

Subject: January Newsletter from Air Safe Hitches



January 2019

Newsletter

1/4/19

Happy New Year Jokes 2019

New Years Eve One Liners A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other.

My new year's resolution is to be more optimistic by keeping my cup half-full with either rum, vodka, or whiskey.

New Years Eve is the only acceptable time to wear body glitter without being mistaken for a stripper.

My New Years resolution is 1080p I'm getting drunk just thinking about tomorrow night.

My New Year's resolution is to stop hanging out with people who ask me about my New Year's resolutions.

If your born in September, its pretty safe to assume your parents started out the New Year with a Bang!

To rediscover the difference between wants and needs.

May I have all I need and want all I have. Happy New Year!

What do you tell someone you didn't see at New Year's Eve? I haven't seen you for a year!

What's the problem with jogging on New Years Eve? The ice falls out of your drinks!

Towing 2019

By Chris Hemer

It is often said that competition breeds innovation. It forces everyone to do a better job — or lose market share and, eventually, relevance. Exponential advancements in technology have resulted in lighter materials, better fuel economy, and comfort and convenience features that we never thought possible just 10 years ago. When a new model arrives these days, it's not just an improvement — it's almost a completely different vehicle. Technology is also making it possible for vehicle manufacturers to respond to market demands more quickly, up to and including "first ever" models that create a new segment in the industry.

What all this means to consumers is that there are more choices than ever for the family vehicle. While we once chose a pickup truck to park alongside the family car, the pickup can now be the family car, and has the manners and refinement to competently fill that role. There are SUVs and crossovers to fill every family need and budget, and hybrid/electric vehicles continue to show promise for future tow vehicles as well.

It's an exciting time to be considering a new family vehicle that can serve as a commuter during the week and a competent, comfortable tow vehicle on family vacations. Here are some of the latest.

Compact SUVs are the fastest-growing luxury segment, according to Cadillac, a fact that has given rise to the all-new XT4. Positioned between the full-size Escalade and midsize XT5, the smartly styled XT4 was developed on an exclusive compact SUV architecture and is powered by a 237-horsepower, 2.0-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine and nine-speed automatic transmission. Thusly equipped, the XT4 can tow up to 2,500 pounds, Cadillac reports.

At introduction, the XT4 will be offered in seven "interior environments" based on Luxury, Premium or Sport trims, and will include the Cadillac User Experience (CUE), the brand's most advanced infotainment interface. Accessed through a rotary controller, CUE incorporates an 8-inch diagonal screen and available technologies such as navigation, embedded 4G LTE connection and 15-watt wireless charging.

Ford's bold move to lighten its trucks and offer more fuel-efficient engines has pushed its domestic competition to respond in kind. The 2019 1500 version of the Chevy Silverado/GMC Sierra is, according to GM, better in every measurable way than the outgoing model.

First of all, it's bigger.

The Silverado Crew Cab short box is 1.2 inches wider, 1.5 inches taller and 1.7 inches longer, and its wheelbase grows by 3.9 inches. Moreover, Silverado/Sierra offers an additional 3 inches of cab length for all configurations, and up to 4 cubic feet more interior volume. GM claims it offers the largest cargo volume of any full-size truck in shortbeds, standard beds and longbeds. The trucks are up to 450 pounds lighter, which bestows Crew Cab models with a 14 percent increase in payload, or 340 pounds.

In all, six engine/transmission choices include a new 2.7-liter turbo I-4 that will be offered as standard equipment in LT and RST trim levels with an eight-speed automatic transmission. The new engine represents a clean sheet of paper, according to GM, and was built specifically for use in truck applications. Technologies such as a dual-volute turbocharger and continuously variable valve timing result in pretty impressive numbers: the 2.7 cranks out 310 horsepower and 348 lb-ft of torque, good enough for 0 to 60 mph in under 7 seconds and a tow rating of up to 7,200 pounds. Also brand new is a 3.0-liter inline six-cylinder Duramax diesel and 10-speed automatic transmission combo.

Across the board, towing capability has increased, with the 4.3-liter V-6 rated at a maximum of 8,000 pounds and the 5.3-liter V-8 with Max Tow Package offering up to 11,600 pounds. The potent 6.2-liter V-8 and 10-speed automatic, meanwhile, is now offered with 4WD only and can pull up to 12,200 pounds.

At press time, Chevrolet announced that the new Silverado 1500 would bring with it several new standard/available features designed to take the stress out of towing, including a my Chevrolet phone app that makes trailer-light checks a one-person job, Hitch Guidance with Hitch View, an Advanced Trailing System infotainment app, an integrated Trailer Brake Controller with brake-gain memory, a Trailer Camera Package and an industry-first Trailing Label.

