

Subject: November Newsletter from Air Safe Hitches



# November 2018

Newsletter

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## RV Winter Storage Tips

An RV and the open road form the classic Americana road trip daydream. But, as summer closes and the cooler weather rolls in, it's time to store the RV away until next year. Keep your RV clean, comfortable, and road-ready for next year with these essential storage tips covering the interior, exterior and wheels of your RV.

### Interior:

Keep the inside of your RV in excellent shape and prevent the stale odors that typically accompany extended storage with these essential steps:

- Make sure all the appliances are disconnected, and that your fridge and freezer are fully defrosted. Propping the fridge and freezer doors open will prevent stale odors from forming.
- Since winter storage is several months long, it's important that your RV isn't connected to any electrical sources. Stem the flow of power by flipping off the main breaker on the distribution panel. It's also advised to turn off the LP-gas supply valve, which is located on the LP tank.
- Give your cabin and upholstery a thorough cleaning to avoid any microbial buildups.
- If you have vent covers that will prevent water from getting inside, open your vents to allow free circulation, so you're not greeted with a blast of stale air when you open your RV in spring. Also, adding [Fresh Cab](#) or dryer sheets prevents the musty smell from forming, while helping repel any mice or other small rodents.
- Winterize your plumbing and tanks by flushing them thoroughly with antifreeze.

### Exterior:

Properly protecting the exterior of your RV during storage will extend the lifespan of your RV. Whether your RV will be stored in a garage or covered and tied down in your driveway, take the time to protect the exterior:

- Get a full wash and wax before it goes into hibernation for the winter. A thorough wash and wax will remove any buildup that may damage the clear coat and paint if left unchecked over the winter months. If your RV has an awning, be sure to clean it thoroughly as well to prevent staining.
- Check all of your seals and caulking to make sure your RV is airtight. If you notice damage to a seal, have it repaired – leaving it unattended allows moisture and bacteria in during the winter months, leading to any number of costly damages.
- Investing in an RV cover is an easy, effective way to protect it during storage. RV covers keep rodents and pests out of your cabin, prevent moisture from entering

through your vents, and protects the paint and upholstery from UV fading. A good cover will bear the brunt of the elements so your RV doesn't have to.

### **Safe Parking:**

Choosing where and how to park your RV is also important to your tires. Follow these essential steps to avoid any long-term issues when parking your motorhome for months at a time:

- Make sure your parking spot is on flat, level cement. Parking on a surface that shifts with changing temperatures – like dirt or asphalt – will subject your RV tires improper weight distribution which puts excess strain on your tires and chassis.
- Place wood underneath the tires to prevent damage to them from the frozen ground. The wood must be large enough that the tires do not hang over the sides.
- Invest in a set of wheel chocks to keep your RV securely in place, preventing accidental movement and costly damages. In addition, make sure the parking brake is off before sealing up your cabin.
- Keep the RV tires covered or at least out of direct sunlight. Constant exposure to UV rays degrades the rubber, and you will have to replace your tires sooner.
- Cooler temperatures will cause the air in your tires to contract, so it's recommended to inflate your tires to the recommended PSI, without exceeding the manufacturer's inflation capacity.

### **Engine:**

Engine repairs are costly, and can easily derail your vacation. These tips will help keep your motorhome's engine in prime condition:

- Store your RV with a full tank of gas, and add a bottle of fuel stabilizer.
- Change the engine oil before prepping it for storage. Check and fill the rest of the fluids if needed. Prevent your windshield washer fluid reservoir from cracking by adding winter blend washer fluid.
- Remove the batteries before storage and give them a good cleaning with a 50/50 mixture of baking soda and water. Be sure to store your batteries in a cool, dry place where they're not going to freeze or be subjected to the elements. Storing your battery on wood is recommended, because a cold garage floor will drain the charge faster.

### **Hit the Road Next Year**

Proper maintenance and storage during winter is key for keeping your RV in good shape all year. With some preparation, you'll be able to hit the road as soon as spring rolls around!

