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Practice Safe Trailer Towing with These 4 Tips

Provided by etrailer

You take your safety seriously when driving—buckling your seat belt, maintaining your vehicle, etc. It's just as important to keep safety in mind when towing your trailer, whether you're hauling a 10' utility trailer or a 30' camper. No one wants a white-knuckle drive down the highway! Check out our tips and hand-selected products below, all designed to keep you and your family safe on the road!

Properly Load Your Trailer (It's Kind of a Big Deal) Part of loading your trailer properly is making sure to never exceed your system's weight capacity. Products are heavily tested and rated by their manufacturers for a good reason! Remember, your towing setup is limited by its lowest rated component, whether that is your hitch, ball mount, vehicle, or any other component. It's also important to load your trailer in a way that properly distributes weight. Keep in mind that tongue weight should be 10% to 15% of the overall trailer weight. (Products like the Haul Gauge # HG103 or Sherline Tongue Weight Scale # 5780 can help you easily, accurately measure your tongue weight.) Place heavier cargo forward and center in front of the trailer's axle to keep your trailer from swaying. Use tie-downs to prevent the load from shifting. If you still experience trailer sway, try readjusting your load. If the problem persists, you may need a weight distribution system with sway control. Weight distribution is recommended any time your trailer weight is more than 50% of your vehicle's weight, or at the load weight specified in your vehicle's owner manual.

Prepare for the Worst (It Will Happen Eventually) If the worst happens and you end up stuck on the side of the road with your trailer, it's best to be prepared. Before your trip, pack an emergency supplies kit just in case disaster strikes on the road. Here are a few items to consider for your kit:

- Flat tire repair kit for car or trailer tire
- POD Hazard LED Lights
- Roadside emergency kit (includes flares, signal flag, safety vest, and first aid kit)
- Bottle jack (single-axle trailers) or wheel chock (tandem-axle trailers) for changing flat tire
- Jump starter or jumper cables

Of course, just tossing a few safety products in your trunk isn't enough. You also need the know-how for those "just-in-case" situations! It's always good to know how to change a trailer tire, how to jack your trailer, and how to jump your vehicle in case of an emergency. If you need to use road flares, know the manufacturer's recommendation for proper placement. For instance, Orion flares require you to place one at least 15 ft behind your vehicle and a second

about 30 ft behind the first flare. On a tow-lane road, place a third flare 15 ft in front of the vehicle. You'll never regret being prepared for bad luck!

Take It Slow (It's a Trailer, Not a Racecar) You may be able to zip through traffic when driving your unhitched vehicle, but driving with a trailer is—and should be—an entirely different experience. Keep in mind that your trailer adds additional weight and length to your tow vehicle, and you should adjust your driving style accordingly. So how can you drive more safely with your trailer? For starters, take it slow. Your rig will accelerate slower and take longer to stop with the additional weight, so give yourself extra time and distance to stop. Allow for extra time when switching lanes or passing vehicles. Swing out wider around corners to clear the turn, and don't take any turn too fast. Slowing it down will also help your fuel efficiency. The extra bulk of your trailer will already translate to poorer fuel efficiency—speeding on top of this will only further increase wind resistance and reduce your mpg. Try using a lower gear on long, steep hills or gravel roads, which can help improve your gas mileage as well. Also know that there are many products designed to help drivers safely tow their trailers. Here are a few to consider:

- Towing mirrors - custom and universal styles available
- TireMinder Smart TPMS
- Trailer backup camera

Treat Your Trailer Right—And It Will Treat You Right Regular maintenance is an important element of safe towing. Maintenance includes making sure your tires are properly inflated and in good shape; checking your trailer lights for proper function; checking and repacking bearings; replacing liquids as needed; inspecting/cleaning your trailer's appliances; and more. Certain tasks will need to be performed before every trip; others will need to be done just once a year or as needed. It's better to repair or replace worn or broken components as needed, rather than wait and have a more expensive problem to fix later.