Located in the driver's side doorjamb, the Trailing Label is designed to take the guesswork out of towing and hauling. By linking the VIN of each truck to the label, owners will now know the gross vehicle weight rating (gvwr), gross combined weight rating (gcwr), gross axle weight rating (gawr), maximum payload, maximum hitch weight and curb weight of the truck they own or intend to buy, providing a clearer picture of its actual capabilities.

Frankly, we don't know why Ford stopped building the Ranger in the first place, but now that midsize truck sales are up 83 percent since 2014, it makes good business sense to bring it back. New from the ground up and built with a high-strength-steel frame, this new Ranger is equipped with a 2.3-liter EcoBoost four-cylinder engine mated to the only 10-speed automatic transmission in the segment. Ford hadn't released power figures at press time, allowing only that the four-cylinder produces torque on par with its V-6 competitors. In Mustang guise, the engine produces 310 horsepower and 350 lb-ft of torque, so even a detuned version designed for truck use should have a pretty healthy output.

Offered in entry-level XL, mid-level XLT and high-level Lariat trim, the Ranger will also be

available with the FX4 Off-Road Package for those who like out-of-the-way places. FX4 packs hardware such as protective skid plates, upgraded tires and off-road suspension, plus technologies like a Terrain Management System and Trail Control to make challenging conditions a snap. Tow ratings have not been released yet, but look for the Ranger to be competitive on this front as well.

The F-150 may be the leader of the pack, but with the competition constantly nipping at its heels, the company is continually improving its flagship product to keep it fresh in consumer's minds. This year, the 2.7-liter EcoBoost V-6, 3.5-liter EcoBoost V-6, 5.0-liter V-8 and new 3.0-liter Power Stroke turbo-diesel V-6 will all be paired with a 10-speed automatic transmission, while the base 3.3-liter V-6 engine will carry on with a six-speed automatic.

Now for the big news: The introduction of the F-150 Limited, which will employ the Raptor's high-output 3.5-liter EcoBoost V-6 engine to become the most powerful light-duty pickup in America with 450 horsepower and 510 lb-ft of torque. According to Todd Eckert, Ford truck group marketing manager, the Limited combines the Raptor's engine with business-class features to deliver "Baja fierceness, boardroom style and the grit to tackle tough jobs." With that in mind, the Limited will also offer a higher-content interior with a Miko suede headliner, two-tone leather seating/trim and ash-wood accents, and will, of course, come loaded with an array of convenience and safety features.

RAM 1500 We tested the 2019 Ram 1500 in the October issue, but in case you missed it, here's a quick overview. First, and most noticeably, the Ram has been completely redesigned to be sleeker, lighter and more aerodynamic than ever, with a wind-cheating .357 coefficient of drag. It's also more capable, with a maximum payload of 2,300 pounds and a maximum tow rating of 12,750 pounds. Cab length was stretched 4 inches, which yields limolike rear-seat legroom, and Frequency Response Damping shock absorbers plus active noise cancellation make this the quietest, smoothest-riding Ram yet. — *Chris Hemer*

Canada's Ram 1500 Sport In Canada the Ram truck brand holds the number-two sales spot behind Ford, whereas in the United States it trails behind Ford and GM. These sales results inspired Ram to build a Canadian-exclusive Ram 1500 trim package called the Sport.

So what does the 2019 Sport look like? It starts with a monochromatic exterior design that features all-black badging and a body-color grille, door handles and mirrors. In essence, it's a chrome-delete look that can be accessorized with a Sport Performance Hood and 22-inch black-accented wheels. The interior is all black with accent stitching in diesel gray. While the Sport is an appearance package only, it has the longer wheelbase, stronger frame and lighter overall body weight of the new generation of Ram 1500s, along with all the towing and payload gains. Other features include a 3.92:1 final drive ratio as part of the Max Tow Package, larger front brakes (14.9 inches) and the class-exclusive four-corner air suspension with load-leveling capability (ordered separately). — *Howard J. Elmer*

Hyundai Santa Fe Hyundai's best-selling SUV is all new for 2019. Now in its fourth generation, the Santa Fe undergoes some changes to its looks as well as its naming convention. The five-passenger Santa Fe Sport is now simply Santa Fe, and the long-wheelbase, three-row, seven-passenger model will be known as Santa Fe XL. Where a 3.3-liter V-6 was once available, all models are now powered by four-cylinder engines — a base 2.4-liter with 185 horsepower, a 2.0-liter turbo with an estimated 235 horsepower, and an all-new diesel with 190 horsepower and 322 lb-ft of torque, all of which are paired with an eight-speed automatic transmission. Available in front- or all-wheel drive, 2.4-liter I-4 models can tow 2,000 pounds, while the turbocharged 2.0-liter I-4 will be rated to tow 3,500 pounds. The diesel tow rating was not available at press time, but with the most torque of all the engines offered, it's safe to assume that it will have at least a 3,500-pound rating as well.

