

BIG SKY RV TECH

Checklists for RVers

#1 Essential Items for you

Now that you have your RV home we need to discuss what you will need for the RV before you go on your first trip. Your RV dealer probably gave you an RV starter kit when you purchased the RV. This is usually made up of the basic essentials and in many cases is not sufficient for what you may encounter. For example if the starter kit included a 10 foot sewer hose you will be disappointed when you discover you need a 20 foot hose to reach the campground sewer connection. This next checklist is not all-inclusive, but will provide you with what I refer to as the **RV essential items** to get through just about any situation you may run in to.

Potable RV drinking hose- these hoses can be purchased in an RV dealer's parts store. It is a good idea to have a 10-foot and 25-foot hose. They should be used for drinking water only.

Green or black garden hose- RV drinking hoses are white. You should take an ordinary garden hose for cleaning and other purposes. The color will help distinguish between the two.

Water pressure regulator- this will protect your RV water system from high water pressure that is common at some campgrounds. Always connect the regulator at the source of the water to regulate pressure before it enters the RV.

90-degree elbow connector- if you do not use an external water filter at the city water connector on the RV it is a good idea to connect the elbow there to prevent the drinking hose from kinking.

Water filtration system- I highly recommend some type of water filtration.

Either under the counter to a faucet for the drinking water, or an external filter that filters all water going into the unit.

Sewer hose- it's a good idea to have a 10-foot and a 20-foot sewer hose. Get the heavy duty type. They are not that much more expensive and will hold up better.

Sewer hose connectors and adapters- you will want to have connectors on the ends of the hose that hook up to the RV and to the campground sewer. You will also want adapters to connect the two hoses together if you need additional length. There are several kits available to make these various connections.

Sewer hose donut- this is usually plastic or rubber and is used to get a good seal where the sewer hose attaches to the campground sewer. It is included with some sewer hose kits that are available. Some campgrounds require this.

Electrical adapters- depending on your unit you will need adapters that will allow you to plug in to the electrical service provided. There are adapters that go from 50-amp to 30-amp, 30-amp to 20-amp etc. Check with your RV dealer.

Extension cords- Ideally you want an extension cord that is designed for RV's with the same gauge wire and ends that match the RV and the campground. If you use a household type extension cord it should be at least 10-gauge wire.

Spare blade fuses- check the amperage of fuses in your RV and carry spares.

Spare bulbs- identify the type of bulbs used in lights and carry spares.

Holding tank chemicals- there are numerous chemicals available for your RV. Experiment with some until you find what you like. The black water tank needs to be treated each time you dump the tank. I recommend you use environmentally friendly holding tank chemicals.

Gloves- you'll want to have gloves for some jobs like dumping the holding tanks. Disposable gloves work well.

RV toilet paper- always use toilet paper designed for use in RVs. It breaks up and dissolves in the holding tank chemicals preventing problems in the black water holding tank and the RV waste water system.

Wheel chocks and stackable levelers- you always want to chock the wheels and you will need some type of blocks to level the unit. Lynx Levelers work well.

Striker- it is always a good idea to take a striker along to assist in lighting LP gas appliances that don't have built in igniters.

First aid kit- you never know what may happen. You will want a good first aid kit available at all times.

Fire extinguisher- RVs come with fire extinguishers but if you buy used, you may not have one. It is also a good idea to have a fire extinguisher in the tow vehicle too.

Note: This list is not all-inclusive but is a very good start. Eventually you can tailor this list to suit your needs. In addition to this I also have what I refer to as "Nice to have Items".

#2 Nice to Have It

In addition to the essential items for your RV there is what I like to refer to as nice to have items. These nice to have items can make your RV experiences more enjoyable and help to protect your RV as well.

Awning tie downs- tie downs help to protect your awning. Never leave your awning out during bad weather, or when you're not physically at the campsite. Wind and rain can damage your RV awning very quickly.

Wand or reverse flush valve for cleaning holding tanks- Every time you dump the black water holding tank you should thoroughly rinse the black tank out with a wand or a product like Flush King.

Plug in digital voltmeter- you can check the polarity and voltage at the campground prior to plugging the unit in. You can also monitor the voltage throughout your trip and protect your appliances and electronic equipment from being damaged by high or low campground voltage. Voltage below 105 volts or above 130 volts can potentially damage electronic devices and appliances.

Bubble levels mounted on the unit- to assist you in leveling the unit at the campground.

TV coax cable- you will want about 25-feet of cable to use at campgrounds that offer cable TV hook ups.

Non-slip shelf liner- this works extremely well in preventing items in the RV from moving, falling and getting damaged while traveling.

Thumb Lock Fasteners- these are convenient, inexpensive fasteners designed to secure larger items like TVs and personal computers from being damaged while traveling.

Maxx Air vent covers- these covers provide an excellent way to get ventilation through your RV. Overhead vents can stay open even when it's raining. Maxx Air offers numerous ventilation products for RVs. www.maxxair.com

Nice to Have Items Continued

Sewer hose support- a sewer hose support will make the job of dumping your holding tanks much easier.

