

Subject: September Newsletter from Air Safe Hitches



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Newsletter

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Fifth Wheel Travel Trailer Towing Tips

June 11, 2019

I am pleased that after roughly 70,000 miles and over eight years of fifth wheel trailer towing, I have thankfully haven't had a traffic accident, a tire blowout, or ran out of fuel.

I started as a complete newbie, never having towed a thing in my life. The first thing I did with the new trailer was off to the nearest big open parking area and practice, practice, practice! The first few times out were, I have to admit, a little nerve-wracking, but as I got more and more hours under my belt, everything became more relaxed.

In this video, I share some of the things I've learned as a full-time RVer towing our 30-foot Keystone Cougar fifth wheel trailer.

Practice, practice, practice!

This has to be the all-time best tip you can get. You can read all the information you want, but the only way to truly learn is by doing it over and over. It's how you learned to drive your car, right? Take some cones and mark out pretend scenarios like backing into a campsite, turning through some tight corners, etc.

Learn how your rig reacts and how long it takes the trailer to turn and how much extra room it takes. This is also a good time to get a feel for braking. Towing a trailer makes the stopping distance greater, and the braking practice will give you a sense of how much distance is going to be a safe distance to stop.

Respect the Weight

One thing you have to appreciate is how much mass you are moving around. With the trailer hooked up, your movements must be slow, steady, and deliberate. If you perform any jerky movements, you're not going to be able to correct the motion the same way as in a car. I see this issue all the time on the freeway when folks pulling trailers do a jerky quick lane change and then spend 10 seconds trying to get the trailer to stop fishtailing.

When braking, remember that even though you may have electric trailer brakes, they won't stop on a dime. Always give plenty of space in front in case a panic stop takes place ahead. I have had more than one occasion where I rounded a corner only to find a line of dead stopped cars waiting in a construction zone.

Hitching and Unhitching

This can be a little different depending on the type of hitch you have, but here are a few basic tips.

1. Make sure the tailgate is down! Have you seen all those trucks with bashed up tailgates? Now, you can imagine why. Also on the flip side when done, make sure the tailgate is up, or you will carve out a sweet hole in the front trailer cargo bay door.
2. Always attach the emergency brake cable, at least in the unlikely event the trailer comes unhitched it will stop itself.
3. Before raising the front jacks too far and after hookup give the trailer a tug test with the truck to make sure the hitch jaws are fully engaged. That step can save your truck bed rails from getting squished by a falling fifth wheel. This is an excellent time to check the trailer brakes are working too.
4. Always chock your wheels even if the ground seems flat, you never know, better safe than sorry.
5. Don't let people distract you while doing the hitch operations. Too many bad things can happen if you forget something.
6. Keep the hitch lubed and clean. I use a round plastic type lube plate on my pin and works great. Check the nut and bolt torque settings every once in a while too.

I have a routine for hitching and unhitching and do it the same every time, that way it becomes second nature, and I'm less likely to forget something. Just before departure, my wife goes through our checklist, and I confirm the tasks were done.

No Distractions

When your towing, it is your responsibility to have complete attention on the truck, trailer, and road. Don't be chatting on the phone, playing with the radio, trying to read the map, etc. Unlike a car, your recovery and reaction time is limited due to the weight and size of the rig. Every second will count if an emergency maneuver is required.

I won't even let Anne play a podcast while we drive unless we are on a very wide-open expressway with little traffic or she uses headphones. I like to listen to all the noises and sounds, so if anything sounds different, I'll know. Hearing a tire hissing or axle bearing squealing early can mean the difference between slowly pulling over or frantically trying to maintain control.

Mirrors, use them!

Mirrors are your best friend when towing. Make sure you set yourself up with ones big enough and far out from the vehicle enough to see down the trailer side to the back. Mine are set so I can see the trailer walls and the tires. This way, I can see if a tire is running low or worse is blown. The next thing to do is add blind spot fish eye type mirrors as an add-on. With these, you can see vehicles that sneak up beside you, your trailer roofline and they are an aid when backing up the trailer. Always keep your mirrors as clean as you can and check them often to watch what's happening behind you.

Cornering

The fifth wheel is going to demand some extra care and attention when taking sharp corners. When you take the corner, the trailer is going to track a path inside that of your tow vehicle. How much depends on the length, and it is important to get to know. The more you practice, the better feel you'll have as to how wide of a turn you need. During the turn take it slow and check your mirror to make sure the trailer is clearing the corner.