Lincoln Nautilus The welcome successor to the MKX, the midsize Nautilus SUV continues Lincoln's elegant new design language and offers a wide range of luxury features. Among these are available Ultra Comfort seats, which were developed with input from orthopedic surgeons and can be adjusted up to 22 ways. That's likely great news for Los Angeles commuters, but what is probably more pertinent to RV enthusiasts is the Nautilus' powertrain. A standard 2.0-liter four-cylinder develops 245 horsepower, while an available 2.7-liter twin-turbocharged V-6 engine can summon 335 horsepower and 380 lb-ft of torque, good enough for a 3,500-pound tow rating.

A suite of new technologies includes lane-centering, adaptive cruise control with stop-and-go functionality and evasive steer assist, which, in Lincoln's words, "uses radar and cameras to analyze the gap between slower-moving and stationary vehicles on the road ahead to lessen

the risk of a rear-end collision.” Additional driver-assist technologies include Pre-Collision Assist with Pedestrian Detection, Blind Spot Information System, active park assist, lane-departure warning, lane-keeping aid and an auto-hold feature, which relieves the driver from having to hold the brakes in stop-and-go traffic.

Subaru Ascent For as long as we can remember, Subaru has been calling its line of all-wheel-drive station wagons “SUVs.” With the possible exception of the oddly named and ill-fated B3 Tribeca, however, it never actually offered a vehicle that fits that mold. The new Ascent definitely does, and in a big way — as in the biggest vehicle Subaru has ever offered. Available with seven- or eight-passenger three-row seating and standard with Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive (of course), this Subaru is powered by an all-new turbocharged 2.4-liter Boxer engine with 260 horsepower, matched with a Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT). While somewhat underpowered compared to the competition, the Ascent still commands a respectable 5,000-pound maximum tow rating (the highest of any Subaru in history) and comes standard with Trailer Stability Assist (TSA) to help maintain vehicle stability while towing. Using yaw sensors to monitor trailer sway, the TSA system will brake individual wheels as necessary to stabilize the vehicle/trailer.

The Ascent will be offered in four trim levels (base, Premium, Limited and Touring) and is claimed to be the most versatile Subaru ever with nine unique seating configurations and two rows of 60/40-split flat-folding seats that yield up to 72.6 cubic feet of cargo space. A second-row bench seat is standard, while Premium and up trim levels offer second-row captain’s chairs as a no-cost option. Standard are three-zone climate control and a 6.5-inch Multimedia system with Bluetooth hands-free connectivity and smartphone integration with audio streaming, Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, Aha and Pandora, as well as SiriusXM services and a rear-vision camera. Higher-model grades offer 8-inch Multimedia Plus and 8-inch Multimedia Navigation systems. Wi-Fi connectivity is also available. Standard safety features include Automatic Pre-Collision Braking, Adaptive Cruise Control, Lane Departure and Sway Warning, and Pre-Collision Throttle Management. Blind Spot Detection with Lane Change Assist and Rear Cross Traffic Alert are also available.

Toyota RAV4 What once resembled an athletic shoe on wheels, Toyota’s RAV4 has steadily improved in appearance, refinement and capability since its North American introduction in 1995. Now in its fifth generation, the 2019 RAV4 sheds its “soft-roader” image, taking on a tough new look that shares design cues with its bigger siblings, Highlander and 4Runner. The implementation of the Toyota New Global Architecture (TNGA) chassis gives the new RAV4 a slightly lower and wider stance, along with a wheelbase that is more than 1 inch longer. It’s also 57 percent stiffer than the outgoing model, with shorter front and rear overhangs that give the RAV4 more favorable approach and departure angles when driving off-road.

RAV4 is available in several trim levels in both front and all-wheel drive, standard or hybrid powertrains — but the Adventure AWD will be the most popular choice with RVers for two reasons: it’s the only model rated to tow up to 3,500 pounds, and it comes standard with Dynamic Torque Vectoring All-Wheel Drive with Rear Driveline Disconnect. This all-new system can send up to 50 percent of the engine’s power to the rear wheels, as well as distribute it to the left or right rear wheel for improved handling. As its name would imply, the Rear Driveline Disconnect system transmits driving force to the front wheels only when AWD isn’t required, improving efficiency and reducing rotational vibration, according to Toyota.

The Adventure AWD grade also delivers off-road specific content like Multi-Terrain Select, and unique styling, thanks to aggressive-looking over fenders, grille, fog-light surrounds and wheels.

AirSafeHitches.com



We carry the largest selection of **AIRSAFE™** Hitches, 5th Wheels, Goosenecks, and Receivers.

