LS (ECPG)

Subject: Nov 2021 Newsletter from Air Safe Hitches

November 2021

Newsletter **11/1/21**

Hitch balls

Dear Dave,

I'm replacing my 2" ball and ball arm for my 5-year-old 3500-pound camper. I would like to know your opinion of the question "to grease or not to grease" a hitch ball. I started out greasing the ball and got it on myself half the time. After a year or so I stopped greasing it. It's not really too badly scarred, but it keeps coming loose so I'm purchasing one that is welded to the arm. *—Douglas*

Dear Douglas,

This is one of those questions I call the "Dunk Tank" topic. That's when I share my experience and opinion and then place myself up on the Dunk Tank to let comments hurl at the target!

Here is my opinion and experience. I have never lubricated the hitch ball and I ran a company that had three trucks towing 10K trailers that put 125,000 miles on each year or more for the past ten years. Yes, we did have some rusting on the hitch balls but it did not affect the connection or disconnection of the trailer or the towing.

Trailer coupling mechanism needs attention What we did find is the trailer coupling mechanism needs to be inspected and lubricated periodically. This includes the top lever that brings the U-shaped connecter to the bottom of the ball hitch and the hinge at the U-shaped lateral piece. Again, in my opinion and experience, the ball typically does not get stuck or lodged to the trailer rounded hitch portion, rather the underlying connection piece.

However, an FAQ from etrailer.com states that it is a good idea to grease the ball hitch to prevent rust and make it easier to disconnect. They also sell the recommended grease.

My recommendation is to lubricate any moving parts of your hitch assembly with a quality lithium spray product. But, more importantly, make sure the components are connected properly and you have determined the weights on the hitch, the GVWR, and GAWR.

The hitch ball keeps coming loose Which brings me to a question on your statement: "It's not really too badly scarred but it keeps coming loose so I'm purchasing one that is welded to the arm."

Typically the ball with threads goes through the hole in the receiver hitch and is secured with a lock washer and nut. If this is installed properly and tightened or "torqued" properly, it should not come loose. My trailers have more than 125,000 miles per year and drive on rough construction sites and have never had a loose connection. However, since you are using a 2" ball, it might be a mismatch of the receiver hitch to the hitch classification. Here is a picture of different drop down receiver hitches.

It might not be easy to see, but there are different hole sizes for the various weight ratings. The

heavier the towing classification, the larger hitch ball requirement and also the heavier or larger shaft with threads. It's possible your slide-in hitch receiver is rated for a heavier towing capacity and your 2" ball has a smaller shaft/thread and is not the proper match. The shaft/thread should slide into the hole in the receiver hitch with very little movement or "slop".

Power Your Adventures

Originally Published in Trailer Life Magazine

Getting away from civilization is what RVs are all about. But when you're dependent on shorepower to run the appliances or charge the batteries, you can't get much farther away from civilization than the longest extension cord you're carrying. If boondocking or dry camping is what gets you up in the morning, you can still have your AC-powered appliances thanks to portable gas- or propane-powered generators. Light, small and quiet, they're ideal for both the outback and the in-close, and they can even be handy around your stick-and-brick house if the power goes out.

A Case for Quiet An important feature of a generator, as much as its size, weight or power output, is noise — especially if you use it in a campground or anywhere other campers are nearby. You might be inside your RV enjoying a movie, but outside, the only thing your neighbors can hear is the droning exhaust of the generator running your TV. This is why industrial generators are a poor choice for RVing. They put out gobs of power, but they're loud. That's not a problem at a worksite, but it won't make you any friends in a crowded campground and might get you thrown out of places that enforce strict noise limits and "quiet hours" during which generator use is not allowed.

The best solution to generator noise is what's called an inverter generator (IG). Conventional generators run at a steady RPM to maintain consistent power output, and they can be prone to power surges and dirty power that can damage some devices. They run bigger engines directly driving the generator unit, with less body casing and a weaker muffler. The result is a lot of AC power and enough noise to wake the dead!

Inverter generators are quieter because of better case insulation, better exhaust mufflers and smaller engines that drive the process. IGs create three-phase AC power that is run through a rectifier to make it direct current, then fed to a pure-sine-wave inverter that produces the clean, usable, 60-hertz, 120-volt AC current. Inverter generators can automatically vary the RPM according to the demand resulting in less noise and better fuel economy, and the output current is safer for charging fragile electronics.

Pick Your Power Inverter generators come in different power outputs, typically from a low of 1,000 watts up to 3,500 watts, with a few hitting 7,500 watts. How much power you need depends on how many appliances you want to run simultaneously. Look up each one's power consumption and add them up; that's your minimum generator output. You probably don't need a 3,500-watt unit if you tend to stay only at campgrounds where shorepower is available. A 1,000-watt generator is sufficient to charge your RV's batteries between stops. A 2,000-watt unit is a good compromise. It will run most of the appliances, but probably not an air conditioner. Some generators can be hooked up (paralleled) together so, for example, two 1,000-watt units can put out 2,000 watts when run in series.

