

Subject:

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When is it Too Windy to Drive an RV?

by Mike Scarpignato

Any experienced RVer will tell you that driving an RV in windy conditions can be very dangerous. We all know how dangerous it is to drive in the rain and some of us have also experienced driving in the snow! But all too often we underestimate windy conditions. Why? Because you can't see the wind like you can see snow and rain but it can be just as dangerous if you aren't prepared. And we are used to driving our cars during very windy conditions with no problems at all. So, we are lulled into a false sense of security.

So, when is it too windy to drive an RV? A good rule thumb is to avoid driving an RV in winds that exceed 50 mph. Wind speeds approaching 60 mph are enough to overturn an RV. The larger the RV the more surface area. And the more surface area the more likely it is that the wind can tip you over.

Below we discuss many factors to consider when driving your RV in windy conditions, tips for driving in the wind and safety concerns, as well.

How Does the Wind Affect Driving an RV or Travel Trailer?

The wind is not something to disregard when driving your RV. One common problem with driving an RV in high winds, especially if it's a travel trailer being towed or an RV with a tow car behind is the trailer or tow vehicle can swerve into other lanes uncontrollably. I've been driving down the highway behind another truck towing a travel trailer and saw the wind catch the travel trailer. It began to shake and swerve back and forth uncontrollably.

Not only does this present a problem for the RV driver but also for the other drivers on the road. The swerving is caused by a side wind, or crosswind, that is wind blowing on either side of your RV. And that swerving can add to the force of the wind and cause the travel trailer to tip over.

A straight on wind poses a different issue. Head on wind will make your RV feel bumpy. This is called bucking. While safer than side winds it is still not to be taken lightly.

It's also important to understand how your particular vehicle behaves on the road because every RV is different in terms of balance and weight. Therefore, it can take different levels of wind before it becomes a problem. However, if you experience either of these situations pull over and wait for the wind to calm down. It's not worth risking your life, or others, due to wind-related issues.

Can Wind Actually Tip An RV Over?

Yes, the wind can actually tip an RV over. Especially while driving. The force of the wind combined with the wind force generated by a moving RV or travel camper can create enough

force to tip an RV over. If the wind exceeds 50 mph, it is a good idea to pull over and get off the road. An RV tipping over is not something you or anyone else on the road would like to see.

The likelihood of wind knocking over a parked RV is slim to none, but it will create a somewhat rocking feeling if you don't have leveling jacks. The last thing you want on your vacation is your living space to feel like a turbulent airplane.

Leveling jacks can help to stabilize your RV in addition to keeping your RV level. One way to try to prevent the full strength of wind hitting the side of your RV when parked is to park it so the front or rear is facing into the wind.

Driving Tips for Windy Conditions

The best tip for driving in windy conditions is to know your limitations. Driving limitations are all about what you are comfortable with. Some owners don't drive in winds over 20 mph while others are comfortable driving in winds up to 40 mph. Understanding your limitations is essential when determining your comfort zone so you know when it's time to pull over for a bit. Besides that, one of the things that can help immensely is investing in a sound suspension system. This includes things like installing anti-sway bars in the front and back of the vehicle as well as making sure you have good shocks installed.

Quite often, it is also raining when there is excessive wind. So good tires with deep tread can help reduce how much you might slide on the road. When dealing with high winds, it is vital to be more attentive to your surroundings when driving. For example, if you are driving in a heavily wooded area, the wind will not affect your vehicle as much as when you are driving in an open area. Just be aware of this and don't let the open area catch you by surprise.

Some other great tips for driving in wind are:

Be on the Lookout for Wind Restriction Warnings on the Highway Signs – very often the state highway signs on bridges or overpasses wind restrictions.

The Lighter Your RV the Greater the Risk of Tipping Over – Be aware of your RV weight. If you are traveling without supplies on board your RV will be lighter and at higher risk for tipping over.

Driver Slower – Remember that the faster you drive the more friction your RV creates with the air. Add that to the wind friction in high winds and enough energy can be created to tip you over.

Pull Over and Park – If it's too windy just wait it out. No destination is so important that it can't wait a day.

Check the Weather When Planning Your Trip – If you check the weather before you hit the road you may be able to drive around storms rather than straight into them.

Factors to Consider When Driving Your RV in Windy Conditions

The two biggest factors to consider when driving in the wind are RV weight and wind direction.

What is your RV weight when loaded? In other words, did you pack heavy for a long trip or light for a weekend getaway? Obviously, the heavier the RV, the less likely wind is to become a factor. On the other hand, if the RV is lighter, you will have to pay closer attention to wind as it can become a factor with a smaller vehicle.

The factors to consider when driving your RV is the direction of the wind. Is the wind blowing toward your RV or against the side? And is the wind causing you to leave your lane while driving? Swerving out of your lane can be just as dangerous as tipping over. Especially if there are other drivers on the road.