Instant Rebates Available

[Receiver Hitches](#)

[5th Wheel Hitches](#)

[Gooseneck Hitches](#)

"We Sell for Less - Buy from us and save"

Accessories Available

[Receiver](#)
[5th Wheel](#)

AirSafe Hitches

[Videos](#)
[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

10 New RVs for 2019

By Valerie Law

SMALL PACKAGES From a mainstream ultralight to a nostalgic teardrop and a rugged off-roader, easy-towing mini trailers can be surprisingly big on amenities

Jayco Hummingbird

Jayco launched its lightweight Hummingbird brand a couple of years ago. The latest model, the 13-foot **10RK** (starting at \$13,478), is also the smallest. The nimble little trailer fits under standard garage doors and has a GVWR of 2,000 pounds. It offers a 54-by-74-inch bed up front and an exterior kitchen out back, and comes with self-adjusting electric brakes and Goodyear Endurance radial tires.

Little Guy Mini Max

Manufactured in Pennsylvania by Liberty Outdoors, the 17-foot, 2-inch **Mini Max** (starting at \$23,000) has many of the same features as Little Guy's larger Max, but its 2,900-pound GVWR is 900 pounds lighter. Beyond a sizable refrigerator, the Mini has a microwave, a two-burner stove, and a queen bed or two singles. Options include off-road wheels and tires, an axle riser and a 100-watt solar panel.

Escapod Topo Series

Based on the outskirts of Salt Lake City, Escapod builds hearty teardrops for taking into the backcountry. With a GVWR of 3,500 pounds, the 13-foot **Topo Series** (starting at \$13,800) has off-road suspension, 18 inches of ground clearance and Goodyear all-terrain tires. Other features include a 7-foot awning, Rhino-Rack roof rack, stainless-steel counters in the rear galley and a custom memory-foam mattress.

LIGHT BUT LOADED

Three lightweight travel trailers distinguish themselves from the pack with user-friendly standard features

Coachmen Spirit Ultra-Lite

Owners of the new **2963BH** from Forest River's Coachmen division won't need a full-size truck to tow the nearly 34-foot bunkhouse. With composite side walls, an aerodynamic front and a 7,500-pound GVWR, the travel trailer can be towed by a wide range of vehicles. Trend-setting standards extend from lighted USB ports and motion-activated floor lights to an exterior leash clip for dogs. Base MSRP: \$37,800.

Lance 2465

Lance's longest travel trailer to date, the 29-foot, 10-inch **2465** has a front-living-room floorplan with a large picture window above the convertible J-lounge and a dinette in a slide. In back, another slide houses the standard king-size bed, and the midship bathroom splits the shower and toilet on one side and the sink on the other. The composite-built trailer has a GVWR of 7,000 pounds. Base MSRP: \$32,695.

Winnebago Micro Minnie

Another trailer with a 7,000-pound GVWR, the 25-foot, 5-inch **2306BHS** has a Murphy bed up front, single bunks in the back, a dinette in a slide and a surprisingly large bathroom. A double-door refrigerator, microwave and three-burner range make for a well-equipped galley, and exterior speakers and a power awning with LED lighting add to the fun outdoors. Cherry red is one of eight exterior color choices. Base MSRP: \$30,563.

SWEET DREAMS

Getting 40 winks is easy in a new twin-bed motorhome, mid-bunk toy hauler and bunkhouse trailer

Leisure Travel Vans Wonder

Built on the Ford Transit chassis, the **RTB** (from \$118,300) features twin beds that slide together or an optional Murphy bed. But the beds aren't the only big news in this motorhome. The 24-foot, 9-inch Class C has the largest kitchen in the manufacturer's lineup and an innovative exterior garage that fits two full-size bicycles or other toys (within weight limits). GVWR is 10,360 pounds.

Jayco Talon

The 42-foot, 4½-inch **392T** (from \$64,310) is Jayco's first toy hauler with a mid-bunk room. The fully enclosed room has a 60-inch trifold sofa with a flip-down bunk above it, housed in a slide. There's more sleeping space in the loft above the room, plus a walk-around queen bed up front, a drop-down electric queen bed in the rear and three convertible sofas. The fifth-wheel has a 16,900-pound GVWR.

Travel Lite Aura

One of nine models in the new Aura line of lightweight travel trailers and toy haulers, the 30½-foot **31BHK** (from \$27,710) features a rear bunkhouse and a convertible dinette in a slideout. The sizable master bedroom offers a queen bed and a small sink, separate from the bathroom. With a GVWR of 7,840 pounds, the trailer has an aerodynamically tapered nose, a diamond-plate rock guard and a pair of entry doors. A rear camp kitchen and electric awning make it easy to enjoy the outdoors.

HOT OFF THE LINE A new RV manufacturer, East to West rolls out the Della Terra

America's RV-manufacturing capital recently welcomed a newcomer to its ranks: **East to West**, a division of Forest River. The fledgling Elkhart, Indiana, manufacturer's initial offering, the **Della Terra** travel trailer, rolls off the production line with eight models from just under 23 feet to nearly 33 feet.

"Our focus is on manufacturing high-quality, value-added products with a limited number of floorplans," says Lindsey Espiritu, East to West's marketing manager. A case in point is the 30-foot 27K2D with dual entry doors and "value-added" standards that range from a 15,000-Btu air conditioner to an enclosed underbelly and holding tanks.