# **How to RV in The Winter Without Freezing to Death!**

By Mark Jenney

Cold-weather RVing is a majestic, yet challenging, experience. If you're looking for peace, quiet, and beauty, winter RVing has it all. However, it takes a lot of careful planning and work. Without the proper forethought, a night in a winter wonderland can quickly turn into a night in a freezing meat locker. All is not lost, however! Thanks to the many that pioneered cold weather RVing, we have plenty of tips to help you stay warm and dry on your next winter adventure.

**Keep Yourself AND Your RV Warm** Your RV has feelings, and it hates being cold just as much as you do! Just kidding, but you *will* experience some big problems if you don't keep it warm. Even though many RVs come with thermal packages, which include extra insulation, it's still not enough for sub-zero temperatures. If you're camping in extreme cold, put your RV in a skirt! Skirting the RV will keep the battery bays, plumbing, and other important components warm. If you don't have a skirt, you can pack snow around the RV bays.

RV windows lose a ton of heat, no matter how insulated the manufacturer claims they are. There are several ways to insulate them: foam insulation boards, bubble insulation, solar blankets, etc. For extra warmth, line your windows with heavy-weight thermal curtains. Use electric or propane space heaters to supplement your RV's furnace. Don't forget to bring along

a heated blanket to stay warm in bed!

**Water Can be Your Biggest Enemy** A burst pipe is an RVer's worst nightmare. When you're camping in the winter, you always have to think about your plumbing. So what's the solution? There are several:

- Many RVers drain their fresh water tanks completely and go sans water for the season. That means bringing bottled water for brushing your teeth and doing the dishes.
- The bay that holds your tanks must always be kept above freezing. Mini space heaters are inexpensive and use very little amperage. Buy one and stick it in the bay.
- Use antifreeze in your plumbing and gray/black tanks. You can do this by flushing antifreeze down the toilets and pouring it in your drains.
- If your RV doesn't have tank heaters, buy some! They're a godsend if you can spare the energy usage.
- If you do choose to use water hookups, make sure you insulate the pipes with heat tape. You'll also need to insulate any connections and exposed piping.
- Never allow your black tank to freeze unless you want to deal with a disgusting mess. Use a PVC pipe for your sewer hose – it'll have less chance of freezing than a regular hose. If you plan on leaving the tank hooked up, add a layer of insulation around the sewer pipe. However, it's a good idea to keep your tank closed until it needs to be dumped.

**You Can Never Be Too Dry** Cold and wet is bad. Not just for you, but for your RV, too. All that heat in one confined space can lead to humidity and condensation, which can cause mold in your walls. Use a dehumidifier when it starts to get stuffy or toss some dehumidifier pellets in the problem areas.

Vent covers are great for two things: they help prevent condensation, and they keep you warm. Lots of warm air escapes out the vents in your RV. A cover adds an extra layer of insulation. The best part is, you can still open the vents even if there's snow on the roof!

**Closing Thoughts** You'll see some beautiful, unique sights along your winter RV trip. There's nothing quite like being in the solitude of a winter campsite, watching the snow fall and blanket the land around you. Make sure you follow the tips we've included here to stay safe during your winter adventure. Remember, warm and dry, not cold and wet!

## How to Store your Solar RV for the Winter

The snowy season is here and for those of you with [Solar equipped RV's](#) that means it's time to check in on the health of your solar RV, and how you should be taking care of it throughout the winter.

### **Routine Maintenance**

Before it gets too cold, it's a good idea to check in on the condition of your power system, and do any needed maintenance. If you live in a warmer or dry climate, you may want to check in on this as well.

If you're still trying to collect [solar power](#) with your RV you may want to consider the angle that your solar panels are angled at. With the shorter, and often, more cloudy days of winter, getting your panels tilted at the most ideal angle can save you a lot of power. The ideal angle is simple, use your location's latitude and add on 15 degrees. If you're concerned with the amount of snow that may pile up on top of your solar panels, you may want to consider adjusting them to a steeper angle.