Portable generators run on gasoline or propane, but most RVers go for gas models. Propane is a good alternative because you can buy it at most fuel stations; it's also kinder to the environment. If you're a belt-and-suspenders camper, get a dual-fuel generator that can run on either gas or propane.

Fuel consumption is a matter of how long a generator can go between fill-ups, not how far. Both the power output of the generator and the load you put on it affect fuel consumption. Finding the most economical generator is tricky, though, because fuel consumption isn't necessarily linear; most generators' fuel consumption is tested at 50% load or less, but doubling the load can increase consumption by as much as four times.

Easy Does It If you have bad memories of working up a sweat yanking on a pull rope to start a reluctant lawnmower, you'll be happy to learn many generators come with electric starting. The only weak link in this chain is the battery that powers the starter, so look for a generator with both a pull rope and an electric starter, or go full Buck Rogers with a starter that uses a wireless remote so you can fire up the grill for breakfast without first going out to fire up the generator.

Other options to consider include the right outlets to connect your appliances and hook up to your RV; an automatic voltage regulator to protect sensitive electronics; a circuit breaker in case of a short; a wheel kit to make moving the generator easier if it's an extra-large, heavy model; and an oil-level window or electronic oil monitor instead of a dipstick to take the hassle out of checking the engine oil. If the generator can be paralleled to another similar unit, the parallel kit might be an option.

Just like your tow rig, a generator needs regular service for reliable performance. Check the oil level, spark plug and air filter at the recommended maintenance intervals, and keep extra oil and spare plugs and filters on hand for on-the-road service. Excess smoke on start-up or high oil consumption are symptoms of more serious problems like worn valve guides or piston rings. Keeping the generator clean makes it easier to spot developing leaks.

You're obviously not going to run a generator inside your RV, but you still need to put some thought into where to set it up. In a campground, you're limited by your neighbors — the farther your generator is from your RV, the closer it is to someone else's — but out in the boonies you have more latitude. Set up the generator far enough from your campsite, and downwind, so you're not breathing exhaust fumes, and while you're at it, make sure the fumes don't blow into a neighboring site.

Following is a selection of the best and most popular brands of portable inverter generators, plus summaries of their models and features. Prioritize your requirements — wattage, weight and available options — and choose the best one to power your next adventure.

ALP Generators The propane-powered ALP ($549) puts out 1,000 watts and runs for 60 hours on a 5-gallon cylinder or three hours on a 16-ounce propane canister. It comes with parallel ports, an ultra-bright emergency LED light and multi-charging power outlets. At 28 pounds, it's easy to move. It comes with a one-year limited warranty and is available in six colors with black or gray panels. A propane tank and 20-foot hose are sold separately.
ALP, www.alpgenerators.com

Champion The 2,000-watt Dual Fuel Inverter Generator (model number 100402, $755) is parallel-ready and runs on either gasoline or propane. Its ultra-quiet operation (53 dBA from 23 feet) is ideal for camping, tailgating and more. For versatility and power there's the 3,100-watt Dual Fuel (model number 100204, $695), which runs for 8 hours on gas or 19 hours on propane, is parallel ready and comes with a 50-amp RV-ready outlet.

The stackable 2,000-watt Inverter Generator (model number 73540i, $599.99) can be paralleled and stacked vertically to save space. It runs up to 9.5 hours on a tank of fuel and operates at 53 dBA. The 2,500-watt Portable Generator (model number 100889, $479) runs for 11.5 hours at 58 dBA and comes with an RV-ready outlet.

With wireless starting from up to 80 feet away, the 3,500-watt Wireless Start (model number 100262, $1,299.99) includes a battery, an Economy Mode, an RV-ready 50-amp outlet and paralleling capability. The 3,100-watt and the 3,500-watt models are easy to handle (literally!) with a fold-down tote handle and wheels. Set top-case handles make lifting into a truck or compartment easier.
Champion Power Equipment, www.championpowerequipment.com

Energizer Energizer's gasoline-powered inverter generator line ranges from the 2,200-watt eZV2200S ($549) to the 7,500-watt eZV7500 ($1,999). The eZV2200P can be paralleled with another unit for more power, as can the eZV3200P ($1,099) and the eZV3500P ($1,099). The 2,200-watt models have recoil starting and run 11.5 hours on a tank of gas at 25% load; the 3200s have recoil, electric and remote starting and run 15.5 hours on a tank at 25% load. A certified remanufactured eZV3200P ($758) is also available.

For the "more power" crowd, the open-frame-designed eZV4800 ($699) churns out 4,800 watts, has recoil starting, and runs for 11.5 hours on a tank at 25% load. EcoMode saves money on fuel without sacrificing power.
Energizer, www.energizergenerators.com

Generac The gasoline-powered iQ3500 ($1,449) is quieter and puts out more power than many other generators its size. Its PowerRush technology delivers more than 50% more starting capacity, and electric starting is standard. The Digital Smart LCD panel has a voltage meter, a runtime-remaining display and a gasoline gauge.