Across from the flush-floor dinette slideout, an 8-cubic-foot double-door refrigerator dominates the kitchen. A 9-inch innerspring mattress, typically an extra-cost option, tops the king-size bed. Two bunks in back also come with mattresses that are a step up from standard fare. The Della Terra 27K2D has a GVWR of 9,488 pounds and a base MSRP of \$23,800.

RV Camping Tips

Recreational Vehicle Camping Tips and Ideas

We received a request for some RV camping tips from a friend of ours, and decided to include the information here for the benefit of anyone looking to avoid some camping pitfalls with their RV. We encourage you to drop us a line if you have a good tip so we can include it.

- Use Checklists!!!!!! No matter how many times you move your RV, you can forget to do something! Roof vents and TV antennas are the biggest offenders for most folks, but basement storage bins being left unlocked can make you lose some good stuff!
- Learn about the many places you can go RV camping. Private RV parks are popular and easy to find, but there are many RV camping locations off the beaten path. Public lands are available in every state for camping, and a quick way to find your states public land management resources is by using the RV Camping Map.
- Check tire pressure before every trip!!!!!! I do, and still had a double dual blowout on I-10 last December. I figure that I caught a nail or something that caused one tire to go low pressure, and all that it took was time to heat up the other tire and take them both out!
- Speaking of on the road problems...if you can't change your own tires like we can't, or you do break down, roadside assistance is worth every penny! Our double blowout cost us \$385. That was the cost of 2 tires and tax. Service call, labor, mounting and balance was covered by the road service. We also picked up a nail in a front tire and just needed the spare put on...No additional charge!
- Staying in RV parks alot??? There are several discount camping clubs that might work for you and where you need to travel. Check them out carefully as no club is right for everyone. We don't stay in RV parks more than a night or two a month, so we don't belong to a discount program. Our Discount Camping Section has a list of several discount camping clubs.
- Weigh your rig!!! It is SOOOOOOOO easy to overload an RV!!!! You really need to weigh each corner of a motorhome separately so you can balance your load, and hitch weight ratios on trailers must be adhered to. Your life depends on it!
- Measure the height!!!! Don't guess!!! You WILL get into situations where a building canopy is too low for you to fit...also remember when parking at a curb that the top of the vehicle may be hanging over the curb due to slope of the street...this can be very embarrassing if you tag a light pole or tree too close to the street.
- Get a pair of small hand-held Family Radio Service(FRS) radios to communicate with each other during parking/backing of the RV, or get on the same page with hand signals. I suggest the FRS radio method as most reliable...and if you get separated in Walmart they work too!
- When staying in RV parks or campgrounds with hookups, don't leave the black tank "open". Only dump black when tank is 2/3 full or more otherwise you stand a good chance of having a clog. The same is true to some extent with the gray tank. Dump black first every time so the gray water can help clean out the dump hose.
- Are you towing a vehicle? If you tow with all 4 wheels down, you will not be able to back up more than a few feet at most!!!! This is always a problem at the worst possible place. For example, I dumped our motor home at Colorado's Chatfield Reservoir a couple years ago with the Jeep hooked up and couldn't make the U-turn I thought I could, and had to disconnect the Jeep before I could back up to complete the turn. I was lucky that there was only one person waiting to go by me as I unhooked the Jeep, then got the motor home out of the street. This can happen even easier at fuel stations. Don't forget that some vehicles can't be towed 4 down!!!
- When you pull into an RV park and go to hook up water, I suggest turning on the water for a second or two before hooking up your hose. I would have had quite a bit of rust in my tank if I hadn't followed this advice. In addition I'd suggest a water sediment filter that goes between the water spigot and the motor home to help keep junk out of your tank.
- When we camp in the desert Southwest, often the water taste is poor. We've found that the Pur brand of charcoal water filtration system available just about everywhere like Walgreens, Walmart, Kmart etc works great to take the smell and bad taste from the water.
- Back to RV parks for a second...Power can vary widely from park to park. At the very least get a good surge protector for the RV, and there are several rather expensive power conditioners available that will protect against surges, and improve commercial power.
- Satellite TV... Our power inverter makes what is called "modified sine wave" AC power. This power works great for micro wave, TV, computer and everything else EXCEPT the satellite TV receiver. We now have a pure sine wave inverter (just a small unit of 150 watts) that turns 12 volts DC into clean AC that works for the satellite TV receiver. (We understand that new receivers will work on modified sine

wave...check specifications carefully) Note – The digital TV conversion boxes that can be used on RVs as well as homes may require a sine wave inverter.