Safe Driving Speeds for Windy Conditions

Because of the different shapes, sizes, and weights of RVs, there is no "one speed fits all" answer. The more susceptible your vehicle is to the wind, the slower you will need to go. It is also suggested that you try to stay about 10-20 mph below the posted speed limit. As for heavier vehicles, it can't hurt to knock 5-10 MPH off your normal speed just to be safe and not take any unnecessary risks.

Examples of RVs more likely to be affected by wind are fifth wheels, travel trailers, pop-ups,

and in some cases, even class Bs. Vehicles that are large enough that they typically won't be heavily affected by a small amount of wind include large, heavy fifth wheels, class A and Class C RVs. However, that doesn't mean wind can't affect your vehicle, and it is still beneficial to be safe and take the precautions.

How Much Wind is Too Much?

Generally speaking, wind over 50 mph is too much wind to safely drive your RV. But, if the wind is causing you to lose control of your RV then you should pull over and wait out the wind. It simply isn't worth continuing on if you know you are not in control of the RV. If you know ahead of time that wind is in the forecast for your trip, it may not be a bad idea to attempt to postpone your trip or drive around a storm.

What are Wind Restrictions?

In some areas, the local government implements wind restrictions, which substantially limit the traffic allowed on the roads while the wind is heavy. They typically restrict big trucks and RVs. This information is essential to check before departing for your trip. Otherwise, you could be in for an unfriendly surprise. Wind restrictions are usually implemented when there are winds of 50 mph or more for 10 minutes or more. Certain bridges also utilize wind restrictions, especially if they span over water because wind gusts are more likely in open areas. Please make sure you are doing your research before departing for your trip to ensure you won't run into any issues.

The wind is not something you should take lightly, and while the impact is different for different vehicles, it still affects everyone. It is best to use common sense while driving in heavy winds. If your RV feels out of control at all, it's time to pull over. It's also important to keep an eye on road signs for wind restrictions too. Hopefully, this article acted as a guide for how to handle windy conditions as an RV owner, be safe and happy traveling.

The 12 Important Steps for Towing an RV Safely

There are 12 Important Steps for Towing an RV Safely and we would like to share them with you here today. Understanding and following these safety tips will help ensure you a knowledgeable and safe trip when earning to tow an RV.

1. Never trust that every truck, car, or SUV will pull the same.
2. Always obey the speed limit and slow down while in inclement weather. Getting to the destination safely trumps getting there fast every time.
3. If the weight of the trailer gets close to the weight of the vehicle, it will throw you around like a ragdoll if not equipped with surge brakes or electric.
4. For anyone getting ready to tow, you should know the weight of the trailer being towed and the capacity of the pulling vehicle. The Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) will determine whether you need a weight distribution hitch and class of vehicle hitch.
5. There are anti-sway bars on the market with controllers to help steady a trailer. If you are in doubt, put one on. It might save your life.
6. If you have ever passed a semi and felt the vehicle shake a little from the turbulent air getting pushed around you, multiply that by a whole lot and you will understand what it feels like to be pulling a trailer when a sheer wind hits you or another large vehicle.
7. No one can teach you every scenario you will face while traveling, so simply be careful. Always be aware of your surroundings.
8. Always check your tire pressure. It does not take much to make a little movement worse when your tires are not inflated properly.
9. Tires are not all the same. There are tires designed for heavier loads or light passenger tires. To prevent a blowout, make sure you check. Also, make sure your tires are adequate for pulling.
10. Always check your ball size. The size is almost always stated on the top of the ball. Smaller trailers usually have 2" ball. Most travel trailers I've seen have 2-5/16".
11. Safety chains. Use them every time. They are the only thing keeping your trailer from veering into oncoming traffic if the trailer comes loose from the ball.
12. If you are unsure whether to tow something or not, always err on the side of caution.

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A four-air bag hitch is designed to allow the hitch head to move on the air bags in any direction based on articulation from the trailer itself. The result of such continuous motion results in a smooth ride and decrease chucking and surging forces from the trailer on the truck. In addition to the movement from the trailer, the 4-airbag hitch support 100% of the pin weight, increasing the effectiveness of the air springs. This results in a smooth and controlled motion for the trailer on the truck.

[Receiver Hitches](#) – If you want a smoother ride and the ultimate in control, then you need the advantage provided by Air Safe Hitches with the Receiver Hitch by AirSafe™. With an Air Safe Receiver Hitch you will get a 90% smoother ride than with a traditional hitch, which can save you money. Glide across the highways and roads avoiding the constant bouncing, which leads to a decrease in gas mileage and early wear and tear on your tires. Our Air Safe Receiver Hitches also reduce stress on your truck and trailer suspension and help eliminate breakages inside the trailer. Our design allows total air ride vs the **Shocker Hitch** with the hinged approach.