The GP3000i ($999) features PowerRush, an economy mode and a PowerDial that combines choke/run/stop settings in a single dial. The GP3500iO ($789) has an open-frame design, a generator status light that alerts for low oil, overload, or when ready to use, and an economy mode that reduces fuel consumption and noise.
Generac, www.generac.com

Honda The gasoline-powered EU1000i ($939; $979 with CO-Minder (which continuously monitors carbon monoxide levels and will shut down the generator if it becomes too high) combines good power with light weight (28.7 pounds). It features a two-tiered noise-dampening system that reduces noise to 50 dBA, and it can run up to 6.8 hours on a tank of gas, depending on load.
The EU2200i ($1,139) puts out more power at lower RPM than the EU2000i it replaces and can run up to 8.1 hours on a tank. It comes with color-coded start-up components, an easier oil fill/drain design and a fuel shut-off valve. The EU3000iS ($2,309) can run most 13,500-Btu rooftop air conditioners, and with its 3.4-gallon tank that runs up to 19.6 hours, it doubles as a home backup unit. By the end of 2020 all Honda portable generators will come with Honda's CO-Minder carbon monoxide detector system, according to the company.
Honda Power Equipment, www.powerequipment.honda.com

Onan The 2,500-watt gasoline-powered P2500i ($749) can be paralleled to another P2500i for a total output of 5,000 watts. It runs for 10 hours on a gallon of gas at 25% load and is double insulated for quiet operation. It comes with two 5-volt USB ports for charging sensitive electronics and has rubber outlet dust covers. The built-in carry handle makes it easy to move the 48-pound unit, and there's a rubber mat on the top for storing electronic devices while charging.

The P4500i ($1,098) is RV- and camper-ready with a 30A TT-30R outlet and can be paralleled with another P2500i or P4500i. It weighs 98 pounds and has electric, remote and recoil starting. Its 3.4-gallon fuel tank allows 18 hours of runtime at 25% load, and it comes with wheels and a telescoping handle.
Cummins, www.cummins.com/generators/portable-generators

Yamaha Yamaha's gasoline-powered inverter generators range in output from 1,000 watts all the way up to a hefty 6,300 watts. They're all powered by single-cylinder four-stroke engines with recoil starting and auto decompression except on the EF3000iSEB ($2,469), which has a recoil and electric starting with an optional wireless remote; and the EF4500iSE ($3,399) and EF6300iSDE ($4,099), which have only electric starting with an optional wireless remote. Noise levels range from 47-57 dBA for the EF1000iS ($879) to 58-64 dBA for the EF6300iSDE.

The 2,000-watt EF2000iSv2 ($899), a good balance of output, size and weight, weighs 44 pounds and has a 1.1-gallon gas tank for a 10.5-hour runtime at 25% load. The EF2200iS ($1,099) is parallel-ready. All Yamaha inverter generators come with an oil-warning engine shut-off system and a U.S. Forest Service-approved spark arrestor.
Yamaha, www.yamahamotorsports.com/power-product

Jerry Smith has been a freelance writer for more than 30 years. He's not picky about the topic as long as it rolls. If it has two, three, four or more wheels, he'll write about it. He calls Oregon his home, and although he loves it there he takes every opportunity to hit the road and see the rest of the world.

Beginner's Guide to RV Trailers

How to choose the right model for you
By Tom Mutchler with Jeff S. Bartlett

Traveling by RV is a resurging trend amid the coronavirus pandemic, with families seeking an escape while maintaining social distancing. A motorhome or travel trailer allows you to see the country without the need to use public lodging, restaurants, or even restrooms.

"We are noticing increased interest in the lifestyle both virtually through online resources and resuming interest in states where dealerships are open when compared to when the pandemic began," says Sam Jefson, a spokesman for Winnebago Industries, maker of Winnebago and

Grand Design motorhomes and travel trailers.

Trailers are the least expensive way to get into the recreational vehicle (RV) lifestyle. That's because owners often need nothing more than the family SUV or truck to haul them. They're much cheaper and simpler to get started with than a motorhome, and they come in a wide range of designs, sizes, and prices.

Because a trailer can be removed, the SUV or truck that hauls it can be used year-round rather than serving solely as a vacation coach, as is the case with an all-in-one RV. Plus, the vehicle towing the trailer is likely to have modern safety features that are just now arriving in some RVs, including forward collision warning, automatic emergency braking, blind spot warning, and robust crash protection. Tow vehicles also provide the ability to safely travel with kids and their car seats, an option that's often not available in motorhomes.

