure, but it also traps moisture inside. Over the course of the winter, water vapor buildup can cause mold, and you'll have a nasty surprise waiting for you, come spring.

Venting is the best way to prevent moisture problems when your RV is in storage. Air vent covers allow you to keep the vents open on your motorhome while protecting it from foul weather. Water vapor can escape and your RV's interior stays dry.

You should also consider using an RV cover that is specifically made for an RV. The fabric of an RV cover is waterproof but breathable to ensure water vapor doesn't build up.

Whether you're camping or storing your recreational vehicle, protecting it against excessive humidity will help guarantee many years of worry-free adventure and memories you'll treasure for a lifetime.

Top National Parks to Visit in the Winter

JANUARY 22, 2016

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the United States National Park Service, and there's no better way to celebrate it than taking in the nation's top national parks.

But you don't have to wait until summer to experience the majestic grandeur of the best parks in America. Winter provides stunning landscapes and unique opportunities that you can't find any other time.

So grab your snowshoes, load up the RV, and hit the road! Here are the top national parks to visit this winter.

Top National Park Destinations in the Winter

Yosemite National Park, California In wintertime, Yosemite's familiar vistas seen in countless photographs, blogs, and travel shows are transformed under a blanket of white into an entirely new landscape. The Yosemite Valley becomes a winter wonderland that appears untouched and unexplored. Winter is the quietest and slowest time of year at Yosemite. In fact, you may feel like you have all of creation to yourself.

Looking for a getaway to play with the family? You'll find it here. Badger Pass Ski Area offers fantastic ski slopes and snowboarding, and Curry Village Ice Skating Rink is tucked in the majestic shadows of Half Dome and Glacier Point. Snowshoeing and ski trails take you exploring along wooded snowy trails with breathtaking vistas.

Winter Must-Do: If you visit in December, be sure to catch the Bracebridge Dinner—a Renaissance holiday tradition since 1927 full of Christmas pageantry and festivities.

Campgrounds Open: Lodges are open in winter. Check nearby campgrounds for more information.

Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona

Known for its breathtaking expanse of red rock and stunning formations, the Grand Canyon's grandeur becomes more striking against the white blanket of snow and golden sunrises that winter brings.

The North Rim of the Canyon is closed from Oct. 15 to May 15, but the South Rim is open year-round. Winter provides viewing opportunities you can't get in the heat of summer. Certain wildlife, like ducks, elk, and deer, are more active in the cooler temperatures. The air is free of the summer haze and smog, adding miles of stunning landscape to the vista.

Winter weather at the Grand Canyon can vary wildly, so be sure to pack for all seasons. Visibility can also be unpredictable—it's best to plan to stay for multiple days so you can catch a great view of the Canyon.

Winter Must-Do: If you're visiting during the holidays, be sure to take in one of the themed family activities. The Grand Canyon's Polar Express takes visitors to the "North Pole" to meet Santa and his elves.

Campgrounds Open: Several campgrounds are available, including RV sites with hookups.

Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah

Bryce Canyon's colorful hoodoos provide some of the most amazing sights in all of the United States, and snowy caps transform the orange canyon

into a magical sight that summer visitors miss out on. Clear days provide views from the rim that stretch more than 100 miles.

The park offers terrific activities for nature lovers who are looking for an experience that can't be matched. Ranger-led activities include scenic snowshoe hikes, full-moon hikes, and astronomy programs. Cross-country ski trails take you through majestic ponderosa pine groves and open meadows.

Winter Must-Do: The popular Bryce Winter Festival is held annually in February over President's Day Weekend. It's centered at Ruby's Inn, near the park entrance, and offers a variety of events, clinics, and demonstrations.

Campgrounds Open: Several campgrounds are available, weather permitting, including RV sites. Check the Bryce Canyon National Park website for more information.

Crater Lake National Park, Oregon

The deepest lake in the United States also provides one of its greatest destinations. Beautiful during the summer months, it is absolutely gorgeous in the winter when snowfall can be as much as 500 inches in a year. However, the lake itself is only visible about 50% of the time, so be sure to check the weather forecast the morning of your trip into the park.

The road to Crater Lake National Park's south entrance is open all year, but the one around the lake will be closed, so be prepared to get around with snowshoes or skis. Once at Crater Lake, take advantage of the free ranger-guided snowshoe walks, or go exploring. The park offers several trails with varying levels of difficulty, but you don't need to stick to the trails—you can easily chart your own course through the vast terrain.

The park also offers sledding and backpacking. Campgrounds are open year-round, and you may find snowshoers heading out for an overnight trip.

Winter Must-Do: If you're up for a winter camping adventure under the stars, tour the lake on skis or snowshoes. It's a breathtaking 31-mile, 3-day trip you'll never forget!

Campgrounds Open: No winter campgrounds are available within the park. Check local campsites for lodging information.

Acadia National Park, Maine

Acadia National Park offers some of the nation's best cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Here you'll find a quiet escape filled with scenic drives, rugged coast, and uncommon birds like puffins and murre.

Free camping is available at Blackwoods Campground, which is a great spot for climbing Cadillac or skiing around the mountain loop. Acadia's experienced mountain guides provide guided hiking trips and ice-climbing excursions.

Winter Must-Do: While you're here, take advantage of a boat trip to see seal pupping on Seal Island, the second-largest pupping colony in the United States.

Campgrounds Open: Blackwoods Campground is open year-round. RVs are welcome.

Yellowstone National Park, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming

If you've been to Yellowstone National Park in the summer, you'll find it's a completely different experience in the winter. A blanket of white transforms the wilderness, as Old Faithful and other steaming geysers dot the snowy landscape.

Yellowstone's winter wildlife viewing can't be beat. You'll spot black bison against a white background, wolf pups playing in snow drifts, and bull elk sporting their massive antlers.

Other can't-miss activities include [snowmobiling](#) among the hot springs, snowshoeing along wintry paths, [ranger-led programs](#), and [nighttime snow coach tours](#) under a star-filled dome.

Winter Must-Do: Need to warm up? Go for a dip in the hot-spring infused [Boiling River](#). Boiling River is accessible between the North Entrance and Mammoth Hot Springs.

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