34 RV Fire Facts That Can Save Your Life

RV fires occur every day in the United States. The latest records from the "The National Fire Protection Association" (NFPA) estimates that 20,000 RV fires occur annually.

We don't always know the actual cause of some of these fires but most are preventable. Please, pay attention to the following RV safety tips.

At best, a fire in your RV can delay or ruin a vacation. At worst, it can mean injury, financial loss, and even death. Unfortunately, RV fires are one of the largest causes of RV loss in America today. The following tips can help you recognize the most common fire hazards and protect yourself from the damage and injury fires are notorious for causing.

1. A pinhole-size leak in a radiator or heater hose can spray antifreeze on hot engine parts. Antifreeze contains ethylene glycol concentrate and water. When the water boils off, the remaining ethylene glycol can self-ignite at 782 degrees F. During your monthly fire inspection, check all hoses for firmness, clamp tightness, and signs of leaking.
2. Rubber fuel lines are commonly used to connect metal lines to the electronic fuel injection system, or to the carburetor in older coaches. Check all the lines and connections between the fuel tank and the engine on a monthly basis. If there is any sign of a leak, have the lines replaced and the entire system inspected by a qualified mechanic as soon as possible.
3. A hard-working engine manifold can get as hot as 900 degrees F. The heavy insulation in the compartment reflects the heat back to the top of the engine, and a fire can easily break out. Inspect your radiator and have any problems repaired by a qualified person as soon as possible.
4. Grease, oil, and road dust build up on the engine and transmission, making them run hotter. The grime itself usually doesn't burn, but if combined with a fuel leak or short-circuited wire, a fire could start. Keep your coach's underpinnings clean, and it will run cooler, more economically, and longer.
5. A dragging brake can create enough friction to ignite a tire or brake fluid. Some of the worst fires are those caused when one tire of a dual or tandem pair goes flat, scuffs,

and ignites long before the driver feels any change in handling. At each stop, give tires at least an eyeball check. When tires are cool, tap your duals with a club and listen for a difference in sound from one tire to the next. You can often tell if one is going soft.

6. Spontaneous combustion can occur in damp charcoal. Buy charcoal fresh, keep it dry, and store it in a covered metal container. Rags soiled with auto wax or cleaners that contain petroleum products or other oil-based cleaning materials can also spontaneously combust if disposed of in a combustible container. Put dirty cleaning rags in a metal container with a lid. [*FWS recommends using only disposable shop paper towels and discarding them in an outside container.*]
7. A hot exhaust pipe or catalytic converter can ignite dry grass.
8. Driving with propane on can add to the danger if you are involved in an accident or have a fire. Most refrigerators will keep food cold or frozen for eight hours without running while you travel. Shut the propane off at the tank [*to prevent a potential fuel source to an unintended fire or spark*]. Also, running a gas furnace in trailers while in tow may propose the same dangers.
9. If you store your coach, be sure to check the flue before starting your refrigerator on propane. Birds and insects can build nests and clog the flue, causing a fire or excess carbon monoxide to enter your coach.
10. Batteries produce explosive gases. Keep flame, cigarettes, and sparks away. Be sure your battery compartment is properly vented. Keep vent caps tight and level. Check your battery monthly. Replace swollen batteries immediately. Use extreme care when handling batteries—they can explode. [*Dave Gray recommends storing all small batteries in fitted plastic containers so they are not loosely moving about. Loose batteries, especially button type batteries, can inter-connect and create a fire. "I know this from experience."*]
11. Have any wiring in your coach done by a capable electrician, and use common sense in using any electrical aid. Check all 12-volt connections before and after every trip. Most coach fires are caused by a 12-volt short.
12. Gasoline and propane can pose an immediate, explosive danger. Though diesel fuel is less volatile, it dissipates more slowly, so it remains a danger longer. Deal at once with any leaks or spills, and use all fuels in adequately vented areas.
13. Even if the flame on your galley stove goes out, gas continues to flow and could result in an explosion. A stove should never be left unattended or used to heat your coach. Open propane flames release high levels of carbon monoxide.
14. In a compact galley, all combustibles—from paper towels to curtains—are apt to be closer to the stove, so use even more caution in your coach than you do at home. A box of baking soda—the ingredient in powder extinguishers—can be used in lieu of a fire extinguisher for minor galley flare-ups.
15. Develop a plan of action before a fire occurs.
16. Make sure all travelers know what the smoke alarm sounds like and what to do when they hear it. Test your smoke detector regularly.
17. Have at least two escape routes—one in the front and one in the rear of the coach. As soon as they're old enough, teach children to open hatches and emergency exits.
18. Review with everyone the "Stop, Drop, and Roll" rule so they know what to do when clothing is on fire.
19. Make sure visitors can open the front door. Not all manufacturers use the same lock and latch assembly.
20. Choose a rallying point where everyone will meet immediately after escaping, so everyone can be accounted for.
21. Show travelers how to unhook electricity (screw-on cords can be tricky) and how to close propane valves, in case either of these measures is called for.
22. Practice unhooking your tow vehicle as quickly as possible to avoid spreading the fire to other vehicles.
23. Re-emphasize to everyone aboard that objects can be replaced, people can't. Never stay behind or re-enter a burning coach to retrieve anything.
24. There are plenty of fire and life safety tools that can save lives, but for them to be effective, they must be in working condition and you must know how to use them properly.
25. You should have three fire extinguishers for your coach—one in the galley, one in the bedroom, and one outside of the coach in an unlocked compartment or in your tow vehicle. Make sure family members know how to use the extinguishers and understand which extinguishers are effective on various fires.
26. During your monthly inspection, check the fire extinguisher gauge to determine if there is pressure in the extinguisher. If the gauge indicates empty or needs charging, replace or recharge the extinguisher immediately. To test non-gauged extinguishers, push the plunger indicator (usually green or black) down. If it does not come back up,