Trailers also offer a lot of flexibility when you're on a campground. You can unhitch the trailer, leave it behind, and use the tow vehicle to explore. This means you don't have to pack things away inside the camper and disconnect all the power and water lines each time you want to leave the park, like you have to do when traveling in a motorhome. And a tow vehicle will be a lot easier to handle when sightseeing, especially when navigating downtown roads, parking, and getting food at a drive-thru.

Still, there's a compromise for that flexibility. Towing an RV trailer requires drivers to develop new skills that are very different from those needed to drive a car. A lot of space is needed to park a long tow vehicle and trailer combination. Learning how to reverse the trailer takes patience and practice. You also need to learn how to safely hitch and unhitch the trailer. Of course, you need to own a vehicle that's capable of safely towing the trailer you have in mind. Approach this aspect with care, as it's very easy to buy more trailer than a vehicle can comfortably handle. (Learn more about what you need to know before you use your pickup to tow.)

Safe Practices for Traveling Now

The RV lifestyle has social distancing built in, but there are times when you'll be around other people.

"RVing and boating are great ways for families to get back out and enjoy the enrichment that comes with active outdoor lifestyle activities," Jefson says. But he adds that campers should follow guidelines from federal and state governments and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in determining when and how to use an RV.

Traveling in an RV always involves certain logistics, such as scheduled maintenance, park reservations, route planning, and stocking up on provisions. But during this pandemic, you may need to be more methodical and self-sufficient.

Darryl Saunders, a traveler who pulls a 27-foot Airstream Globetrotter, shared several tips with Consumer Reports from his recent experiences on the road:

- Plan your stops. Park closures, restrictions, and crowding are all factors now.
- Double-check your reservations to make sure they are still valid.
- If you're traveling to a destination for a certain attraction, make sure it's open. Saunders mentioned that a place he wanted to see (Sequoia National Park) was closed.
- Plan ahead for food. Many businesses are now reopening, but there are still restrictions. And remember that you won't be able to go through a drive-thru with a large trailer.

Many travelers recommend checking with RV parks about their amenities because some, including restrooms, laundry facilities, and on-site convenience stores, may be closed. Ask about specific rules regarding social distancing, which can have an on impact on pool usage, playgrounds, and campfires.

Restrictions vary by region, and they'll certainly change throughout the year. They may include the need to self-quarantine after traveling in certain states. Check the restrictions for your state and those you plan to travel through, because they could have a significant impact on your plans.

AirSafeHitches.com

Why Use an Air Hitch?

AirSafe is committed to giving you the safest and most comfortable ride possible. We offer the largest selection of air hitches in the industry, including 5th wheel hitches, gooseneck hitches, and receiver hitches for trailer hitches for trucks.

Our hitches utilize the most innovative engineering and design available on the market today. With a fully height adjustable design, AirSafe hitches are easy to use and don't cause any headaches.

Air Safe Hitches also delivers the ultimate in safety.

With only 10% trailer inertia, our hitches make your vehicles sway a lot less. By evenly distributing the weight between the trailer and the tow vehicle, you will have more ability to brake and steer safely.

AirSafe Hitches are the safest way to tow anything, and they provide the most comfort of any ride. If that isn't enough to convince you, these hitches are also affordable. With AirSafe Hitches, you get safety, comfort, and savings all in one.

5th Wheel Hitches - Omni-Directional 4 air bag vs competitor 2 air bag system. 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 form 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.

Gooseneck Hitches – Air Safe offers the industry's largest selection of air hitches. Innovation and engineering insures you receive the safest and smoothest ride. "Enjoy the ride, arrive alive." With AIRSAFE™ you stop the flow of shock flow between the tow vehicle to the trailer and greatly reduce the explosion of energy when these two forces meet. The patented AIRSAFE™ hitches are engineered so the connection to the trailer is separated from the connection to the tow vehicle by an industrial strength airbag. Air Safe Gooseneck Hitches by AIRSAFE™ are simply the best air product money can buy. They are engineered with you and your precious cargo in mind. Simply remove your existing gooseneck tube and coupler and replace it with the AIRSAFE™ system. Available in round and square necks.

Click to check out the benefits of an air hitch vs a rigid hitch.

How to RV in The Winter Without Freezing to Death!

by Mark Jenney

Summer may be the most popular time for road trips, but that doesn't mean you have to pack up your rig at the first sign of Jack Frost. RVing in the winter is a great way to experience a wide variety of outdoor recreational activities, from skiing and snowshoeing to simply meandering around in winter wonderland, cup of hot cocoa in hand.

You may be wondering, however, how to keep a camper warm in the winter. After all, even the best-made rigs on the market have significantly less insulation than a sticks-and-bricks home! And just like your foundation-built house, RVs have a variety of sensitive systems that can be damaged by the impact of freezing cold temperatures.

In this post, we'll walk you through everything you need to know about winter RV living, from keeping your rig warm and toasty while you're inside to winterizing it for storage. Read on to unlock all the secrets you need to know to make winter RV journeys into a pleasure!