Also, keep in mind the back-end of the trailer will swing wider than the tow vehicle path, so allow space for this. Very important in tight campgrounds where I've been witness to many small crunches to people's trailer sides as they scrape an obstacle such as a tree or post. Worse yet the electrical pedestal or water tap!

Plan Your Route

This can save you much time and aggravation. When you are touring around in a car, it's so easy to turn around, get fuel, and deal with any type of roadway. Not so much when your 40-65 feet long and 12-14 feet high. Always plan ahead and know where you're going with the trailer before departing. It is important to know the terrain you'll be towing through, is it hilly? Too curvy? Rough road? Etc. Where are the easy in and out fuel stops? Nothing worse than being in some unknown town with low fuel trying to jam yourself into a tight situation to refuel.

Cities take extra planning such as knowing when rush hour might be, what's the bypass route and if they have tolls. The internet is a wonderful resource and if in doubt about the routing, go to one of the many good forums like Love Your RV forum, RV.net, IRV2.com, RVForum.net and ask. You'll usually get a boatload of information

back from folks that have done the same route or have intimate local knowledge.

Pay attention to your Tires

A big problem fifth wheel and travel trailers may face is tire blowouts. All the weight and stress eventually is on the little patch of rubber meeting the road. I watch my tires like a hawk. Before every tow, I check the pressure, lug nut torque, visually inspect the sidewall and treads. Whenever stopped for a rest break I feel the tires for overheating along with the bearings. A handheld infrared temperature gun is also an excellent tool for this.

Many people invest in a tire pressure monitoring system, and it is on my upgrade list. Replace your tires after 5-7 years whether they look like they need it or not. Tires can look perfect but be rotten on the inside. This is especially true if they sit for long periods without use. For an extra margin of safety when I purchased my second set of tires, I elected to upgrade them to a higher load range. Just a little extra piece of mind as the OEM manufacturers are notorious for barely meeting the safety requirements to save a dime.

Our Gusty Friend Wind

I find the wind to be the biggest enemy to my fifth wheel trailer towing experience. Being that the rig is near 13 feet high and box-shaped any wind has a dramatic effect. The worse scenario is on the big Interstate highways when traveling among the tractor trailers. When it's gusty, and they are passing by you pushing a lot of air themselves, there is a push-pull effect that happens that you must be aware of. The wind can also devastate fuel mileage and is hard on the truck trying to pull the trailer through it, worse if you add hills into the equation.

So I always check the weather and tend to plan my tow days around the wind. Many times I will leave a day early or a day late to get the least wind. One time we were towing across South Dakota's rolling hill country into 30 mph winds, I had enough and just pulled into a fancy RV Resort to wait it out. May as well spend the money on a beautiful place then diesel fuel spent to drag the trailer through a wall of wind. I find traveling in anything above 25-30 mph of wind is no fun.

Backing it up

This can be the most intimidating part of fifth wheel ownership. The dreaded backing into a campsite with the local peanut gallery watching.

- The first tip is to take your time, rushing it is only going to enhance the chance of problems. Fifth wheels respond to your steering input in a delayed manner; by going slow, you have a better opportunity to correct a miss guided path. It will help if you can pull a reasonable distance ahead before backing in to allow plenty of space for a gradual turn into the spot.
- Second, use a spotter always!! Also, have a good simple set of hand signals and have the spotter always visible in your mirrors. A set of two-way radios or cell phones for communication is another good option.
- The third is GOAL. GOAL stands for "Get Out And Look." I will sometimes do this twice or more if in doubt, no shame in looking. It's actually an acronym used by professional truckers.
- Fourth, look at your tires. I always watch the path the tires are taking as that is where the trailer will go. If you watch the back of the trailer, it can get you out of line quickly as there is a significant swing to the end and doesn't follow the same arc as the tires. When backing up, don't forget about the front of the truck. It's so easy to get wrapped up in the looking back you crash into something right in front of yourself.
- Finally, always look up and have your spotter look up. It is easy to forget how tall the rigs are. A low tree limb can ruin your camping trip.

Take your Time

Traveling in the RV is not a race. It is meant to be enjoyable. Make sure you don't overdo the mileage. I tend to stick to between 100-250 miles as a nice distance in a day. I feel any longer than that, and you start to speed and get tired. Two terrible things when on the highway. If you feel tired at all pull over somewhere and take a nap, you have your house with you after all. Instead of taking the fastest Interstate highway, try a slower secondary road, and you may discover interesting things or that super cool off the beaten path camping spot.

Well, that's my Trailer Towing Tips. Hope this helps some of you RVers that are new to towing.