- Will you be boondocking (remote dispersed camping)? This is our standard mode of traveling whenever possible, and throughout the west, there is plenty of public land available for it. The issues here are how to conserve resources so you can stay out longer without having to find an RV dump and fill location. We carry a couple extra 7 gallon water containers and have a 12 volt electric pump to transfer the water from the containers to RV fresh tank. We can stay out with our rig for 14 days if we are VERY careful with water consumption. Here is a link to information about finding good spots to camp...Boondocking.
- You can save water by washing dishes in a dish pan instead of the sink. Wipe plates off first before washing to cut down on water needed. Take Navy showers...get wet, shut off water, wash yourself, rinse. Experiment with soaps and shampoos to find what you like AND rinses easily. You can save gray water space by washing your hands outside...use a plastic milk jug for water and poke a small hole in it and put a golf tee in. This will keep the water in the jug, pull the "tee" when you want water and it dribbles out instead of running down the sink!
- Use Scott single ply toilet tissue. We don't buy the expensive RV toilet paper...we think it's the same stuff at a fraction of the price.
- You will find a lot of people use RV holding tank chemicals, but we don't recommend them. The black tank smell comes from bacteria, but by not using chemicals, you promote another type of bacteria that eats the waste and kills the smell. Smells coming from the tank inside are a result of a plugged or disconnected vent pipe to the roof. Don't use antibacterial soaps unless you really want to...this will kill the good bacteria that eliminates the bad smells in the gray tank too.
- RV awnings are great...as long as they work and don't get ripped off in a freak wind. My example is our trip from Washington State to Denver last December. We hit very heavy side wind which just happened to catch the big awning turning it into a parachute. If I had straps (bungi cords) around the awning supports and roller, I wouldn't have needed a new awning.
- Check for leaks, and if you find one, don't wait...fix it now!!!! Water is an RV's worst enemy. There are some great calks available for RV roofs and windows, and I'd suggest having a tube on hand for when you find a leak in the future.
- You can save propane by not running your water heater all the time, and turning the furnace off at night and snuggling or putting an extra blanket on the bed. You can run a battery down overnight with a lot of heat usage.
- RV batteries...you have at the very least 2 batteries in your Rig and maybe more. You have battery for starting the engine, and you have coach battery or batteries for lights inside, and if you have enough batteries and an inverter, you can watch TV, run the micro wave and pretty much live in the dirt like folks in town. If you have room, 2 6 volt golf cart batteries (deep cycle) will last longer than a single 12 volt battery. We are set up with 8 6 volt batteries. 2 are for engine starting, and the other 6 are our power source. We seldom use our generator as we have 4 big solar panels on the roof to charge the batteries. We also have a 2500 watt power inverter to convert 12 volts to 110. We can watch TV all night without a problem as well as operate the computer and satellite internet equipment.
- Carry a step ladder so you have a way to clean windows, wash the rig perhaps, and make repairs if necessary. It also is a must if you are strapping your awnings down.
- Consider joining an RV camping club. These clubs are available for just about every interest, vehicle type, and lifestyle. RV clubs are a great way to meet new RVers with similar interests, and these clubs have camping trips that will show you new places to go RV camping. You can find a list of every RV club we know of in our RV Clubs Section.
- Though we included this item in our checklists section, it bears repeating here... Always have extra fuses for those unexpected RV electrical malfunctions. Additionally, keep in mind not all fuses are of the same type, so be sure to have the type and rating of fuses your RV uses.
- Finding information about RVs and RVing can be frustrating. A web site with links to many RV related web sites is rvresources.com. The site is set up in categories to help you find what you are looking for quickly.

Preparing our RV for an Extended Road Trip

Each year we spend summers mostly stationary on Vancouver Island in beautiful British Columbia. However, once the temps begin to drop in the fall, we become snowbirds and fly south for the winter. The winter half of the year is spent on the road traveling down the west coast and into the sunny US southwestern desert regions. We move around quite often putting a ton of miles on our truck and trailer.

Because of this before we leave on our extended RV journey, I like to make sure the rig is in tip-top shape. Better to have all my maintenance and repairs done now instead of trying to do them while out on the road. This year as I was doing it I thought I do a video for you listing it all. Call it my “**Snowbird RV Maintenance Checklist**”.

The checklist is mostly focused on a fifth wheel trailer as that’s the type of RV we own but much of it is transferable to a travel trailer, truck camper or Class A, B, C motorhomes. Below the video is a categorized text version with links to products and related posts & videos. I’ve always followed the old saying “*An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure*”. Happy travels!

Extended RV Trip Prep Checklist

Clean the Rig

Clean the Rubber Roof – Our trailer roof is an EDPM type synthetic rubber. I use Dawn dish soap and water and scrub the roof with a soft bristle brush and rinse. Any stubborn stains I wipe away with a commercial rubber roof cleaner or acetone. While cleaning I inspect the roof for any defects such as staples, nails or screws popping up.

Clear Gutters – While on the roof I inspect the gutter system and clear out any stuck debris. With the hose, I test how well the water is being directed through the gutters and out the spouts.