How Do You Live in an RV in the Winter? RV winter living is all about one thing: preparation. Your RV has feelings, and it hates being cold just as much as you do!

Just kidding, but you *will* experience some big problems if you don't keep it warm. Your RV's pipes can burst just like the ones at home, and the cold weather is killer on your RV batteries. Even though many four-season RVs come with thermal packages, which include extra insulation, it's still not enough for extreme cold weather RVing in sub-zero temperatures. If you're camping in extreme cold, put your RV in a skirt! Skirting the RV will keep the battery bays, plumbing, and other important components warm. If you don't have a skirt, you can pack snow around the RV bays.

RV windows lose a ton of heat, no matter how insulated the manufacturer claims they are. There are several ways to insulate them: foam insulation boards, bubble insulation, solar blankets, etc. For extra warmth, line your windows with heavy-weight thermal curtains. You may also want to go over your RV windows and doors with a layer of RV sealant or caulk, just to ensure they're nice and weather-tight. Double-check the weather stripping around these areas to ensure nothing needs to be replaced, and if you do find cracked or damaged stripping, go ahead and replace it!

Some of the most important (and vulnerable) machinery in your RV is deep in the underbelly: the pipes, batteries, and plumbing. While skirting can help, you'll also want to wrap your pipes in heat tape and invest in a heated RV water hose, so as to avoid having your water line freeze if you're hooked up to a city water connection. If you don't want to upgrade to a heated hose, you can also add insulation or tape to your existing water hose, or fill your onboard fresh water tank and use that as a water source instead. Whatever you do, don't continue to use an unwrapped, summer water hose in sub-freezing temperatures… because if your hose freezes and cracks, you could end up with a major mess on your hands, which is even less fun to clean up in the cold!

How Do RVs Stay Warm in the Winter? There's one major area of confusion many campers face when RVing in the winter, and it's all about the HVAC system. Many rigs have both a "heat pump" that's built into the rooftop unit and an onboard furnace that uses propane. How do you know which one is appropriate to use?

The answer is simple: if it's falling under 45 degrees or so, you'll want to switch to your RV's furnace rather than the heat pump. Your HVAC system is only rated to warm the space down to a certain external temperature, and if you try to warm a freezing RV with the unit alone, you risk burning it out entirely.

While your furnace does utilize propane to burn, it's more efficient at warming a space quickly. Which means that if you're planning on living full-time in an RV in winter, you need to ensure you've got plenty of propane on board! When you're out of your rig for the day, be sure to leave the thermostat set to switch on your furnace if the RV reaches a certain temperature — it can be pretty cool, if you don't have pets waiting, but you don't want it to freeze inside while you're away.

Along with skirting, wrapping your pipes in heat tape, and adding insulation, there's another great way to keep your rig warm in the winter: invest in some small indoor space heaters!

You can use electric or propane space heaters to supplement your RV's furnace. They're inexpensive and use relatively little amperage… and they're a way better investment than having to replace your RV's plumbing system after a freeze.

In order to ensure that your heaters offer as much protection as possible, you may want to keep your cabinet doors open to expose the pipes to the interior heat. That's especially true during those moments when you're outside of your rig when the open doors won't get in the way or disrupt your RV living.

Winter RV Living Checklist Now that we've covered the basics for keeping your RV warm, let's talk about keeping YOU warm! Living in a travel trailer during winter can be trying, even under the best of circumstances, so you'll want to be sure you add a few winter accessories to your packing list.

Along with all the stuff you normally pack for an RV trip, consider adding the following items to your kit:

- Heavy coats and other winter clothing
- Boots and heavy-duty winter shoes
- Heat tape, thermal curtains, and other items necessary for insulating your RV for winter living
- A freeze-proof heated water hose
- RV Skirt
- Ice scraper
- RV antifreeze — and engine antifreeze, for your tow vehicle or the motorhome's engine
- Mini indoor space heaters, which can help you keep the interior of your RV nice and toasty (and protect vulnerable plumbing and other systems!)
- And, of course, your favorite warm blanket, mugs for hot cocoa, and other cozy winter living items!

What's the Best RV for Winter Living? Although many RVs are advertised as four-season or insulated, not all rigs are created equally when it comes to living in an RV for the winter. For instance, camping in a pop-up trailer in the snow is a recipe for frostbite… or at the very least, a miserable night's sleep.

The best RV for winter living is one that's fully self-contained and as insulated as possible, perhaps even with some extra, after-market insulation added. Large motorhomes and travel trailers may be constructed out of sturdier, more weather-proof materials, but on the other hand, a smaller travel trailer may be easier to heat, since there's less internal living space.

Keep in mind that some travel trailers — particularly large, luxurious fifth wheels — offer fireplaces, which can be a welcome addition for those planning on extreme cold-weather traveling. And no matter which rig you go with, you'll want to ensure it does have an onboard furnace, since, as discussed above, the HVAC heat pump won't cut it below freezing!