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[Click to check out the benefits of an air hitch vs a rigid hitch.](#)

How to Overcome Your Fear of Towing an RV

by Mark and Angela Hardman

The best suggestions we can make of overcoming your fear of towing an RV trailer is to **REPLACE FEAR WITH SAFETY**. If you follow these safety suggestions of towing an RV behind your vehicle, it should help you to feel much more comfortable in the moment. Here are the 12 Steps to Take to Replace Fear with Safety and How to Overcome Your Fear of Towing an RV.

Know Your Vehicles

Know your vehicles-know your towing vehicle and RV GVRW Gross Vehicle Recommended Weight or max tow ratings. When you know your max towing ratings and you follow the guidelines, you can replace the fear of losing control of your vehicle with the safety of knowing you are pulling the right RV with the right vehicle.

Load Rating For Tires

The load rating for a tire will determine how stiff the side wall is. The stiffer the side wall, the

less side sway it will have when properly inflated.

When you know you have the correct tires on both vehicles and have your spare tires available you can replace the fear of being stranded on the side of the road with tire issues with the safety of knowing your tires are appropriate.

While Towing

Just like a car, when you enter your towing vehicle to tow an RV, it is important to check your mirrors on your vehicle to ensure you can see all around your RV and especially those blind spots. Having proper Towing Mirrors on your tow vehicle is especially important. Investing in a Backup Camera puts you at a great advantage in this area.

When you know you can see all around your vehicle and RV and your blind spots are open with the use of the proper mirrors and a backup camera, you can replace the fear while driving with the safety of knowing you have the best view of most areas of your RV.

Allowing a Safe Distance

When you allow a safe distance between you and other vehicles, you can replace the fear of an accident with the safety of knowing there is plenty of room to maneuver around something that may come your way.

Stay In Your Lane

Staying in your own lane and keeping your RV towed between the white outer line and the inner yellow line(s) allows you to replace the fear of going off the side of the road with the safety of knowing you are keeping your vehicles in the right place.

Making Wide Turns

The best thing you can do is check your mirrors while making wide turns. Pay attention to how your RV tracks behind your vehicle. Replace the fear of making too wide of a turn and going into someone else's lane with the safety of knowing how to correctly make a wide turn by using mirrors and tracking.

Breaking

Always allow for braking ahead of time when you can. This includes the above-mentioned suggestion of allowing a safe distance between you and other vehicles. Replace the fear of not being able to stop soon enough to avoid a problem with the safety of knowing you are allowing plenty of space between you and others around you to stop.

Have a PLAN!

Plan your route to eliminate the worry of bridges, construction areas, and all clearance of your roof.

Use a Map App that shows construction areas to plan your route.

Replace the fear of coming to an overpass that is too short, a construction area that is unplanned, and clearance over-all with the safety of knowing you can clear all obstacles on your path to your destination.

Weather Conditions

Check the weather forecast from your home to your destination and ensure you are comfortable with traveling on your departure day under those weather conditions.

Replace the fear of towing your vehicle in hazardous weather with the safety of knowing you are going to travel on a day when the weather is appropriate for you.

Allow Time

Allow plenty of time to get to your destination before dark. Additionally, allow for stops along the way for fuel and a rest break if needed. Also planning where you are going to stop for fuel and a rest break is helpful to ensure you have plenty of room to maneuver at that location. Replace the fear of arriving at your destination after dark with the safety of planning ahead and allowing plenty of time to arrive early.

Practice

Practice, practice, practice! That is how you improve on anything in life and it's the best way to improve your skills on towing an RV Trailer. Start off in a large, open parking lot and practice driving around. Next, practice backing up. You can use cones to help guide you. Do not panic if you fail the first time. Practice makes perfect! Take your time! Replace the fear overall of

towing an RV with the safety of practicing!

Ask for Help

Finally, if you are still apprehensive about towing your RV for the first time, ask for help from a friend or relative. Consider asking someone to tow it for you to your destination and ride alongside them to get more comfortable with the process. Then have them ride alongside you while you tow your RV back home. Continue doing this until you are comfortable with trying it alone. Replace the fear of pressure to tow your RV from the very beginning with the safety that you can depend on someone else to help guide you until you are comfortable with towing it yourself.

Rest Areas: Is it Legal to Park Overnight in an RV? – A State By State List

Any RV driver who has traveled long distances across the United States knows that sometimes you just want to stop overnight somewhere convenient to the highway to get some sleep.

If you're stopping at night and plan to get up early to continue your roadtrip, you may not want to spend \$30-\$40 in an RV park if you may not even connect to its utilities. But what about staying in a rest area?