Wash & Wax – Once the roof is all clean, I next wash and wax the rigs fiberglass sidewalls and front cap. I use a polished called Pro RV, Boat, & Aircraft P-38-Q. It takes a bit of elbow grease but makes for long-lasting protection. I double wax the front cap to help make bug removal a bit easier. I like to use this wax at least once a year and then do one or two touch up jobs using a quick spray on/wipe off wax like Protect-All all surface care.

Vacuum the Storage Areas – I unload the storage areas and give them a clean and vacuum and reorganization. It’s an excellent opportunity to remove items we don’t need or use on the road.

Wash the Inside Floors, Walls, and Ceiling – Using Pinesol and water in a bucket I wash all the inside flooring, walls and ceilings. It’s a good time to carefully look for any defects or areas that may show signs of a potential water leak.

Clean Oven – I clean the RV gas oven with a heavy duty spray on oven cleaner. Wipe off and test operation making sure the pilot light is working correctly and there are no leaks.

Windows and Screens – I use Windex on all the windows and wipe out the frames with soap and water. I remove all bug screens including the roof vents and take them outside and hose them off.

Clean and Treat the Awning – I use a combo of bleach, dish soap, and water to clean the awning fabric.. I finish the job by applying 303 Aerospace Protectant to help minimize UV damage to the vinyl fabric.

Tires and Aluminum Wheels – Tires are thoroughly inspected all around for defects and tread wear. Then I apply 303 Aerospace to them. The wheels are also examined for damage or cracks and then polished. To finish, I check the air valves stems and inflate to the

prescribed PSI.
Lubricating the Rig

Landing Legs – Inspect the condition of the beveled gears on the top of the landing legs and add grease if needed. Every few years I pull the legs and relube. Check the operation of the gearbox and crossbar. Look for any signs of wear or looseness.

Rear Stabilizers – Clean the rear stabilizer jacks and make sure the hardware is tight, no loose nuts or bolts. Apply a dry type lubricant such as Protect-All dry lube to the worm gear and mechanical joints.

Entrance Steps – Much the same as the rear stabilizers, clean, dry lube and inspect for wear.

Slide Out Rails and Ram – Clean any dirt and debris from the gear teeth. Clean the round slide ram. Lube slide ram with silicone lubricant, spray on and wipe. I also like to add some dry lubricant to the gear teeth and wax the underside of the slide floor.

Waste Valve Rods – Since I have installed two new electric waste valves, I'm down to one mechanical type. Spray silicone lubricant on the pull rod and work it in and out to keep the rod from sticking.

Lube the TV antenna – A little silicone spray in the Winegard TV antennas mechanism keeps it from getting stiff and sticky.

Door Hinges and Catches – All doors and door hardware get a lube. My new favorite lube is called Lube-All. A good all around lube that repels water and stays in place.

Hitch and Pin Box – I use a dry lithium lube for most of the hitch and pin box moving parts. I use a heavy duty grease on the hitch jaws and a plastic lube plate on the kingpin.

Awning – Spray silicone lubricant on the moving parts contained in the arm hardware and a shot at each end of the roller.

Lube Folding Ladder – I carry a telescopic folding ladder for doing maintenance tasks high up on the RV and other things like supporting my ground solar panel. It needs a couple shots of silicone spare every once in a while to keep the mechanical parts working smoothly.

Safety Checks

Rear Ladder – Check for cracked plastic end caps and loose screws on each rung. Check the mounting points to the rig and roof. Tighten as needed.

Gas Lines – Inspect the condition of all gas lines and connections. Perform a leak test using my homemade manometer.

Reduce Weight – Go through all our stuff and weed out anything we don't need on the road. The goal is to remove all unnecessary items to keep under the trailers GVWR (Gross Vehicle Weight Rating). I aim for a safety margin of at least 5-10%

Check Detectors and Fire Extinguishers – Replace batteries and check expiry dates on the propane and CO detectors and smoke alarms. Service fire extinguishers and replace any that are expired.

First Aid Kit – Check items in first aid kits and replace any that have been used or are getting old. We carry a large one and a couple of small ones for our backpacks and the truck cab.

Weather Radio – make sure the weather alert radio is in working order and stocked up with fresh batteries. Same with our CB and walkie-talkies.

Electrical Systems

Electric Brakes – Test the brake controller and safety breakaway pinbox cable. Inspect the tow cable plug and the wiring under the rig to each brake assembly.

Exterior & Trailer Lights – Check running lights, brake lights and turn signals. Check porch, security and hitch lights. Inspect bulb sockets for corrosion.

Interior Lighting – Check and make sure all interior lighting is operational replace any bad bulbs.

12V Batteries – Test each cells specific gravity. Top up cells with distilled water and clean battery connections. Wait a few days then perform a battery bank equalization cycle on a sunny day using the solar controller.