Tips and Tricks for Winter RV Living Here are some more quick tips and tricks for winter RV camping.

Water Can Be Your Biggest Enemy

- Many RVers drain their freshwater tanks completely and go sans water for the season. That means bringing bottled water for brushing your teeth and doing the dishes.
- The bay that holds your tanks must always be kept above freezing. Mini space heaters are inexpensive and use very little amperage. Buy one and stick it in the bay.
- Use RV antifreeze in your plumbing and gray/black tanks. You can do this by flushing antifreeze down the toilets and pouring it into your drains. That said, you do *not* want to introduce RV antifreeze to your freshwater tank or water heater!

- If your RV doesn't have tank heaters, buy some! They're a godsend if you can spare the energy usage.
- If you do choose to use water hookups, make sure you insulate the pipes with heat tape. You'll also need to insulate any connections and exposed piping.
- Never allow your black tank to freeze unless you want to deal with a disgusting mess. Use a PVC pipe for your sewer hose – it'll have less chance of freezing than a regular hose. If you plan on leaving the tank hooked up, add a layer of insulation around the sewer pipe. However, it's a good idea to keep your tank closed until it needs to be dumped.
- Don't dump your holding tanks until they're full, or almost full, to avoid having their contents freeze — ick! And don't leave your black or gray water outlet ports open if you're camping in a spot where you're connected to the city sewer. Why, you ask? One word: poopsicle.

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

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

How to Winterize an RV for Winter Living If you're planning on living in your RV during the winter, you likely won't want to fully winterize it — as doing so makes it impossible to utilize your RV's plumbing and water system. That said, if you're going to put your RV into storage, winterizing is essential if your region falls below freezing!

Winterizing your RV's plumbing system can be done in two ways. You can run RV antifreeze through the entirety of the plumbing system, which is safe since the RV-specific product is nontoxic. That said, some campers say they can continue to taste the residue of the RV antifreeze for a long while after they dump it, and alcohol-based antifreeze can dry out and degrade your plumbing fittings over time.

If you do utilize RV antifreeze to winterize your RV system, be sure to bypass your RV's hot water heater. And make sure you're using the right stuff — regular engine antifreeze has NO place in RV plumbing!

The other winterizing option is a little bit less intrusive: it involves using compressed air to blow out your RV's water lines and ensure they're nice and dry, which will help you avoid any freeze damage. You'll need to use an RV blow out plug to achieve this, and be sure to check your owner's manual to learn the correct pressure to use so as not to damage anything.

You'll also need to drain your RV's hot water heater, which may involve removing the anode rod. You'll likely need a socket wrench to do this, though the exact size will vary based on what kind of RV you have. As always, consult your manual for full details on RV winterizing.

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

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO TOW: GOOSENECK TRAILER EDITION

Gooseneck trailers are undeniably the beasts of the enclosed trailer scene. These behemoths are for the biggest loads, whatever heavy cargo needs to get transported from A to B safely and securely. Our gooseneck trailers offer a lot of advantages for the heavy load haulers but

there's some important considerations to remember as you tackle gooseneck towing for the first time.

In today's spotlight series, we'll cover everything you need to know to tow a gooseneck on the open road.

WHAT MAKES A GOOSENECK TRAILER DIFFERENT FROM OTHER ENCLOSED TRAILERS

Most trailers are attached to a tow vehicle's receiver hitch or via a bumper hitch. A gooseneck is different from traditional enclosed trailers both in its namesake shape and because of the gooseneck hitch attachment within the vehicle's bed. This allows a gooseneck trailer to be attached to the tow vehicle over the rear axle which is different from a hitch receiver, located at the rear of the vehicle. This provides far greater stability for the tow operation and in turn allows for larger loads to be safely carried. Also, because of the closer proximity of the trailer to the tow vehicle, a gooseneck trailer will typically have a tighter turn radius over other enclosed trailers.

BEFORE YOU DRIVE WITH YOUR GOOSENECK TRAILER With a big trailer, comes big responsibility to make sure you stay safe on the road. Checking over just a few simple details before you ever put your vehicle in drive can easily mean a safe trip from A to B over having an incident on the road.

Know Your Numbers Since goosenecks are rated for really heavy loads, first things first is to make sure your tow vehicle has the towing capacity to handle the load. There is no "best truck for pulling a gooseneck trailer" but your tow vehicle should obviously have the capability to safely tow the combined weight of the vehicle and the trailer. But how do you go about finding these figures? Manufacturers will specify the exact numbers for each of the four weight limits every gooseneck trailer driver should know:

- Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR): this is the max weight of your vehicle's empty weight and all of the passengers, cargo, fuel, etc. that the vehicle can safely carry.