- the extinguisher has no pressure to expel its contents. If you need help testing your fire extinguishers, check with your local fire department.
27. Do not pull the pin and expel the contents to test your powder extinguisher. If you use a portion of the powder extinguisher, have it refilled or replaced immediately. When you have a fire extinguisher refilled, ask to shoot off the charge first (most refill stations have a special place where this can be done safely). This lets you see how far it shoots and how long a charge lasts.
 28. Invert and shake your dry-powder or dry-chemical extinguisher monthly to loosen the powder. The jarring of the coach does not loosen the powder; in fact, it packs the powder, which may make your extinguisher ineffective.
 29. Deadly, invisible, odorless CO usually results from exhaust leaks or misuse of heating devices. Be sure to put your CO detector in the bedroom. The proper location is on the ceiling or on an inside wall at least eight inches from the ceiling and at least four feet from the floor.
 30. Liquid petroleum gas, like gasoline fumes, tends to pool in low spots in the coach until a spark sets it off. Newer motorhomes are equipped with an automatic shut-off for when its sensor detects an LPG leak. If you have a leak, be sure to shut the propane off at the tank.
 31. The first rule of RV firefighting is to save lives first and property second. Get yourself and your family to safety before attempting to extinguish a fire. Only if you can do so without endangering yourself or others should you use firefighting aids on hand.
 32. Get help. Adults and older children should know how to dial 911 or 0, and how to get emergency help on any CB, VHF, or ham radio available.
 33. It's crucial to know your location so firefighters can find you.
 34. If you have a quick-disconnect fitting on your water hookup, these hoses can be unhooked instantly to fight a fire. If a nearby coach is burning and you cannot move your coach but can safely stay close enough to keep it hosed down, you may be able to save it. *[React safely, fatalities have occurred when an RVer attempted put out the fire with a water hose.]*

Bonus number 35. Install an automatic fire suppression system at the top rear of the refrigerator compartment and in a motorhome engine compartment.