Electrical Connections – Check all electrical connections, make sure they are clean, tight and free of any corrosion. Add some dielectric grease if required.

Appliances – Make sure all are clean and in good working order.

Solar Power System – Check that rooftop solar panel mounts are tight and in good shape, add more Dicor sealant if needed. Test each panel's output amperage. Confirm proper operation of the solar charge controller. Test the remote ground solar panel.

Generator – Clean and test run the portable generator. Check output power and perform any maintenance that is due.

Heating and Cooling – Check the operation of the Roof air conditioner and RV gas furnace. Check portable space heaters and electric vent fans.

Power Cords – Test main RV power cable, extension cords, adapters and plugs. Carefully inspect their condition. Repair or replace any that show signs of corrosion or overheating.

Mechanical Parts

Brakes and Wheel Bearings – Pull the trailer wheels and check the condition of the wheel bearings, hubs, drums, and electric brakes. Replace if needed. Otherwise, clean, adjust and repack with fresh grease.

Power Landing Legs – Check operation of the landing legs, gearbox, and motor from fully retracted to fully extended. Relube and replace noisy worn parts if suspect.

Suspension – Crawl under the rig and have a look at the suspension. Look for any broken, corroded or worn parts. Inspect, axle, leaf springs, shackles, bushings, and hangers, etc

Check Nut and Bolt Torque – Check for proper torque on all critical nuts and bolts such as wheel lug nuts, suspension U-clamps, hitch, pinbox.

Slide Out – Test slide room operation, realign if required. Clean and treat rubber seals and wipers with Protect-All slide rubber treatment.

Seals, Vents, and Windows – Check sealant around windows, vents and exterior hardware. Look carefully at all roof and side wall seams. Reseal if needed.

Underbelly – Make sure the Coroplast plastic underbelly is in good shape and firmly attached. Look for any missing screws and washers or peeling tape.

Bike Rack & Bumper – Inspect bumper for corrosion, sand and repaint if required. Pull out bike rack, lube and check hardware and welds.

Plumbing & Sewer **Water Heater** – Remove the anode, drain and flush water heater. If it has lots of hard water mineral deposits, I when fill and rinse again with a 50/50 vinegar and water solution. Check both electric and gas operation.

Waste Tanks – Fill and flush all waste tanks several times with clean water. Check plumbing, sewer hoses, valves, and tanks for any leaks. Flush black tank several times with the built-in flushing system and a flushing wand down the toilet.

Sanitize Fresh Water Tank – Add a small amount of household bleach (1 cup per 40 gallons) to the tank and run into the water lines. Let sit overnight and flush out the next day. May take a few fills and flushes to remove all the bleach smell. Also, I sanitize my portable drinking water jugs and hoses.

Hoses – Check condition of all hoses both water and sewer. Replace or repair any that are worn or leaking.

Faucets and Drains – Check toilet flusher and bowl seal. Lubricate the rubber gasket with Lube-All or plumbers grease. Test each tap, faucet, and drain. If required, I clear slow drains

and repair leaky faucets. Clean aerator screens on faucets. Clean and lubricate the toilet bowl seal.

Water Filter – Install new filters in the dual stage fresh water filter canisters. Check the rubber seals and hardware. Test and check for leaks.

Miscellaneous

Defrost & Clean Fridge – Remove any frost or ice from freezer walls and fridge fins. Check external drain hose making sure it's in good condition and not plugged. Inspect fridge vent stack and make sure its clear of any obstruction like bird or insect nests, or debris. Test fridge in LP gas mode and inspect burner. If the flame isn't blue and steady, remove and clean.

AC & Furnace Filters – Pull AC and furnace filters. Clean or replace.

Electronic Gadgets – Go through and test the various electronic gadgets and gizmos we use out there on the road. Update any software. (Garmin GPS, Garmin Dashcam, Rear Backup Camera, LevelMatePro RV leveling aid, Winegard Wifi Booster, weBoost Cellular booster, EEZRV Tire Pressure Monitor System, RV Lock)

Plug Mouse and Insect Access – Fill any small gaps and holes with pest rated expanding spray foam.

What about the Truck?

So normally I would be adding a section for our tow vehicle, but this is a special year as we just bought a brand spanking new 2018 Ram 3500. Not much to do with it other than break it in and set up and organized my bed storage.

In the past, I've made sure the truck was in good mechanical shape with all maintenance up to date, with special attention to tires and brakes. Give it a good clean and wax job and poke my nose everywhere, giving it a detailed inspection, looking for any possible defects or worn parts. As I said before better to fix things now than on the road.

Contact Us

Air Safe Hitches
264 Lincoln Ave
Island arkh, New York | 11558
Tel. 321-939-2132
Fax. 866-201-3391
airsafehitches.com

Follow Us



Unsubscribe

This email is intended for
istegemant@echoline.com.
[Update your preferences](#) or
[Unsubscribe](#)