- Gross Combined Weight Rating (GCWR): this is the maximum weight that the fully-loaded tow vehicle and trailer can be. It can also just be referred to as GVW and refers to the weight of the empty gooseneck plus the cargo inside. For example, a Gooseneck 5200 Triple Axle that is 38' has an empty weight of 6,820 pounds and a max cargo weight of 8,780 pounds for a total GVW of 15,600 pounds.

- Payload/Cargo Capacity: this is the maximum weight of cargo that your enclosed cargo trailer can carry.

- Towing Capacity: this is the maximum weight that your tow vehicle can safely tow.

If you have any questions on these, don't risk it. Check out our trailer measurements page or talk to one of our trailer experts to get you in the know on safe towing weights before hitting the road.

Run Over Your Gooseneck Trailer Checklist Doing a quick once over on your gooseneck trailer and tow vehicle before getting on the road can save a lot of time and aggravation over having a component fail mid-drive. Here's a few things to check over:

- **Tire Pressure** : make sure all the tires on the trailer and on the tow vehicle fall in line with the manufacturers' specifications. Overinflated and underinflated tires can cause uneven tread wear, a reduction in gas mileage, increased engine wear, and can even result in a blowout. While looking over your trailer's tires, go ahead and make sure lugs are tight. These can become looser over time and with a lot of strain from towing. Bearings will also require grease from time to time. If you happen to jackknife your trailer, such as when reversing, you can put a lot of pressure on the sides of the tire which can also add to premature wear.

- **Secure Connection** : always, always make sure you have the correct ball size and the connection is secure before departure. While gooseneck trailers like other

enclosed trailers have safety chains attached (make sure this is true prior to departure), you don't want to put these to the test and can still end up damaging your trailer and vehicle if a disconnect occurs. We'll cover how to hitch a gooseneck trailer a little later.

- **Make Sure all Lights are Working**: check your connectors for wear and tear and test out the connection. Make sure your signals, brake lights and running lights are all functioning both for safety and because it's illegal to drive without working lights.

- **Secure Cargo Inside the Trailer** : any kind of big and/or heavy cargo should be tied and secured in place before towing. Within Renown's Goosenecks, you'll have at least four (4) 5,000-lb rated D-rings. The straps should also be rated highly enough for the job you're asking them to do. If you have a sudden swerve or braking event, the cargo could shift making the trailer a lot more difficult to handle. Also, always do your best to balance the load over the axles.

This list is not entirely exhaustive and can vary depending on your tow vehicle, the gooseneck, and the cargo being hauled. Our trailer experts can help you find the perfect gooseneck, based on your needs. Talk to a trailer specialist now.

HOW TO HOOK UP A GOOSENECK TRAILER

1. Before you back your truck up, raise the coupler above the ball/truck bed.
2. We use a 2 5/16" adjustable coupler.
3. Back up the truck and align the coupler above the ball.
4. Make sure the coupler is unlatched and in the "open" position.
5. Lower the gooseneck trailer onto the ball.
6. Secure jack handle.
7. Raise jack feet by releasing the pins.
8. Climb into the truck bed to connect the breakaway cable on the hitch system.
9. Connect safety chains to u-bolt or d-rings on the gooseneck hitch.
10. Close the coupler and latch the safety pin.
11. Find your receptacle and connect to your 7-way plug.
12. Perform "preflight" checklist outlined above and, once complete, drive safe!

Bottom line, when you're looking at how to hitch a gooseneck trailer, make sure you absolutely know the trailer is firmly attached to the gooseneck hitch attachment. If you need any help, don't hesitate to ask and our helpful staff will walk you through the whole process until you feel comfortable doing it yourself.

GOOSENECK TRAILER HAULING ON THE OPEN ROAD Now that your trailer is all ready for the open road, how do you go about driving with a gooseneck trailer? The same principles for safe towing goes into this larger package, you just need to remember it is indeed larger so take extra precautions. Staples for towing like adequate sight lines in your mirrors, avoiding excessive speeds, and giving other vehicles a wide berth when passing and changing lanes should all be incorporated into your overall safe driving behavior.
Some other things to remember when towing a gooseneck trailer include:

- Try and speed up and slow down gradually. This will make your trailer components like the brakes and tires last longer but will also help keep the cargo secure.

- Be aware of the speed limit for large trailers in your state of travel. Some states have lower limits for vehicles with trailers.

- Give yourself more room to stop. With a heavy trailer that's fully loaded, it will take more distance to slow a trailer traveling at speed.

- If going down a hill, try to downshift. This helps reduce your speed in a less stressful manner to the tow vehicle's and gooseneck's braking systems.

One consideration you may not have thought of is the fairly tight turn radius of a gooseneck. While helpful in maneuvering, you may not be used to the gooseneck's tight turn radius. With a

gooseneck's shorter distance from the trailer to the tow vehicle, the turn is all the tighter and can cause your trailer to go onto the curb if the turn is too tight so always swing it wide but be aware of vehicle's around you and any other obstacles or hindrances near the corner.