You may be eyeing rest areas right now as you drive down the highway. You may be wondering, can we just pull over and stay in the rest area for the night or will we get a ticket?

Having found ourselves in this situation recently as we drove across the country, I decided to find the official answer. (Despite not knowing at the time whether it was legal or not, we stayed in a stunningly beautiful rest area in Idaho on the Snake River. See this post.)

If you've looked for the answer as to whether recreational vehicles can stay overnight in a rest area, you are likely finding conflicting information, as I did when I started this search. Some websites have outdated or inaccurate information, unfortunately.

Hence, I did some research on the topic by reviewing current state statutes, regulations, rules, and any other policy information I could find online about whether it is legal for vehicles to park overnight in highway rest areas and any parking hour limits.

If I couldn't find a clear answer, I contacted the state department of transportation for more information to see if they have any official or unofficial policies on the matter.

The state-by-state list of results is below.

Another handy tool we've used is *The Next Exit* book which lists all of the upcoming rest areas, as well as amenities at the next exit off the highway. It's super useful for knowing how much further you need to drive to get to a rest area, campground, gas station (including which ones have diesel), restaurants, or other location. Websites and apps are certainly useful, but having a handy book at your fingertips makes it so much easier.

What are Rest Areas?

Rest areas, sometimes referred to as rest stops, are typically located every hour or so along highways in the United States. Congress passed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 which created the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways and included a provision for the construction of safety rest areas along the highways.

Given that the areas in which highways were constructed tended to be in remote and previously lightly traveled areas, facilities for motorists were frequently sparsely located so drivers needed safe places to take a break along the newly constructed highways.

Two years later, in 1958, the American Association of State Highway Officials released a policy document that outlined site guidelines and national standardization requirements for rest areas.

AASHO's rest area document stated that:

"REST AREAS ARE TO BE PROVIDED ON INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS AS A SAFETY MEASURE. SAFETY REST AREAS ARE OFF-ROAD SPACES WITH PROVISIONS FOR EMERGENCY STOPPING AND RESTING BY MOTORISTS FOR SHORT PERIODS. THEY HAVE FREEWAY TYPE ENTRANCES AND EXIT CONNECTIONS, PARKING AREAS, BENCHES AND TABLES AND MAY HAVE TOILETS AND WATER SUPPLY WHERE PROPER MAINTENANCE AND SUPERVISION ARE ASSURED. THEY MAY BE DESIGNED FOR SHORT-TIME PICNIC USE IN ADDITION TO PARKING OF VEHICLES FOR SHORT PERIODS." (AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY OFFICIALS)

Since then, many states have added state welcome centers with promotional materials about each state.

Some states have also been expanding their rest areas to meet the needs for safe parking places for long-haul truckers (e.g., see North Carolina's response below) and for RVers. For example, Ohio has developed overnight parking for RVs on the Ohio Turnpike, complete with electrical hookups, potable water available, and an RV dump station. These are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Rest areas have also faced budget cuts from states, with some rest areas being closed, much to the chagrin of travelers.

So What's the Answer?

The answer as to whether you can stay overnight in your RV depends on several factors: 1) what state you're in; 2) what rest area you're at within that state; and 3) how comfortable you are ignoring signs saying that you can't camp or park overnight.

Here's the basic gist:

- **Official state policy response:** Only some states have official policies on the books about how long you can "rest" at a rest area. Most states prohibit "camping" at rest areas, but camping is not the same as "resting" in your RV. If you're not convinced that "resting" and "camping" are different, see the emailed response to my question about whether it is legal to park overnight at a rest area from the Louisiana Department of Transportation below, which states "You can stop and sleep overnight. You just can't open a pull out i.e. no "camping.""
- **Unofficial state policy response :** The unofficial overwhelming response I received from states to my question about whether it is legal to park overnight in an RV at a rest area is that rest areas are there to keep drivers safe and that a tired driver is not a safe driver. Hence they are not going to ask tired RV drivers to move on unless the area is unsafe for some reason. For example, North Carolina's Department of Transportation representative emailed me to say, "Rest areas are about safety and we do not want sleepy drivers on the road causing accidents."
- **Unofficial RV community response:** The unofficial answer from the RV'ing community is that many people "rest" overnight in their RV at rest areas along highways all the time, and only a tiny percentage have ever been asked to move on, despite there being "no overnight parking" signs posted. This seems to confirm the unofficial state policy response above.

Each state has its own laws, rules, regulations, and other policies regarding rest areas. In most states, the official rules lie with the state department of transportation, given that highways fall under the purview of the Federal Highway Administration.

In my quest to find the official state policies on RVs staying overnight at rest areas, I reached out to the state's department of transportation (DOT) if I couldn't find an official policy online.