Slide-out topper- if your RV has a slide-out room, a slide-out topper is nice to have. It prevents water and debris from collecting on the top of the slide-out and entering the RV when you put the slide-out in the travel position. Talk to your RV dealer.

Window awnings- another nice to have item. They provide shade, keep the RV cooler, help keep rain out and protect fabrics from the sun. For step-by-step installation procedures check out our RV Awning Use, Care & Accessories DVD available at www.rveducation101.com

Refrigerator vent fan- this will make your refrigerator work more efficiently, especially when it is hot outside.

Note: These items are not essential, but they will make your camping trips more enjoyable. To get more information about these products talk to your local RV dealer. This would be a good time to discuss "Tools and Maintenance Supplies"

#3 Checklist

pressure gauge- Invest in an accurate gauge. You should check the air pressure in your tires often and do it when the tires are cold, before traveling.

Cordless drill and assorted drill bits.

Assorted straight head and Phillips head screwdrivers

Assorted RV related screwdriver tips. Check with your local RV dealer.

Pliers, regular and needle nose

Household type extension cord

Rope and bungee cords

Hammer

Carpenter level

Duct tape

Electrical tape

Teflon tape

Small step stool or ladder

Gloves

Adjustable wrench

Set of open end and box end wrenches

Socket set
Vice grips
Multimeter
Wire cutters & crimping tool combination
Fuse puller
Spare flashlight
Portable air compressor
Gardening or folding shovel
Battery charger
Bucket & rags
LP gas leak detector solution
Engine oil, transmission fluid
Windshield washer fluid
WD 40
Assorted screws, nails, nuts, bolts, electrical connectors & wire nuts
Jumper cables
Emergency road kit
Utility knife
Hose repair kit & hose washers, spray nozzle for hose& hose Y splitter

#4 Pre-Trip Checklist for your RV (Outside of RV)

Do you know what two of the most common repairs made on RV's are? They are repairs to the steps and the TV antenna. Damage to RV steps and TV antennas occur frequently and can be costly to repair. The main reason for these frequent repairs is because you forget to do a walk-around of the unit before leaving on a trip or leaving the campground. The good news is both of these common repairs can be avoided by following a simple "Pre-Trip Checklist" before heading out in your RV.

I will attempt to cover items that pertain to towable RVs as well as motorized RVs. Disregard the items that do not pertain to your RV. Now that we have everything we need for our RV, and it's loaded and ready to go, let's talk about what to check before we leave on our trip.

Top off fuel and propane tanks.

Check the air pressure in all tires. Check tires when cold before traveling.

Check lug nuts on wheels. Discoloration and stains around lug nuts indicate they may be loose.

Make sure all items in storage compartments are secure. Lock all outside compartments.

Check bike rack and bikes for secure mounting if applicable.

Make sure the power cord and/or water hose are disconnected and stored.

Be sure all slide-outs are in and slide-out travel locks are securely in place.

Make sure the TV antenna and/or satellite are down and stowed in the proper position for traveling.

Check the awning, be sure that it is securely stored and all travel locks and knobs are tight and locked.

Check that the range vent locking tabs are in place.

Close and secure rock guard (towables)

Raise and/or remove all stabilizer jacks or hydraulic leveling jacks.

Look under the RV for any indications of leaks (motorized) or anything out of the ordinary.

Stow or retract the step.

Fill fresh water holding tank with enough potable water to get to your destination.

Remember, water adds to the weight of the RV

Check and secure the cap on the sewer outlet.

Make sure roof latches are locked (pop-ups).

There is a big controversy over traveling with the LP gas turned on. For the sake of not giving bad advice turn off all LP gas appliances and turn the gas supply off at the tank or bottles.

Hitch up (towables) see hitching and unhitching checklists.

Check all fluid levels (motorized) and tow vehicle.

Remove and store wheel chocks.

Check all running lights, turn signals, brake lights and headlights on the RV and tow vehicle.

Check for up to date inspection/emissions sticker and license plates.

Check trailer brakes for proper operation.

Make one last walk-around and check for anything you may have overlooked.

#5 Pre-Trip Checklist for your RV (Inside the RV)

Walk through the entire RV and secure all loose items that could move, fall or get damaged while traveling.

Turn off all appliances gas & electric. Turn off all pilot lights.

Close all roof vents unless you have Maxx Air covers.

Close all doors, drawers and cabinets

Check for anything in the refrigerator that could spill. Lock the refrigerator and freezer doors.

Turn off the 12-volt water pump.

Close the range top cover.

Turn off all lights, stereos, TV boosters or other electrical items that could drain the auxiliary battery.

Close windows and secure blinds.

Secure any large items such as TVs and computers that might move or fall while traveling.

All weight in the RV should be distributed evenly. It is a good idea to have the RV weighed when it is fully loaded for travel to make sure you are not exceeding any weight ratings.

Adjust your mirrors and seat and hit the road.

Use your seat belts! Have a safe journey

Camping Tip: When you are packing items in your RV it is much easier if you use various sizes of see through plastic containers. It is more organized and will prevent items from moving and falling while you travel. You can also look and see what is in each container without removing every thing. Be careful when opening cabinet and refrigerator doors when you get to your destination.