The Part of RV Life No One Talks About

We had no idea when we set out on our course to live in an RV that our marriage was about to change. The whole dynamics thing...the closeness (*as in space around us*), intimacy and dealing with unspoken emotion. What *used to be* is now *no longer*. We have become...oh, dare I say...*different, more pliable and more resilient*. I dare to say even more than when we were an Active Duty Military Family. Rarely do I talk about the intimacies of our marriage. It's *ours*; it's the one thing that we keep private because well...no one would ever understand our *'no soap no radio'* quips to each other or singing in unison, *'You and me and a dog named Boo...'*. But I did feel compelled to write about how RV life has changed our marriage...for the better.

“Love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage”

The last four years of our 35 year marriage has been, in my opinion, our biggest *growing* season and I credit that to living in an RV. Not that it's because of *the RV* but more so, the *lifestyle*. Even my husband admits this lifestyle has brought things to the forefront that we never were addressed while living in our former McMansion. I think it's because we were so distracted with life's chaotic schedules, stuff, fluff and everything in between. And, while I'm no marriage counselor, that may be the reason why so many marriages fail today.

Simply put, living in a 360 square foot box on wheels *has* changed us spiritually and emotionally; individually and as a couple.

I recently read a blog piece by Camille, my dear friend, blogger and business/life coach who truly resonated every facet of what I feel. I'm being really honest here, *“this minimalist life truly isn't for EVERYbody”* and I felt compelled to convey that to those contemplating this lifestyle.

Let me tell ya, this is WORK!

Camille touched on the emotional challenges of our “RV Life” and to be quite honest, I was so relieved to read that our experiences weren’t so odd or different in this so-called nomadic lifestyle. Her words also resonated much of what we have experienced, not only as individuals but also as a couple. She brought up several good points that made us put things more into perspective; paying more attention to each other, respecting each other more and those emotions as a result.

‘Two objects can’t occupy the same space simultaneously’

Allow me to put this one to rest. *OH, YES THEY CAN!* At least in an RV, they can and I’m sure every couple out there living full-time in an RV (*or boat*) will whole-heartedly agree with that sentiment!

Living in tight quarters forces us to share some of those intimacies (*oh, sit down...we’re not going to talk about our sex life!*) with others of the same suit because we look for validation...but only from others who live a similar lifestyle. Seriously, no one else would understand. However, get us all around a campfire with a few brewskis and man, the stories will fly!

But it’s true about the whole space occupation thing. It never fails the when one of us goes to a tiny, two square foot part of the RV, coincidentally, so does the other but for a totally different reason. Same exact time in the same exact space. We both gawk at each other thinking to ourselves, ‘*SERIOUSLY?*’ while sighing heavily. I’m sure neither of us don’t do it on purpose...or maybe we do?

For example, our bedroom is 8’ x 10’ or something like that. That includes our closet, king-size bed, night stand, small wardrobe and corner sink vanity so that leaves very little walking-around-room. If I go up into our bedroom to change into other clothes, it always seems to be the precise time he needs something out of his man-drawer too. We pause for a quick moment and look at each other with disdain. Usually one of us growls while the other exits the room with that ‘*Oh shit, what have I done now?*’ thought (*usually it’s him*).

This happens often. After four years, you’d think we’d get that part right but I digress.

“WTF are you looking at?”

The floorpan of our fifth wheel includes a kitchen island that divides our RV living space left from the right almost adjacent to his man-recliner he sits in to watch television or reads or watches his favorite RV maintenance YouTube videos. While he’s doing whatever-he’s-doing, I would be either doing dishes at the island sink or preparing our meal on the counter on the side closest to his recliner.

Then, I will look over to him because I feel like I’m being stared at and wouldn’t you know it, I WAS! Our eyes would lock for a few seconds and I’d then, cock my head and blurt out, “*WTF are you looking at?*” Of course, we are only playing with each other. We would laugh and go back to doing what each were doing. This is just one example of how such humor keeps our marriage alive.