### **Keep it free of snow**

If it snows, try to routinely clear your solar panels of any snow you can. If you let snow sit and freeze onto solar panels, it could take even longer before the panels are able to collect power again.

## Batteries

Consider that in colder weather batteries hold a smaller charge. If you've left a battery sit through a cold winter, chances are in the spring you may find a dead battery. If you're using your batteries on a daily basis, they tend to keep their charge much longer. Fully charged batteries freeze at a much lower temperature than low batteries. A battery that is half charged can freeze at a much warmer temperature than a fully charged one.

## Solar behavior in cold weather

Consider that you may be collecting less energy during the winter months and modify your behavior to accommodate for that. Turning off appliances to save energy is a must. Keeping your solar panels free of snow allows for them to charge every time the sun comes out, rather than wasting the sun's energy.

Winter can be a great time to catch up on the maintenance of your solar RV. You may have not had time to fix something or update your system in the summer, as you were too busy enjoying your RV. Spend the time to take care of your RV and make sure that it is properly stored and taken care of for the longer winter months.

# 13 Fascinating Facts About Horse Trailer History

Throughout much of history, men depended on horses to carry them to town, pull their plows, and drag carts loaded with goods to the market. It took hundreds of years, but eventually the day came when the horse's status switched from that of a labor animal to one of recreation and value. Suddenly, people wanted to spare their horses from walking long distances and the horse trailer was born! Here are 13 facts and photos dug out of the vaults of horse trailer history.

**1. When it comes to horses of extreme value, we need to look no further than racehorses.** It's the sport of kings and it seems fitting that our first story features one of the most famous racers. Eclipse was a legendary undefeated British racehorse in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. His stud career was so successful that 95% of modern Thoroughbreds carry his genes.

Back in 1771, he also became the first horse to be shipped by a horse trailer! At the time, he was not able to travel to stud because his feet were so bad, so a carriage was "purposely constructed" to help him fulfill his sire duties. The carriage was horse-drawn, so we're sure the horse in the front was not quite as excited about the historical landmark. (Source: The History of Horse Racing by Roger Longrigg, 1972, Hardcover)

**2. If a horse trailer could help a retired racehorse reach the stud farm, it seems even more fitting for the racers to use it to get to the track!** Starting in 1816, some racehorses were transported to the track to "to spare the animal wear and tear of self-propulsion." (Yes, that's actually how they phrased it...)

The first known instance of this occurred when a racehorse named Sovereign was transported to the Newmarket Racecourse in England. They used a modified cattle cart drawn by three strong heavy horses hitched in a "unicorn team" configuration (two at wheel and one in the front.) The caravan traveled at a rate of 40 miles a day, which was twice the distance typically traveled by a racehorse headed to the races. (Source: The Turf: Social and Economic History of Horse Racing by Wray Vamplew, Published by Viking, 1976)

**3. Besides transporting racehorses, many of the very first horse trailers were actually horse-drawn ambulances used by city fire departments.** Horse injuries were common at city accidents and they needed a way to quickly transport wounded but savable horses back to the firehouse for veterinary care.

**4. By the time World War I rolled around, even more horse ambulances were needed to transport French infantry horses from the battlegrounds to base hospitals where they could receive care for gun shots and shell wounds.** A special horse ambulance vehicle was created that could rotate on its base so that horses could walk forwards both on and off of

the trailer.

**5. Eventually horse trailers transitioned for horse-drawn to motorized propulsion.** This was certainly a nice change for the unlucky horses that had previously done the pulling!

**6. Almost 100 years after the first racehorse walked onto a trailer, Popular Science magazine reported on a novel way to transport racehorses.** The 1918 article described putting three racehorses in a trailer that is fourteen feet long, five feet eight inches wide, and six feet six inches high. This new method of travel was said to be more reliable than using railway cars.

They boasted of trips made between New York and Baltimore or 203 miles traveled. A typical horse trailer today is much larger at eight feet wide, eight feet high, and at least twelve feet long.

**7. It's common knowledge that horse can travel by truck, train, or plane, but did you know they could also travel by motorcycle?** Here, a motorcycle sidecar has been modified for a studly Shetland pony in this 1950's era vintage photo.