Pack Rats (aka Wood Rats) RVing Tip

January 28, 2019

When I first started boondocking in the US southwest desert regions, I would sometimes see other campers with their vehicle hood left open. I didn't pay much attention to it figuring they were using the truck or motorhome battery for camping.

It wasn't until I first visited Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument that I learned about the Pack Rat (aka Wood Rat) and how much damage they can cause. They emerge from their burrows at night to forage, looking for food and nesting materials.

Unfortunately, they sometimes will crawl up into the engine compartment and chew on things like insulation and wiring. On a modern truck or motorhome, this can quickly cause thousands in damage and may render it inoperable.

By leaving the hood open enough moon and starlight comes inside to help keep the Pack Rats at bay. So, if you come across a place where campers have their vehicle hoods up and have night lighting set up around the RV take heed.

LED rope lights and lanterns are also often used deterrents.

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9 MISTAKES THAT NEWBIE RV CAMPERS MAKE

Mistake #1: Skipping a test drive

It's a great idea to get the feel for driving your ship on wheels. Unless you're, say, a bus driver in real life, maneuvering an RV presents its own set of challenges. On our maiden voyage, my husband and I headed to the nearest big parking lot (at a shopping center) and drove around to literally get a feel for how it moved.

Paying attention to the turn radius and overhead clearance. Practice backing into a spot for those RV parks that don't have what's called pull-through sites. Trust me, it's good to have done this at least once in a stress-free setting before parking your rig for the first time at a packed campground... Though I am sure your audience of seasoned RV veterans will find it quite amusing!

I should mention that you'll start to get confident driving your RV... and then you'll take a turn too fast. Remember, you always have to drive slower and brake sooner.

Mistake #2: Not watching the gas gauge

Running out of gas in the middle of the wilderness is literally something out of a horror movie. It's so important to acquaint yourself with your vehicle's capabilities, and pay attention to the proximity of the nearest gas station. This is especially important if you're hauling a camper with your regular vehicle. You may be used to getting a lot more mileage from a tank of gas, but your load could drop efficiency to less than 10 miles a gallon. One other tip here, with an RV you might be driving through more remote places than you are used to and the next gas station might be much further away than you think.

Mistake #3: Forgetting paper maps.

Our smartphones sure make navigation easy... that is, until you find yourself without service and in the middle of nowhere. (Also see not watching Gas Gauge) It's important to have a good old fashioned paper map at the ready.

Mistake #4: Forgetting to do a walk-around before leaving an RV site.

We're all anxious to get on the road, but before you do, walk around the RV. Check the tire pressure. Make sure all the slide-outs are back in. Ensure the outside storage cabinets are closed and locked. Double-check that you didn't leave your empty luggage next to the RV—you know that kind of thing.

There's also things you need to do inside, like place coffee maker and toaster in sink so they don't slide around. The one thing my husband and I just COULD NOT remember was making sure the refrigerator door was shut tight. We'd make a turn and, to our children's total delight, the door would fling open and 10 apples would come flying out. If you are renting an RV, ask for a checklist.

Mistake #5: Over-packing.

It's so enticing to over-pack when you have all this space! However, an RV starts feeling pretty cramped when things aren't neatly stored away. You really don't need every kitchen gadget in the world. One set of plates, bowls and silverware will do. Remember, you have a sink and can wash things! Though it may not feel like it, you are *camping*. Even if it is fancy camping.

Mistake #6: Not making reservations.

Part of the fun of RV travel is spontaneity. However, if you're touring in the states, Memorial Day through Labor Day is busy, busy, busy—especially on holidays and weekends. Many great sites fill up early, and if they're first-come, first-served, you best be at the campground when it opens. It's always a good idea to book ahead of time or call and find out the best way to ensure your spot in the RV park you want.

Mistake #7: Not being level.

Not only does this mean you'll be uncomfortable as you sleep, a wonky RV set up means the fridge doesn't work properly and you run the risk of your food going bad. Most RV's have some sort of leveling system, so find out where it is and how it works. Also, a small level is a handy-dandy item to have in your tool box.

Mistake #8: Forgetting Tetris-able storage.

Organization and storage are important elements of RV travel. Square containers will just about always fit better than round ones. Ziplock bags pack small and have a myriad of uses.

Mistake #9: Skimping on essential tools.

You don't need every tool known to man, but a few items will make your trip so much easier.