I guess its bound to happen when living in such small confines. I’m not sure RV manufacturer’s floorpan designers planned it that way but it’s just so comical...each...and...e-v-e-r-y...day. Now, I think he stares at me just to get my potty mouth to say it. We never had these playful moments in our McMansion.

So, I’ve learned to actually embrace and love those moments. When I’m preparing a meal and notice his stare out of the corner of my eye, I start chopping and throwing stuff around like I’m some chef at a Japanese Benihana putting on a show for him. And, he still stares...but now as if I’m a woman gone mad! (*C’mon, its funny!*)

“Quit bothering me!”

We’ve learned to laugh more and take ourselves less seriously. We’ve tapped into each other’s goofiness that I’m not sure we would have found in that 3600 sq. ft. McMansion in Kentucky. There, we were separated by walls and large rooms. We always had our own space. But, now in our 350ish square foot RV, yeah...not so much.

“*though we have less distractions, we are more distracted*”

What I mean by that is though we have less chaotic fluff and stuff in our RV life (*i.e. endless*

amount of chores, massive to-do lists, and overflowing calendars, etc.), we still are distracted by the other and what they're doing *because* we live in such tight quarters.

It wasn't until recently when we remodeled the aft half of our RV putting in a home office that we had this huge elephant-in-the-room distracting issue. Unlike our former McMansion where I had a quiet home office and my own craft studio, I had to do my work at our small dining table that faced him in his man-recliner.

UH OH! Here we go with that whole "WTF are you looking at" scenario again!

While I would be trying to concentrate on my work, he'd be talking away about his maintenance schedules, voltage this, amperage that...womp, womp, womp like Charlie Brown's teacher. After awhile, I'd just give him that pissed-off-mother-look and boy, he got the message loud and clear. It wasn't his fault really, because in his mind, I was just *typing at the dining table*. He didn't associate the dining table with *work*.

We had to fix that. We each needed our own personal space but how?

It didn't take long for us to reevaluate our living space and fix this *issue*. We decided to remove the sofa in the back of our RV to create a real bonafide workspace. So now, when he sees the back of my head and hears the tap-tap-tap on my MacBook, he sees the preverbal *don't bother me* flashing neon sign.

Now, I have headphones that I can put Kenny, George and Kacey tunes on when he starts up with his amperage, voltage, gigawatts, empty-the-shitter-tank conversations with himself.

"Missing our family"

UGH! This is probably one of the biggest pitfalls of RV Life. However, I'm going to say that even if we *didn't* RV, we'd still have this issue. We lived in Kentucky but our family was spread out all over the United States. Dan's Mom and some of his brothers' families in Pennsylvania, our son's family in Minnesota, other brother's family in Virginia and lets not forget our hundreds of shipmates and friends strewn all over the country.

RV Life has actually made it a little easier because we now plan some of our adventures around them. But that involves travel and parking logistics such as seasonal weather restraints, mileage and of course, finances. We have to really plan. If we can't take our RV there, we fly. It's what we do. We agreed that we will always have a credit card bill with flight and rent-a-car charges.

"Words to the wise but not from the wise"

The point of me sharing this is to show that our RV lifestyle is not all *adventure*; tall snow-covered mountains, 10-mile hiking trails, geocaching and scavenger hunts. It's so much more than that. Its about finding ourselves in a new light and sharing it. Its constant change and resiliency. Its about making our marriage work in a different way never imagined. Yes, I'd say we work a little harder at it.

It's also about respecting each other's *space*; whether it be personal space or emotional space. It's about testing our limits; not necessarily physically like hiking up a thousand foot trail in a half-mile.

It's really more about US than the cool places we go to. Its.... *our* RV Life.

So, if you're contemplating this lifestyle, whether in a tent, an RV, a boat or a cab of an 18-wheeler, take a good, hard look at yourselves as individuals but also your relationship to each other because trust me, your marriage is going to be DIFFERENT!

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The Ultimate RV Camping Checklist:

Don't Forget To Do These Things Before You Leave Camp! **The Importance Of An RV Camping Checklist**

We all forget sometimes.