**8. As the decades passed, horse vans continued to be used to transport racehorses and performance athletes throughout the world.** These trailers were known as "horse boxes" in England.

**9. The German company named Westfalia began building trailers in 1927 and expanded their market to box trailers and camper vans.** They had built 25,000 trailers by the start of World War II.

**10. While some parts of the world were progressing to more sophisticated designs, other folks made due with that they had.** In this 1928 photo, a New Mexico man transports his horse across the countryside in a trailer with wooden slat sides.

**11. The Texas Rangers are famous for hunting down notorious criminals Bonnie and Clyde in 1934 and later providing inspiration for the Chuck Norris TV show *Walker, Texas Ranger*.** Just after the great depression, the Texas Rangers continued their patrols with two rifles, car, horse, saddle, and – you guessed it – a horse trailer.

**12. In 1940, many people adored the "Singing Cowboy" Gene Autry and his faithful horse named Champion.** They traveled from show to show in the fancy trailer shown below. Champion's other claim to fame is his status as the first horse to fly coast to coast. The pair needed to travel quickly from California to New York in time for Gene's Madison Square Rodeo. The horse was loaded onto a special designed TWA airliner with all but two seats removed to make room for the horse.

**13. The Budweiser Clydesdales became a well-known American icon when they started delivering beer right after the prohibition was lifted in 1933.** Today, these teams of 10-horses travel throughout the country for exhibitions and public appearances.

Three 50-foot tractor-trailers are needed to transport the horses and equipment and they are on the road 10 months out of the year. They stop each night at a stable, so the horses can rest. The trailers feature air-cushioned suspension and thick rubber flooring.

Horse trailers sure have changed in the last 250 years! Today we can enjoy a variety of safety features and amenities that were unheard of in times past. Improved construction materials have helped to make the ride more comfortable and your horses more protected. Even in the last few decades, we are continuing to see the horse trailer designs evolve as old aluminum models are being replaced by new stronger composite materials. All of this is done so that our equine friends can be safe while we haul them all over the place!

Click to view Vintage Horse Trailers: <https://www.pinterest.com/angelbuckley/horse-trailers/>

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## 9 Important Things to Prepare Your Truck for Towing a Camper

Every outdoors-man has to start somewhere when they start looking at taking camping more seriously. If you're unsure where to begin, this guide is for you. This information is for the beginner camper, preparing your truck and camper to get on the road with the utmost comfort and performance.

### 9 – How much can your vehicle really tow?

It's very important to check this *before* shopping for your camper. Last thing you'll want to do is wear out your suspension, motor and transmission. Vehicle specs are really put out there to help keeping your vehicle at a prime state. Your vehicle will indicate a few things – Conventional/Towing Capacity, 5th Wheel towing, Goose Neck towing, and Payload Capacity.

**Conventional Towing** is meant to mean bumper pull with a frame mounted hitch. Would be really unwise to tow from a ball mounted directly to your bumper as the mounts from the bumper to the frame are not that strong. With a frame mounted hitch, there's a few other things you need to keep in mind but we'll discuss that more in number 14. Conventional towing will be most common for most beginning campers as its the best way to start getting into camping. You'll find this most common with Tent Trailers and your standard enclosed trailer. ([Receivers](#))

**5th Wheel Towing** will be a mounted directly in the bed of your truck. This will provide a larger towing capacity as it provides more weight distribution over your rear wheels and suspension. You'll start seeing this in your 3/4 ton and 1 ton pickups. 5th wheel towing will also provide you the best ride comfort going down the roads and easier up/down hills. The 5th wheel hitches will utilize a kingpin and pin receiver and you'll find a wide variety of different receivers. 5th wheel towing you'll also find to be the most expensive route, so not generally recommended for the first time camper purchase. ([5<sup>th</sup> Wheel](#))

**Goose Neck Towing** is generally going to be meant for towing horse trailers and the actual hitch its self will be a ball and coupler. This mount will still be in the center of the bed between the wheel wells to help distribute the weight of the trailer. This and the 5th wheel will generally be similar on towing capacity documents for the vehicle you own or shopping for. ([Gooseneck](#))

### 8 – What kind of Hitch should I have (Conventional Towing)?

**Hitch Class 1** – Towing capacity is up to 2,000 lbs and meant for small recreational vehicles, bike racks and cargo boxes. I'd really recommend not towing anything with these smaller hitches. Also, the hitch size will generally be smaller then your generic receiver.