READY TO CHECK OUT RENOWN'S GOOSENECK TRAILER LINE? If you are ready for a totally new trailer buying experience, our team stands ready to exceed your expectations. No pushy sales people, no high pressure sales tactics, just trailer pros working with integrity towards getting you in the trailer that meets your needs. If we can't do that, we won't try and sell you something that isn't right and would gladly send you to a competitor that better met your needs. Service that's focused on being kind, the kind of service we'd want someone to give our family, is what sets apart the experience.

Check out our gooseneck trailers online and if you spot one you like, you can complete the entire process online and have it shipped right to your door. If you'd rather meet your new trailer in person, we'd love to see you at our dealership location.

The Best RV Jokes

- George, who lived in Ashland, Oregon, loved his RV, but he also dreamed of going to Hawaii. One day, while walking along the beach, George stumbled over a genie in a magic lamp who granted him a single wish. "I've always wanted to explore the island of Maui in my motorhome, but I can't afford to ship it there. I wish for you to build a bridge from Oregon to Hawaii so I can fulfill my dream." The genie replied, "That's impossible. The ocean is far too deep to build a bridge across. Even a genie such as I can't do it. You have to wish for something else." George thought for a moment, then he said, "I don't understand women. I wish to understand how they think and what they want." The genie paused, then said, "Do you want two lanes or four on that bridge?"
- After checking into a public campground, set a tuba on your picnic table to keep the spaces on either side of you empty. No one will sit near you out of fear you might start playing it. Just a little RV humor you can put to good use.
- "Knock, knock!" "Who's there?" "RV." "RV who?" "RV there yet?"
- A woman named Mrs. Grazinski bought herself a brand-new Winnebago. She was excited and took her first trip to an Oklahoma football game. On the way home, she set the cruise control to 70 as soon as she got onto the freeway. She then walked to the back to make herself a sandwich, leaving the Winnebago to drive itself. The resulting crash was spectacular. It's hard to believe that someone would actually do that, but she did not feel at fault. In fact, she sued Winnebago for the crash because the owner's manual didn't tell her she couldn't leave it to drive itself. The jury agreed with her and she was awarded $1,750,000 plus a new motorhome. This is why Winnebago manuals now warn people that they must actually drive the vehicle at all times when it is moving. True story — while technically not an RV joke, it's certainly a conversation starter.
- Why didn't the elephant carry a suitcase on his RV trip? Because he already had a trunk!
- I want to hang a map of the United States in my house. Then I'm going to put pins into all the locations that I've traveled to in my RV. But first, I'm going to have to travel to the top two corners of the map, so it won't fall off the wall.

The Best Camping Jokes

- It was late in the day when a fully loaded minivan pulled into the only remaining campsite. As soon as it stopped, the doors flew open and four children jumped out. They began to unload gear and worked feverishly to set up the tent. Next, the boys ran to gather firewood while the girls and their mother set up the camp kitchen area. The camper in the space next to them marveled to the children's father, "I've never seen such teamwork nor a camp that was ready so quickly. I'm impressed." The father turned to the neighbor and nodded sagely. "I have a system," he said. "No one goes to the bathroom before the camp is set up."
- After Little Johnny came back from another walk on the nature trail, he told his mother that he learned why ants don't get sick. "Because they have little anty-bodies," he said.

- Little Johnny stood outside the tent and called to his mom. “Hey mom, can a frog jump higher than an average tent?” “I don’t know,” she replied. “Of course,” he said. “An average tent can’t jump!”
- When Little Johnny went back to school, his teacher, knowing Johnny’s love of camping, decided to use something Johnny was familiar with to teach him math. She said, “If I gave you two tents and then another two tents and then another two, how many tents would you have?”
- Johnny replied, “Seven.” The teacher said, “No, listen carefully. If I gave you two tents, and then another two tents and then another two, how many would you have?” Again, Johnny said, “Seven.”

So the teacher said, “Try this instead. If I gave you two apples, and then another two apples and then another two, how many apples would you have?” Johnny answered, “Six.” So, the teacher began again, “Okay, so if I gave you two tents, and another two tents and another two, how many tents would you have?” Johnny immediately answered, “Seven!”

The teacher looked at him and asked, “Johnny, where do you get seven from?” And Johnny told her, “Because I already own a tent!”

Next time you’re on a road trip in your RV or heading to an awesome spot to pitch your tent, don’t forget to use a little humor to lighten the mood. By using one of these funny camp jokes, you’ll make the dull times go by faster and maybe even spread some cheer. And when everything is going great, a good camping joke will make things even better. You can even find some funny RV images to go with these jokes and hang them on your vehicle’s door. It’s always best to personalize RV funny jokes — this will make them more relatable and help your delivery. You can make a few small changes in these and turn them into mobile home jokes. Whatever you do, just keep on laughing. A funny RV trip is a great RV trip

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