How many times have you seen a motorhome traveling down the highway with the TV antenna sticking straight up like a periscope scanning the horizon?

Have you ever seen an RVer motoring down the road, oblivious to the fact that the hose from the waste water tank is wildly dangling in the road behind the RV?

We've all been there — to some degree. The goal is to avoid being there more than once!

Since there are so many important things that an RVer must do before hitting the road, I'd like to help you create the ultimate RV camping checklist — based on your specific RV, the accessories that you have on board, and other items you typically use at camp.

Do *not* forget to do these things...

The Importance Of An RV Camping Checklist

I can personally confirm that an improperly stowed Winegard TV antenna can't handle much of an impact.

I learned this firsthand on the day that I dared a low hanging branch to jump out and snap the antenna's thin aluminum legs off at the pivots.

Often, when we're getting ready to break camp we tend to get in a hurry.

Whether it's because our minds are preoccupied with upcoming activities later in the day, or we have already started dreading the work that's waiting for us when we get home, all it takes is a slight interruption in our routine and — bingo — something gets forgotten!

So the first step is to accept the fact that you are not infallible. You *will* inevitably overlook something. We all do. By accepting the fact that an RV checklist is a good idea and a potential money saver, it will become easier to make a habit of using it.

When my wife and I break camp, she usually takes care of the 'things to do inside' and I address the 'things to do outside' on our checklist. Though I must admit, we both double check each other — especially after hitting that low branch and ruining the antenna on our fifth wheel a few years back!

TIP: If you divide the breaking camp chores between you and your spouse, it's still best if one person manages the checklist. All it takes is one instance of "I thought you did that" and your RV roadtrip could be derailed.

Creating The Ultimate RV Camp Breakdown & Setup Checklist

Making up your RV camping checklist will be an individual thing, because every RV is a little bit different than the next and not all RVs have the same accessories.

For example, your motorhome may have hydraulic levelers, while my travel trailer has crank-down jacks that need to be retracted.

Okay, ready to get started?...

The best way to avoid an expensive repair bill is to make yourself an RV breaking camp checklist.

My RV Breaking Camp Checklist

OUTSIDE

1. Stow TV antenna. Verify visually that it went down all the way. (Ours didn't.)
2. Stow awning. Check that all knobs are tight and rewind is set in the retract position.
3. Make sure stabilizer jacks are retracted and wood blocks are stored.
4. Plug in the trailer lights/brakes and hook up the break away cable.
5. Reinstall equalizer hitch bars and safety chains.
6. Make sure that trailer lights operate.
7. Drain waste tanks and stow hose.
8. Unplug electrical power cord and stow. Be sure plastic access door is snapped shut so cord doesn't come out while driving.
9. Stow lawn chairs, dog's rope, etc.
10. Douse campfire, then douse it again.

INSIDE

1. Stow TV. (Ours rides in the corner on the bed since it sits on the table when we're parked.)
2. Check refrigerator contents for riding position, and make sure the doors are latched properly. (Food really makes a mess when the doors pop open, been there, done that.)
3. Make sure the refrigerator successfully switched to GAS when power cord was pulled from the panel.
4. Make sure all cupboards and drawers are closed properly. (We've also had to sweep up broken glass when a set of mixing bowls went airborne. Not good.)
5. Pick up everything possible. (The clothes hamper rides in the shower stall. We also have a wall clock that comes down and gets put in a safe place.)
6. Close roof vents and windows.
7. Turn off the 12v water pump. (This is the last step, since we don't want water everywhere in the event that something goes wrong.)

Obviously, we have a rather simple travel trailer. Larger RVs will have more to contend with. For example, those with slide-outs may require placing special locks in place before traveling. It's easy to see that double checking a list like this only takes a minute or two. It's a small effort that can definitely save you a lot of headaches!

Crossing Items Off Your RV Breaking Camp Checklist

Keep in mind that your RV breaking camp checklist needs to include items beyond those used

for preparing the RV itself to be moved.