**Hitch Class 2** – Towing capacity will be up to 3,500 lbs. You'll generally find this in Van/SUV's and Light Duty pickups. Hitch size will actually be more that standard size you're wanting but still would only recommend towing a feather weight trailer/hybrid or tent trailer. It's also

recommend not to exceed over 2 utility vehicles or a small boat.

**Hitch Class 3** – Towing capacity will be up to 8,000 lbs and more common in those 1/2 – 1 ton pickups. This will give you the ability to tow between a small to a medium sized trailer.

**Hitch Class 4/5** – Towing capacity will be up to a staggering 18,000 lbs. This will be more common in the full size heavy duty and dully trucks. With this, you're options are wide open for towing a large RV to even a space shuttle (if its in your cards).

### **7 – What do I need to look for wiring my trailer?**

There are several different kinds of wiring harnesses and adapters. I'd recommend before buying an adapter to check first how many prongs your trailer has and the inlet connector on your truck.

**4-Way Connectors** – the basic hookup of the three lighting functions (running, turn, and brake lights) plus one pin is provided for a ground wire. Most standard light duty trailers will use a 4-pole flat connector.

**5-Way Connectors** – the basic hookup of the three lighting functions (running, turn, and brake) and, besides the ground, one pin is available to provide support for another function. Typically the 5-Way Flat is used for trailers with surge brakes or hydraulic brakes. The additional wire is tapped into the backup lights to disengage the hydraulic trailer coupler (actuator) when the vehicle is reversing, thus turning off the trailer's brakes.

**6-Way Connectors** – the basic hookup of the three lighting functions (running, turn, and brake). The ground and two extra pins are available to provide two additional functions, typically for electric brakes and 12 volt "hot" lead. The 6-way square connectors are more common on campers.

**7-Way Connectors** – Aside from the three main lighting functions, additional pins for electric brakes, a 12 volt "hot" lead, and backup lights are available. There are two types of 7-way connectors. One has flat pins, which are often referred to as blades. The other has round pins. The round pin style is very rare. The RV style 7-way with flat pins (or blades) is very common. It is often found on newer trucks and SUVs that come equipped from the factory with a trailer hitch.

### **6 – How to avoid wear on your tires/shocks and increase performance**

The one thing I find makes the biggest difference in towing is how it rides down the ride. Taking on every bump and head wind can all be impacted with your shocks of your vehicle. There are several ways to combat the issue of the 'squat' or that non level truck look. The least expensive and easiest install will be standard helper springs. They generally run about \$80-\$100 and should be installed in under 2 hours generally depending on your vehicle. Second option and probably will have the largest impact to your vehicle would be air bags. No, I'm not talking about dropping your truck on the rails and flipping switches, I'm talking about additional towing support with airbags. They assist with getting less weight off of your springs and shocks. Each vehicle will vary but they can either go in between your rear springs or attach to your leaf springs and mount to the side of the frame. Air lines will be ran to the rear of the vehicle and you can either inflate them manually with an air compressor or for even more convenience, have an on board air compressor. It's truly amazing the difference air bags can make and with having an on board air compressor, you're able to press a remote from the inside/outside of your cab and watch the back end raise up to become level.

Either option will be great, but you've got to weight cost vs time. Air bags will cost you more but the overall hassle of adjustment is soon much easier. Yes, you can mount helper springs on and set up the adjustment and never leave it, but when you're truck isn't under load – not always best to have it setup in that same position. You'll notice a much stiffer ride while not having your trailer attached.