- Duct tape is a must—this is true in almost every life situation!
- A small level is helpful for ensuring you're not parked at a slope.
- A multi-bit ratcheting screwdriver set
- 1/2-inch, 3/8-inch, and 1/4-inch socket set including adapters and extensions.
- A Leatherman multi-tool
- Bungee cords with hooks
- Hatchet/hammer combo
- Headlamp with extra batteries.
- Tire pressure gauge.
- Rubber gloves.
- First aid kit

5 Top Camper Security Precautions

Campers are significant investments. The security of your camper is a priority. Unfortunately, camper safety is somewhat questionable. Each day, campers and/or components of campers are targets of theft. Luckily, there are several precautions that you can take to help ensure that your camper and its belongings are secure.

1. There are only a certain number of camper key molds in the universe. The majority of camper manufacturers (i.e., Forest River, Heartland) use camper keys and locks made by Global Link. If you examine your keys, you will most likely read a letter on your key beginning with G, followed by a number, such as G325. There are limited numbers of these keys, and you can easily order replacement keys rather than having copies made. The keys can be purchased from almost any camper supply store. Unfortunately for safety concerns, if you hypothetically checked all the campers at your campground, you would find that your keys will open many of those campers. It is important to note that duplicate keys is just part of the problem. The standard locks on your camper are rather simple and will often unlock with a little jiggle.

The best alternative for camper door locks is the **RVLock**. RVLocks have many advantages over the factory locks that come standard on most campers. Not only can an RVLock secure your camper with a unique key, but it also has a digital keypad and key fob to lock and unlock your camper. RVLocks can be installed within ten minutes by a typical camper owner. They also come in both right and left-handed models, whereas factory locks are righthanded by default. RVLocks provide both convenience and added security to your campers, travel trailers, RVs, and/or fifth wheels.

2. If you thought that camper keys were a safety concern, try the storage compartment keys. It is estimated that 75% of all campers require the key mold CH751 for their storage compartments. If your camper storage uses CH751, the majority of camper owners have access to everything in your storage compartment. With under bed access, this also means that the inside of your camper is accessible. If a thief gains entry into your camper through the storage compartment and enters the interior of your camper, they are not locked in. All campers have doors that cannot be locked from the inside due to safety/fire precautions. To combat theft in storage compartments, a **tubular cam lock** is recommended.

Campers and Campfires believe that most campers are good and do not want to steal the personal belongings of others. However, all campers should be aware that most compartment keys are identical, and theft does occur.

3. Most camper security breaches occur at home or while campers are in storage. Since anyone with the right key can unlock your camper or storage compartments, owners should be educated on possible situations in which campers can potentially be burglarized. Truck hitches are another area for campers to gain awareness. If you own a pull behind camper, it will quickly hook to any truck with a hitch, making your trailer susceptible to theft. Fortunately, there are several precautions that you can take to help ensure that your investment remains safe.

Blink cameras (Check them out on Amazon) are excellent at protecting your camper while parked at home. The cameras connect to your home Wi-Fi network and operate via motion detection. Every time motion is detected within the range of the camera, the camera begins filming, and the footage is saved to a cloud drive. There is no charge for cloud storage. Cameras can easily be self-mounted. Blink advertises that the batteries in the cameras last for two years. However, Campers and Campfires has found that in high traffic areas, the realistic expectation of battery life is six months. If you have the camera mounted in a location with light traffic, the battery life will last longer.

Depending upon the strength and location of your Wi-Fi signal, your network may require an inexpensive Wi-Fi extender to boost the signal. You will want to ensure that the Wi-Fi signal can reach all the cameras on your property.

In addition to video cameras, security stickers are available to place on campers, propane tanks, and batteries. These stickers are available for purchase on Amazon. Security stickers notify people that the premises are under video surveillance. They are significant theft deterrents, even if your camera has not yet arrived.

4. The truck hitch is an item that needs to be considered as it relates to camper safety. A significant number of campers use the stock hitch pin that comes from the factory with their truck. Using the stock hitch pin leaves nothing but a cotter pin to prevent thieves from stealing the hitch. It takes less than a minute for a thief to disconnect a hitch from a truck and disappear. Luckily, this problem is solved by purchasing a **hitch lock**. A good quality hitch lock typically cost less than \$20.00. If researching or purchasing hitch locks, be sure to buy one made of stainless steel to prevent rust and damage from the weather.