For example, don't forget about the rope you tied out for drying swimsuits and towels, the dog's stake-out and chain, and other small things that could easily be forgotten if they weren't written down.

Imagine how pleased I'd be if I pulled into a nice wooded campsite and the previous camper had forgotten their Honda generator which was positioned away from their RV to lessen the noise! (Don't laugh, dumber things have happened.)

With a completed RV breaking camp checklist you can safely pull out onto the highway without that nagging feeling that you forgot something back at the campsite.

Bad Camping Etiquette: Five Ways to Make Your Fellow Campers Despise You

Sometimes, when I'm camping, I wonder if some people will ever make it past the first step. More often than not, there is that family, usually camped right next to me, that makes me wonder how on earth they made it to adulthood. It's as if they thumbed their noses at poor Maslow and said, "Take a hike."

I have to wonder if these people are purposely trying to get under everyone's skin or if they are truly self-unaware. As a result of my musings, I've compiled a list of things you can do to roll back any progress you've made in personal development—at least when you're camping.

Ways to Deny Yourself Acceptance By Others

1. Do Not Take Care of Your Campfire

While everyone else is enjoying an evening sitting around their fire pits, go ahead and leave yours unattended. In fact, if the wind is blowing, throw some trash in there so the smoke wafting into your neighbor's camp will carry with it a little toxicity and a lot of stink. For good measure, let it smolder for hours. With any luck, everyone's RV upholstery will smell of smoke for months afterwards.

2. Please, Let Your Kids Run Wild

Aside from stranger danger, unfriendly dogs, campfires and matches, knives, deep water, wild animals, poisonous plants, biting insects, speeding cars, steep drop-offs, snakes, and bullies, there's really nothing that can hurt them.

When you see your precious little offspring wandering through other campsites, be sure to go back inside for your afternoon nap. Responsible parenting demands that you are well rested for later when you yell and swear at them because you can't find your cigarette lighter.

3. Everyone Loves Your Dog as Much as You Do

Shredder, your saber-tooth Doberman is as kind and gentle as a baby chick and would never hurt anyone. When he bit that little boy's thumb off last month it's because he was provoked. If Shredder barks all night long, all of the nearby campers will understand. He must have been provoked. It has nothing to do with the fact that his chain is tangled up in the picnic table and all he got for dinner was that one hotdog that fell into the ashes when you were cooking dinner. Dogs love to run and play and explore as much as kids do, so unleash those 70 pounds of kid chasing, food stealing, and poop making happiness so that he can just be a dog.

4. Camping is About Noise

If there ain't noise, it ain't camping! Turn your radio up full blast. It would be a shame if that retired couple from Vancouver drove three days to be here and didn't get to jam to some serious #@&*!ing hip hop at least once before they go home. Yo, yo, yo, everybody loves the shizzle. Fireworks—check. Honking your horn to get someone's attention—check. Loud generator after hours—check, check, check. Now, that's camping! 5. Midnight Isn't Really That Late

Hey, you have a job and you work hard, so when you arrive late at night, it's A-ok to shine your headlights into other campers, use loud voices, and leave your diesel truck idling while you set

up camp.

5. Mi Casa es su Casa

When you camp next to someone, they will be more than pleased if your slide outs hang over into their space. Each time they bump their head they will apologize to you for any inconvenience they cause. You can hit them up for damages later.

If you forget which campsite you have reserved, no problem, just pull into that one along the beach with the big shade trees and full hook ups. When the rightful occupant arrives they will understand your plight and the hardship it causes you to have to pack everything up and move. All campsites are equal and they shouldn't mind finding something else.

Once you have settled into "your" campsite, go ahead and put your dog kennel below the neighbor's slide out. Park your ATVs on their grass, and if you have to move some of their lawn chairs, or borrow some firewood, they won't mind. When relatives come to visit, have them park in the road. If people can't maneuver around them with an RV, they shouldn't have bought it in the first place.