Overall, installing one of these will make for a better ride, your vehicle will love you for it and you won't wear out your tires or shocks as fast. The other thing to is if your truck isn't level, you'll be shining your lights in everyone's eyes and your vehicle is less aerodynamic so this will equate to terrible fuel economy.

### **5 – What are some performance options for my truck/vehicle to help with towing?**

There are so many things you're able to do to your vehicle regardless if you have a gas or diesel engine. I personally have always stayed away from aftermarket tuning or deletes for diesel, but there are some great items to look at to help your vehicle perform better – specially for towing! While towing your truck will be under a lot more weight and hills will really bog it down to cause higher rpm's and the need to breathe harder.

First thing I'd recommend would be a Cold Air intake. These are fairly inexpensive, for a decent one like **K&N** or **Spectre**; you're looking between \$100-\$300 depending on the vehicle. This is going to create more air flow directly to your motor, pick up colder air because of where

the filter sits down lower in the engine bay, create a meaner engine noise (always love this), and most importantly better HP and MPG.

Second thing would be looking at an aftermarket exhaust system. I'd still recommend keeping within Emission standards from your state's requirements. However, having less back pressure from the engine to allow it to breathe better will help immensely. Specially if you've installed a cold air intake, you'll want that extra air to breathe easier as it releases from the motor. I'd highly recommend checking out local exhaust shops to find the best diameter for your motor/vehicle. Never want to go too big or too small for the fitting of your vehicle. This is really going to add a nice touch to the appearance and again the sound of your vehicle. You're going to see an increase in performance and MPG with a few simple changes. Cost wise, you're going to be looking between \$300-\$700. This will really depend on muffler, if you go dual pipe and diameter of pipe and bends. I've always been a huge fan of **Magnaflow** and **FlowMaster** for exhaust mufflers, they're also not going to break the bank.

#### 4 – How to avoid sway of your trailer

The larger the trailer you're towing the more you'll notice those windy days! When you're out on the open road going down a busy interstate, the largest percentage of accidents from campers are due to swaying trailers. You'll get this largely from bumper pull trailers but will often see that typical 5th wheel or semi-truck creeping over in your lane. To help combat this, **Sway bars** connect to your trailers front frame and to your tow hitch. It'll also help provide more support and more level comfort for the ride. These do take a little setup for the first time but after you've installed and setup, pretty easy to connect each time you connect. Depending on the size of your trailer and weight, these will run you anywhere from \$200-\$600.

#### 3 – Why is my trailer bouncing while driving?

There's several things that could be occurring, I'd first check to make sure the trailer tires are properly inflated. Second, check to make sure the load is even and distributed correctly in/out of the trailer. Third, check the leaf springs on the trailer to make sure they aren't worn. Fourth, may want to visit number 4 of this article as we reviewed options with making a better ride.

#### 2 – Always maintain your vehicle and trailer

I know this may seem like a duh type of comment, but its the little things that are often forgot. Keeping up with routine maintenance especially before a long road trip is key to a headache free trip. Oil and oil filter, check your tires and ensure proper inflation, spark plugs and never hurts to have a little fuel additive or cleaner for improved mpg.

Never hurts to take a quick walk around at all of your tires, including your trailer. Making sure there aren't any cracks in the side walls or screws wedged in the tires.

#### 1 – Keep a inventory list or check list of your supplies for camping

I always laugh at my wife when we're preparing for a camping trip, shes making a list a week before the trip. Matches... Lighter... Sleeping bags... Pots... Pans... You know, a lot of the basic items. I can actually really appreciate this for the fact that I always forget something and usually doesn't hit me until I really need out in the woods. If you have a camper, it might be a good idea to keep inventory of the things you have and when you're getting low on something, add it to your shopping list. You really can't be too prepared for a weekend adventure, so don't be afraid to pack that extra roll of toilet paper.

Camping and towing is always a learning experience. From setting up your truck, going down the road and maneuvering it into tricky camping spots. The more you know, the better prepared you'll be. Nothing like a terrible experience on the road to ruin your entire camping weekend. Thank you for taking the time to read this article, please feel free to comment below and ask any questions.

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