The following list of states provides a link to the actual policy text concerning staying overnight at rest areas, if I was able to located such a policy. If I received a pertinent response from the state DOT, I included that response too.

Some state DOTs responded that some other state agency was responsible for patrolling the rest areas and were not able to provide a clear answer. I left those blank, until I'm able to find out more information about the state rest area policy or lack of policy.

I will fill in the remaining states as I obtain more information. If you know of specific information about a particular state, please add a comment below and I'll update this list.

Alabama Alaska

- “The general rule is that motorists can use rest stops to rest, even at night—but not to camp. If a motorist has set up shop and appears to be camping, they can be asked to leave (and potentially ticketed) by law enforcement. A good rule of thumb for any motorist would be not to park in any rest stop for longer than 24 hours. (Source: Emailed response from Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, 11/14/2018)

Arizona

- “The following are prohibited in the rest area: camping/campfires” (Source: Arizona Department of Transportation, Rest Area Rules)

Arkansas

- “Overnight only. There is not [a] statute, just signage for each rest area at the location.” (Source: Emailed response from the Arkansas Department of Transportation, 11/1/2018)

California

- “You may: Stay up to 8 hours in any 24 hour period.” (Source: California Department of Transportation, Rest Area Usage Policy)

Colorado

- “There is no overnight parking or camping allowed in Colorado’s rest areas.” (Source: Colorado Department of Transportation, Colorado Rest Areas & Welcome Centers)

Connecticut

- “I’m not sure there is a written policy or statute but for the most part the State Police will not bother RV’s that park at our rest areas overnight as long as you’re discrete.” (Source: Emailed response from the Connecticut Department of Transportation, 11/1/2018)

Delaware

- “The Smyrna Rest Area has a parking lot for truck drivers to take a rest period located in the back. It is acceptable to use an RV to rest with a time limit of 8 hours in the back lot only, but there is no camping allowed.” (Source: Emailed response from the Delaware Department of Transportation, 11/8/2018)

Florida

- “Overnight camping is not permitted, but visitors may stay for up to three hours.” (Source: Florida Department of Transportation, Rest Area Information)

Georgia

- “Nothing in this Code section shall prohibit the normal, customary, and temporary use of safety rest areas, welcome centers, tourist centers, and other property of the department or state highway system specifically designated for purposes of resting,

sleeping, eating, or other similar activities by persons traveling by vehicle.” (Source: Office Code of Georgia, 32-6-6. Camping on Roadways; penalty)

Hawaii

- “Certain uses of parked vehicles prohibited between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.; definition; exceptions. (a) No person shall use any vehicle for purposes of human habitation, whether or not the vehicle is designed or equipped for that purpose, while the vehicle is parked on any roadway, street, or highway or other public property between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. or while the vehicle is parked on private property without authorization of the owner or occupant authorizing both the parking of the vehicle there and its use for purposes of human habitation. (b) As used in this section “purposes of human habitation” includes use as a dwelling place, living abode, or sleeping place. (c) This section does not apply to the parking of vehicles and their use for purposes of human habitation in parks, camps, and other recreational areas in compliance with law and applicable rules and regulations, or under emergency conditions in the interest of vehicular safety.” (Source: Hawaii Statewide Traffic Code, Chapter 291C, §291C-112)

Idaho

- “Time Limits. Occupancy of the rest areas on interstate highways is limited to ten (10) consecutive hours. Occupancy of rest areas on other routes of the State Highway System is limited to sixteen (16) consecutive hours.” (Source: Idaho Transportation Department, Rules Governing Safety Rest Areas, IDAPA 39.03.50)

Illinois Indiana

- “Our rest areas include parking spaces to use the facility. If there is parking space available, you may park there. You may sleep in your car, RV or truck, but please note that you are assuming a safety risk by taking that action. INDOT is not liable for any activity that may occur while you are parked there, regardless of the time of day.” (Source: Emailed response from the Indiana Department of Transportation, 11/1/2018)

Iowa

- “The posted rules and regulations at Iowa’s rest areas prohibit camping or staying at a rest area for more than 24 hours without extenuating circumstances. As long as you’re legally parked, staying overnight will not be a problem.” (Source: Emailed response from the Iowa Department of Transportation, 11/1/2018)

Kansas

- “The following restrictions shall apply to the use of any roadside facility maintained by the department: (1) Overnight camping shall be permitted for one night only. (2) Vehicles shall not be parked in a manner which obstructs the roadside facility. (3) Parking for more than 24 hours shall be prohibited.” (Source: Kansas Department of Transportation regulations, 36-32-2)