Since campers hook up to most truck hitches, a lock for the coupler on your trailer can be one of the most important purchases that you make. Several coupler locks can be used to secure your camper. Simple to advanced padlocks are available for purchase, ranging from a few dollars to a few hundred dollars. Remember, any deterrent is better than none. For a minimal cost, Campers and Campfires recommends this coupler lock made by **Master Lock**. The lock slides where the ball would go, and it cost approximately \$30. There are numerous locks similar to this that can be purchased for less than \$50. Most locks can be broken quickly with a large hammer, but the more time a lock takes to break, the less likely a thief will try to break it.

Proven Industries Coupler Locks enclose the entire coupler. They are the most effective hitch theft deterrent because they are difficult to remove. However, these locks can cost hundreds of dollars.

For those towing a fifth wheel, a **king pin lock** can be used to ensure that your camper cannot be easily stolen.

5. Batteries and propane tanks are targets for thieves. A battery can easily be stolen if it left in an unsecured battery box. At home, it is possible to take the battery out of the box and store it in a garage or other secured location. However, when traveling, the best protection is a **Batteryshackle RV Battery Lock**. The battery lock clamps across your battery both horizontally and vertically, then locks the battery in place with three padlocks. A Batteryshackle RV Battery Lock will serve as a deterrent for most thieves. The price of the lock is about the same as a new battery, but this is better than having to buy a new battery at an inconvenient time.

Campers and Campfires also recommends a **battery quick disconnect**. Since the Batteryshackle will make it more difficult to access the battery, a disconnect is a must. This device makes it easy to disconnect and reconnect the battery when it is stationary in the box. A battery quick disconnect will prevent the battery from draining while at home yet makes it easy to regain power if you need to access lights, slides, or other camper features that run on battery power.

Propane tanks are at risk for theft on your camper. Two full propane tanks are worth \$100+ and can be removed from your camper in less than five minutes. A **propane lock** can be easily purchased and installed to ensure that you have propane when you need it.

Campers are a significant investment and unfortunately, they are not very secure. Although we wish that everyone was of good nature in the world, the truth is that camper theft happens every day. Campers and Campfires hopes to educate owners so that theft does not occur. At the end of the day, it is up to the owner of the unit to keep his/her camper secure. Nothing

ruins a vacation quicker than the violation of someone stealing a camper or any of its components.

Taking a Road Trip? There's an App for That!

Road trips may be a time-honored American tradition but that does not mean they can not be made better with the addition of some modern technology. By using the following smartphone apps you can save time and money, and will never miss an adventure. Now the person riding shotgun can be more than just the navigator, they can also handle reservations and diner orders too!

Safety First

One thing you need to keep in mind when using smartphone apps while driving is safety. Not only is using your phone when behind the wheel unsafe, in many jurisdictions it is illegal as well. The safest way to use your smartphone when on a road trip is to bring along a friend to help. If you are flying solo use a hands-free feature such as Apple's Siri or Android Auto.

Navigating the Highways and Byways

Waze This crowdsource app is more than just maps and directions it is also interactive. Users can add real time info concerning construction, accidents, traffic and even police activity. As you approach the area the app will notify you with icons, change in highway color and allow you to obtain additional information if desired. (Android, IOS and Windows)

Roadtrippers This is not simply an app you can use if taking a road trip, it is specifically designed for that purpose. With this app you can plan a route, plan your agenda and get advice from other users. No real plan other than a final destination? Pick from one of the pre-planned itineraries and follow Roadtrippers' lead. (Android, IOS)

Road Tunes

TuneIn Traveling through strange locations means someone needs to spend considerable time turning the dial, trying to find a local station playing your favorite tunes. This app lets you listen to over 100,000 radio stations no matter where you are – listen to your hometown favorites or follow a new favorite until you get home. (Android, IOS)

Spotify Another music app Spotify allows you to search by musical preference, artist or even song title. You can also build playlists or listen to playlists designed to play additional music of similar taste or even artist favorites. This is the modern version of the road trip hits tape. (Android, IOS)

Deals on the Fly

Gas Buddy Fuel is a necessary expense when traveling and you are often at the mercy of the near exit stations looking to make money from others in your situation. Gas Buddy lets you check prices as you go, allowing you to better plan your next stop. Because the information is obtained via crowdsourcing info is up to date in high use areas, of course other out of the way areas may lack information. (Android, IOS)

TripAdvisor After fuel a nice place to stay is another necessary expense of the road trip. But this does not mean you need to blindly go from hotel to hotel when you've reached your limit, hoping to not get gouged. Not only can you search for available rooms by city, zip code or near your current location you can also make reservations on the fly.