But Seriously

This tongue-in-cheek look at camping etiquette pokes a little fun at some of the things that really do happen in campgrounds. Most people aren't bad; they just don't realize that camping is about everyone's fun, not just their own. I have learned over the years that the majority of people have the best of intentions and haven't yet learned the rules for courteous camping. The best way to keep them from spoiling your experience is to have a dark sorcerer curse all of their vehicles so they won't start. If you are unable to arrange this you're going to have to be a good and patient camp neighbor. After all, St. Augustine told us, "Patience is the companion of wisdom."

ADJUSTING TO RV LIFE – THE STRUGGLE IS REAL

JUNE 25, 2018 BY DRIVINANDVIBIN

Adjusting to RV life can be pretty hard at first. Making the choice to follow our dreams and live life on the road is one of the best decisions we've ever made, but it's definitely got its own unique set of challenges.

It's a major adjustment to leave behind the life you knew; You're saying goodbye to your house, your friends and family members, and probably your old job too. You're journeying into the unknown and that's HUGE. If you've made this transition or plan to, you're so very brave and you have a huge community out there to support you.

Back to the RV struggles: I wanted to share some things with you that have helped us in our journey. It can be difficult for some, especially in those first few months, but it gets so much easier and we're here to help. It just takes a little while to find your bearings.

SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS People refer to RV life as a "permanent vacation" and that's just not true. We still have to work, keep up the laundry, buy groceries, and pay bills. We're not immune to stress and our problems don't disappear. RV life has some amazing perks, like exploring beautiful landscapes and changing your backyard whenever you want, but we do regular people stuff too.

You could be on the go all the time and moving every couple days, but we've found that we need balance so we don't burn ourselves out. Find that balance and a pace that works for you.

BE OPEN TO THE JOURNEY Mindset is everything. If you approach things with an open heart, without expectations of what it "should" be you will save yourself a lot of grief. Almost nothing goes as planned when you want it to, so be flexible and learn to adapt.

Be open to changing plans. Not holding ourselves to strict schedules, has given us so much freedom. That doesn't mean there's no planning involved, but we give ourselves some wiggle room. We can add a few days at or leave early if we want to. On actual travel days, we

personally like to leave early and move no more than 200 miles. That may sound short, but it keeps us stress free and we still have the whole day ahead of us.

Sometimes you get a flat tire, or the campground is full or you get on the road later than expected... We like to have a lot of daylight to come up with a backup plan. No matter the obstacle, there's always a lesson to be learned from any situation. You just might end up learning a new skill, finding a great new camp spot, or making a new friend.

FIND YOUR TRIBE We spent the first few months on the road navigating this new life by ourselves. We learned a lot in those months, but I can't even describe how much we grew once we found our place in the RVing community.

We found our tribe with the Xscapers, we met like minded individuals, who understood the joys and struggles we faced. They helped us learn the ropes of boondocking, we learned about generators and solar and so much more. We shared stories, campfires and meals together and we still meet up every chance we get.

We had no idea how important this was to us, until we found it. We encourage you to find your tribe. Join a club, attend a rally, invite your neighbors over to your campfire. Just put yourself out there, you won't regret it.

NURTURE YOUR RELATIONSHIP This may not apply to you, but if it does it's very important. Your partner is not your enemy. It will feel like it at times (ahem..backing up the trailer) but they are going to be your biggest support system. You're a team and it requires both of you for the ship to run smoothly. It will take a while to figure out your individual jobs, but once you do you will be unstoppable!

We tend to take our frustrations out on the ones closest to us, so it's very important to communicate openly with your partner. Improving our communication skills have been key to avoiding conflict in our tiny space.

ENJOY THE RIDE Your confidence will grow day by day and the experiences you have will be priceless. RV Life is filled with beautiful natural wonders and the most kind hearted people. Enjoy the journey and know that you made it happen.

As you grow and learn, don't be afraid to help out others who are just beginning. They may need advice or they may just need a friend, but it will mean the world. We had others show us the way and now it's our duty to pass it on.

Contact Us

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

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