Kentucky

- “Time Limit; Restricted Uses. (1) Except as provided in Section 3 of this administrative regulation, the use of a safety rest area located within the right-of-way of limited access facilities, as defined in KRS 177.220, shall be limited to a maximum of four (4) hours during any twenty-four (24) hour period for the same person or group of persons.” (Source: Kentucky Administrative Regulations, 603 KAR 5:040. Use of rest areas)

Louisiana

- “You can stop and sleep overnight. You just can’t open a pull out i.e. no “camping.” If you are staying for more than 4 hours, find the security guard and inform them that you will be staying for a nap so he won’t bang on your door for a “wellness check.”” (Source: Emailed response from the Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development, 11/1/2018)

Maine

- “MaineDOT rest areas are specifically signed for ‘No Camping’ and ‘No Overnight Parking.’ These facilities are intended for things like: stretching your legs, getting travel information, using the restroom, getting a snack from the vending machine, walking the dog, or using the cell phone. If a person is over-tired, they can certainly take a brief ‘power nap’ to enable them to continue on their journey in a safe manner, but under no circumstances are these facilities intended to be used for an overnight stay. Hotels and campgrounds exist for that purpose.” (Source: Emailed response from the Maine Department of Transportation, 11/5/2018)

Maryland

- “Length of Time for Use: Visitors may not use an area for more than 3 hours without a permit from the caretaker or the Maryland State Police.” (Source: Code of Maryland Regulations, Control and Use of Rest Areas, 11.04.07.07)
- “Camping and Overnight Parking: Camping and overnight parking are prohibited.” (Source: Code of Maryland Regulations, Control and Use of Rest Areas, 11.04.07.11)

Massachusetts Michigan

- “From what I can tell, there are no cut and dry rules about this in Michigan. I don’t believe there is any specific mandate from MDOT that prohibits overnight parking...” (Source: Emailed response from the Michigan Department of Transportation, 11/2/2018)

Minnesota

- “Visitor length of stay limits: All other motorists are permitted to stop at rest areas for up to four hours, where posted. See MN Statutes § 168B.04.” (Source: Minnesota Department of Transportation, Safety Rest Areas & Waysides)

Mississippi

- “As driver safety is paramount to our agency, we provide and maintain rest areas for both commercial and non-commercial motorist to rest should they feel it is needed. It is allowed to park overnight in a recreational vehicle. The limit on parking is 24 hours. I should note that within the truck parking area, lateral space is limited so we ask folks no to pull out any extensions that would go into the adjacent parking space or cause a safety issue.” (Source: Emailed response from Mississippi Department of Transportation, 11/24/2018)

Missouri Montana Nebraska

- “Overnight camping or parking is prohibited. Maximum length of stay permitted is ten (10) hours. If vehicles remain longer than the permitted time, contact the NDOR Area Supervisor.” (Source: Rest Area Rules and Regulations, Guidance Document)

Nevada New Hampshire New Jersey

- “I’m not aware of any policies regarding how long an RV or truck driver may stay in NJDOT-maintained rest stops, however I know drivers do sleep overnight.” (Source: Emailed response from New Jersey Department of Transportation, 11/9/2018)
- “New Jersey Turnpike Authority regulations limit truck drivers to 10 hours in the service area parking lots.” (Source: Emailed response from the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, 11/9/2018)
- “Legally parked vehicles, such as vehicles parked in a designated rest area for not more than 12 hours, or vehicles used or to be used in the construction, operation or maintenance of public utility facilities and which are left in a manner which does not interfere with the normal movement of traffic shall not be considered abandoned vehicles for the purposes of this section.” (Source: New Jersey General and Permanent Statutes, 39:4-56.5. Abandonment of motor vehicle)

New Mexico

- “Remaining in rest areas and similar facilities; penalty: No person shall remain, or willfully allow any property under his control to remain, in any publicly owned and controlled rest and recreation area or sanitary or tourist information facility, which area or facility is located immediately adjacent to a public highway and is intended for use by persons travelling the highway, for more than twenty-four hours in any three-day period, unless otherwise provided by law.” (Source: New Mexico Statutes, 67-8-22.)

New York

- “Parking of vehicles for longer than three hours during the hours of darkness is not permitted in any rest or parking area or scenic overlook; provided, however, that a commercial motor vehicle, as defined in section 820.1 of this Title, may, except as provided otherwise by the Department of Transportation by the posting of signs, remain motionless at such an area for up to 10 hours if the commercial vehicle driver is present and is required to use this period as off duty or sleeper berth time to allow rest in accordance with Federal or State motor carrier safety hours of service regulations.” (Source: Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York, 17 CRR-NY 156.3)
- New York State Thruway Travel Plazas: “Please be advised that Thruway Authority Service Areas are posted for a maximum stay of 4 hours and are not designed for multiple day stays.” (Source: New York State Thruway Authority, Service Areas)