Don't Let This Happen To You – Avoid Fire In An RV

Imagine this. You're traveling to your favorite camping spot to celebrate Memorial Day. Suddenly, while rolling at 60 miles an hour, your fifth wheel bursts into flames! Don't let this happen to you. You *can* prevent fire in an RV. This family escaped harm, but your family could be next. Don't wait till something happens. Prepare now to avoid danger.

This article will walk you through the steps necessary to keep your rig safe from billowing

flames.

Okay, think about it. Most motorhomes have flammable materials. Motorhomes sit on top of tanks filled with diesel or gasoline. (Scary, right?) Yet, few RV owners have a clear plan on how to fight a fire in an RV. Here are the top 10 ways to prepare for a fire emergency, and keep your RV safe from harm. (And let you rest worry-free each night!)

Know The Trouble Spots

Whether you own a Class A, Class B, Class C, a travel trailer, fifth wheel, or camper... for safety, you need to know the most likely trouble spots. There are several areas where RV fires can start, but the fridge and the engine are at the top of the list. Electrical shorts in the coach can also contribute to sudden flames. Combustibles like curtains, towels, paper plates, and simple grease fires can start kitchen fires.

Other trouble spots include: a dragging brake, which can ignite the brake fluid, and rubber hoses in a radiator, or a heater hose. Create a troubleshooting checklist and follow your fire safety inspection each month.

Have The Right Kind of Fire Extinguishers

There are different types of extinguishers to fight a fire in an RV. The first is dry chemical. A dry chemical extinguisher is a popular choice for the inside of your rig. This extinguisher must be accessible. A dry chemical extinguisher sprays a fine powder over the fire using pressurized nitrogen. It's used on electrical fires, as well as kitchen fires, but remember these chemicals are toxic.

A CO2 or carbon dioxide extinguisher is helpful in various kinds of fire. These extinguishers suffocate the fire, by creating a high pressure frost or dry ice. As with any fire extinguisher, be sure to check your unit every six months. Watch for pressure leaks as they may need servicing.

Consider An Automatic Extinguisher

Believe it or not, you can install an automatic extinguisher to help you fight fire in an RV. These units are usually installed in the basement or storage compartment of the coach. ColdFire extinguishers remain connected within your engine bay. Automatic extinguishers provide extra safety in case of an RV fire.

Prepare An Exit Strategy

Every RVer needs a two-exit strategy. Take time to look at your windows. Which windows are easy to open? Do you have safety windows installed in your rig? Consider leaving a step-stool outside your window, in case of emergency. Once you exit the coach, where will the family meet? How will you get your animals out? Practice your exit, and make sure that everyone in your RV knows what to do. If you have visitors staying with you, make sure they know how to open and close both the windows and doors.

Know Where To Turn Things Off

Everyone in your party should know how to unhook the electricity, and close the propane valves. They should know where the fire extinguishers are, and how to turn them on and off. Every RV should have a fire extinguisher in the bedroom, kitchen, and engine compartment. It is also a great idea to have an extinguisher prepared and accessible outside the trailer.

Inspect Your Location

When traveling, spend time getting to know your location. Are there neighbors who could help in an emergency? Do you have access to a phone? Are you parked amongst the underbrush or trees (both of which are flammable)? "Safety first" *can* save lives.

Install Fire Alarms along with CO Detectors

Fire alarms save lives. Make sure to update your fire alarms in your rig, and don't forget the CO detectors. Campers can emit a variety of unsafe gasses. By installing a CO detector, you will avoid deadly, preventable accidents.

Practice Unhooking In A Hurry

Whether you tow or are towed, you must know how to unhook your vehicle in an emergency. Practice working together as a team, and time your efforts. The faster you can unhook in the day-to-day, the better prepared you will be for a fire in an RV.

Certify Your Propane Systems

Many RV's rely on propane systems to cook the food, and keep the fridge cold. While propane is easy to use, it is also one of the deadliest features in a rig. Be sure to shut the propane off

before moving your rig. Your fridge can stay cold for many hours, without having the propane tanks on. Always check your flue before taking your rig out of storage. (A bird's nest can be dangerous.) Remember, propane burners can overheat. Watch the back of your fridge, to make sure it does not overheat. Err on the side of caution, and have your propane systems inspected and certified every year.

Store Combustibles The Right Way

Soiled rags, damp charcoal, batteries, and kitchen items can all cause spontaneous combustion. Keep all flammable items in containers with lids. It's better to be safe than sorry. Remember, your gallery is a fire waiting to happen. Keep paper products, curtains, dish towels, etc. away from the stove at all times.

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