North Carolina

- “We do have a standing policy of no stays longer than 4 hours. We do however allow truckers to spend their allotted parking time be it day or night to fulfill the law on driving time. We do have RV owners spend the night/day at rest areas. Rest areas are about safety and we do not want sleepy drivers on the road causing accidents. We do not allow long term camping or spending more than a night/day in North Carolina rest areas.” (Source: Emailed response from the North Carolina Department of Transportation)

North Dakota

- “RV’s are allowed to stop and park overnight at public rest areas in North Dakota. Many truck drivers spend their 10 hours off at these locations. It is illegal to leave a vehicle parked at a location for more than 48 hours.” (Source: Emailed response from the North Dakota Department of Transportation, 11/4/2018)

Ohio

- “No camping or overnight parking is permitted.” (Source: Ohio Administrative Code, 5501:2-4-01 Control and use of rest areas and roadside parks)

- An exception is on the Ohio Turnpike: “Overnight Parking for RVs and Travel Trailers: Eight service plazas* listed above offer overnight parking areas for RVs and travel trailers. The parking areas are open for occupancy for one night only and are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. RV parking areas offer electrical outlets (20 and 30-120V; 50 AMP-240V), a wastewater dump station and potable water filling station for a \$20.00 fee.” (Source: Ohio Turnpike Commission, Service Plazas)

Oklahoma Oregon

- “Prohibited Activities: Setting up a tent or other structure, camping, or remaining in a Rest Area for more than 12 hours within any 24-hour period.” (Source: Oregon Department of Transportation, Highway Division, 734-030-0010)

Pennsylvania

- “The following specified activities or actions are prohibited in roadside rest areas: Parking or standing of a vehicle for more than 2 hours in a single 24-hour period or in excess of the posted time limit. Vehicles unattended for more than 24 hours will be considered abandoned and subject to removal and storage at the sole cost and expense of the owner.” (Source: Pennsylvania State Code: Chapter 443. Roadside Rest Areas)

Rhode Island South Carolina South Dakota

- “Temporary rest stops permitted–Time limit. No person temporarily resting in any vehicle is in violation of the provisions of § 31-7-15. For purposes of this section, temporarily resting means stopping, parking, or otherwise keeping or occupying any vehicle in a rest area, or any portion thereof not officially designated for camping, for not more than three consecutive hours or, if the driver of a commercial motor vehicle subject to the provisions of 49 C.F.R. Part 395, as of January 1, 2009, for not more than ten consecutive hours.” (Source: South Dakota State Code, 31-7-17)
- “Camping prohibited at rest areas on interstate system–Petty offense. No person may camp at any rest area established by the department within and adjacent to the national system of interstate highways in South Dakota. A violation of this section is a petty offense.” (Source: South Dakota State Code, 31-7-15)

Tennessee

- “No overnight parking is allowed. There is a two-hour parking limit.” (Source: Tennessee Department of Transportation, Welcome Center & Rest Areas)

Texas

- “A person commits an offense if the person remains at a rest area for longer than 24 hours or erects a tent, shelter, booth, or structure at the rest area...” (Source: Texas Transportation Code – TRANSP § 545.411. Use of Rest Area: Offense)

Utah

- “All rest areas are posted for no overnight camping. However, extended stays are permitted and are monitored by the on-site staff and the Highway Patrol.” (Source: Utah Department of Transportation, Rest Areas)

Vermont

- “Please note the following:
 - Limited-Access Facilities: State Traffic Committee Regulations, Article 2.11 prohibit overnight camping along limited-access facilities, including rest areas, except at particular rest areas where the Committee approves overnight camping. (However, as far as I know, the Committee has never authorized overnight camping at any of the rest areas along limited-access

facilities.) In Vermont, limited-access facilities include the entire Interstate System, as well as certain segments of other highways, such as US 2 between St. Johnsbury and Danville, US 4 between the NY/VT state line and Rutland, US 7 between Bennington and Dorset, the Vergennes Bypass segment of US 7 in Ferrisburgh, and VT 279 (the Bennington Bypass).

- Other Highways: 19 V.S.A. § 1106 generally prohibits overnight camping on any part of a public highway right-of-way. Another statute, 23 V.S.A. § 1106 also prohibits overnight camping at State highway rest areas, picnic grounds, parking areas, or park-and-ride facilities, unless a particular facility has been designated for overnight camping by the State Traffic Committee. (Again, I am not aware of any particular facility designated for overnight camping by the Committee.)
- There is no specific hour limit defining the point at which use of a rest area becomes “overnight camping.” (Source: Emailed response from the Vermont Agency of Transportation, 11/2/2018)

Virginia

- “Can I park overnight or use the rest area as a park and ride location? No, overnight parking is not allowed and unattended vehicles will be towed at the owner’s expense.” (Source: Virginia Department of Transportation, Safety Rest Area – Most Frequently Asked Questions)
- “Waysides and Rest Areas.
 - A. Waysides identified by name and without lights shall be open from 8 a.m. to one hour after sunset. Areas having security lighting will be open at all times.
 - B. When an area is posted for limited parking, the operator of each vehicle may be required to sign a register setting forth the time of arrival.
 - C. When posted, parking shall be limited to the period specified.
 - D. No overnight parking will be permitted.
 - E. Camping is not permitted at any time.” (Source: Virginia State Code, 24VAC30-50-10)

Washington

- “You may: Park only in designated parking areas for a maximum of 8 hours, unless otherwise posted.” (Source: Washington State Department of Transportation, Safety Rest Area Rules and FAQ’s)

West Virginia

- “Overnight parking for tractor trailers (with the exception of oversized vehicles) and campers is allowed at the travel plazas and the rest areas in the areas designated for large vehicles.” (Source: West Virginia Parkways Authority)

Wisconsin

- “Camping Policy: Wisconsin Statute 86.025 prohibits camping by any person on public highways or adjacent lands.” (Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Rest Area Guidelines)
- “Long-term Parking: Long term parking at highway rest areas is not allowed, as it is not consistent with the purpose and design of the facilities and can cause problems relative to the use and maintenance of the site. Long term would be considered as vehicles parked at a roadside site for more than a 24-hour continuous period, occupied or not. If a vehicle is parked at a roadside facility for more than this time period, it may be reported to the State Patrol and the procedure for removal will begin.” (Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Rest Area Guidelines)

Wyoming

- “Camping is prohibited at rest areas, but drivers who need rest to safely continue their travels can sleep in their vehicles in the parking lots. The National Sleep Foundation

recommends a nap of 15-20 minutes to improve alertness and driving skills. If you need more than a nap, you can sleep in your vehicle for a longer period, but don't pitch a tent, extend your RV's slideouts or otherwise set up for an extended stay." (Source: Wyoming Department of Transportation, Wyoming Rest Areas brochure)

RV Community Experiences with Overnight Parking at Rest Areas

A review of the comments posted online by RV'ers about overnight parking in rest areas seems to indicate that most people who have stayed overnight in a motorhome, fifth wheel, travel trailer, etc at a highway rest area have never been ticketed or even requested to move from their parking spot.

For example, see the sample statements posted online below:

- "We travel a lot and use rest areas all the time. Even the 3 hour posted ones. Haven't been bothered once in 25 years. You pull into a space and shut it off. That's it. No slides out, no lawn chairs, no levelers, etc. If you can't just get behind the wheel and drive off you're asking for a knock on your door. The signs are mostly there to keep people from using it as a campground or stealth camping for over a day (I've seen it tried). Gives security a way to move someone along if they overstay their welcome. The rest area is designed for people to sleep if they are too tired to drive. I doubt in the remote chance security or the police knocked on your door they would make you move along if you told them you were afraid of falling asleep at the wheel." (Camping locations, plans, & trip reports board, IRV2 web forum, 12/30/2016)
- "Any of the rest areas we've used, I haven't seen any such caveats. We've stopped as early as 5PM & as late as 2AM, rarely leaving before 9AM, & have never been approached by any authority saying we've overstayed an 8 hour time limit." (Navigation, routes & roads board, IRV2 web forum, 9/13/2015)
- "I'm sure the intent of the 8 hour limit is to prevent multiple day camping. The intent of a rest stop is to give motorists (including RV'ers) a place to stop, rest, sleep, walk, eat, etc. I've never been questioned but I used to worry about it until I decided that most cops would rather see you sleeping comfortably in your RV than barreling towards them (or their loved ones) at 70 mph in a 30,000 lb bullet. I wouldn't think twice about sleeping in my car as long as I needed to at a rest stop, why should I be concerned just because I'm way more comfortable sleeping in an RV? If I do end up getting a ticket someday, so be it, but I'd rather be safe in the meantime." (Navigation, routes & roads board, IRV2 web forum, 9/13/2015)
- "In 14 years, (115k miles), traveling in my coach I've overnights in dozens of rest areas, in numerous states with similar signs posted, often for longer than 8 hours. I have never been hassled." (Navigation, routes & roads board, IRV2 web forum, 9/13/2015)

Advice for Staying Overnight in a Rest Area in Your RV

If you decide that staying in a rest area works for you, here are some general tips:

- Do not put out anything to make it look like you're "camping." Do not put out your chairs, bbq grill, awning, etc. The goal is to look like you've simply parked your vehicle.
- Do not extend your slides.
- Do not put down your leveling jacks.
- Do not disconnect your trailer or fifth wheel from your tow vehicle.
- Keep your pet(s) inside with you, unless you're walking them on a leash.

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