#6 Traveling with Pets Checklist

Pets and RV's just seem to go together. One of the really great things about traveling in an RV is that you can take your pets with you. In many cases the main reason people buy an RV is so their pets can travel with them. Both of our dogs have been traveling with us in our RV since they were puppies. They both get extremely excited when they see us loading the RV for another trip. It's fun and convenient to be able to take your pets along with you, but I realized a long time ago that certain precautions must be taken when you travel with pets. This checklist is a good start to making sure your pets are prepared for RV travel. **When making campground reservations be sure and ask about pets.**

Campground pet etiquette is a must. Be considerate of other campers where your pet is concerned. Always pick up behind your pet.

First and foremost always keep in mind that an RV gets extremely hot and/or cold inside depending on the outside temperature. Always make sure there is some type of ventilation and/or heat and air available when pets are left in the RV.

Never leave your pets in an RV for long periods of time without somebody checking on them periodically. If you will be away from your pets and the RV for an extended period of time leave a key with someone you can trust to check on the pets and in case of an emergency.

Always have fresh water available for your pets. You never know the quality of the drinking water when you are traveling so it's a good idea to take a container of water from your home that your pets are accustomed to, or use bottled water.

Pets should always travel in a pet carrier or crate for their personal safety.

Get a current health certificate from your veterinarian before traveling.

Always take the pets medical records along with you.

Take a recent color photograph of your pets with you in the event that they should get lost.

Update all vaccinations before leaving on your trip.

Take a proof of rabies vaccination.

Take flea, tick, and heartworm medications.

Take a pet first aid kit and know what dosages of medication to give your pets.

Take your veterinarians regular phone number and emergency phone numbers with you.

Get the phone number for a local veterinarian when you arrive at your destination.

Don't forget to take the brand of pet food your pet is used to and take a food and water travel bowl.

Take a walking leash.

Your pet's collar should include identification along with basic information such as your name, address and a cell phone number. You can even include an e-mail address.

You should have your pets micro-chipped. It's not very expensive and your pets can be registered internationally. Talk to your veterinarian.

Take a harness, tie out anchor and a leash or chain. Give your pet plenty of room to move, but be cautious of traffic and obstacles that they can get hung or caught on. We use portable exercise pens.

Take grooming tools, pet toys and treats.

Take extra cat litter and the cat box.

Take some plastic bags for pet clean up.

Take your pet's favorite bedding or crate.

Take some old towels just in case you need them

Traveling can be stressful on pets especially if they are not used to it. When your pet is away from home and off of their regular schedule it can affect their health. Perform a daily health check on your pet. Look for anything out of the ordinary.

Stop often when you're traveling and allow your pet's to exercise and to relieve themselves.

When making campground reservations be sure and ask about pets. Some campgrounds offer kennels and boarding for pets. If your travel plans include day trips or extended travel away from the campsite inquire about these services.

This checklist does not cover everything that you need to be concerned with when traveling with pets in your RV, but it's a good start. You can add to this list and tailor it to your specific type of pet or your pet's needs and refer back to it before a trip so you don't forget anything.

Note: Some campgrounds offer kennels and boarding for pets. If your travel plans include day trips or extended travel away from the campsite inquire about these services before making reservations.

Daily RV Logbook

This is a simple daily logbook to assist you in keeping records of your trips and expenses. Feel free to modify it to suit your needs.

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Date: | Weather: | Daily Expenses: |
| Location: | | Fuel: |
| Today's Destination: | | Food: |
| End mileage yesterday: | Mileage @ fill up: Gallons @ fill up: | Tolls: |
| Start mileage today: | Mileage @ fill up: Gallons @ fill up: | Propane: |
| Total mileage today: | MPG = mileage driven divided by gallons used: | Eating out: |
| Today's Journal Notes: | | Recreation: |
| | | Supplies: |
| | | Maintenance: |
| | | Campground: |

| | |
|--|---|
| | Miscellaneous: |
| | Daily Total: |
| | Campground Reservations |
| | Campground _____ Telephone _____ Arrive: _____ Depart: _____ Made: _____ Confirmation# _____ |

Never Leave Home Without It!

This list is not all-inclusive, but it will serve as a reminder not to forget important paperwork and documents you should never leave home without.

Emergency Roadside Assistance information.

Road Atlas

Maps

Campground directory

Vehicle registrations

Insurance card & paperwork

Vehicle owner's manuals

Warranty card & paperwork

Address book

Emergency contact information and numbers

Camping and travel club cards

Calling card

Credit cards

ATM card

Checkbook

Pet records if applicable

Passports (only if necessary) verify expiration dates

- Reading material
- Printed checklists from this guide
- Prescription medication
- Prescription eyeglasses & sunglasses
- Spare keys
- Medical records if your under a doctors care
- Toys, games and videos for children
- Cell phone

AC & DC Amp Draw Charts

There are two types of amperage draw concerning your RV. The AC amps we are using and the DC amps we are using. I'll try to explain. When you plug your RV into an electrical source and use 120 volt appliances like the roof air conditioner, the microwave and a TV you are drawing amps from the available supply at the campground, usually 30 or 50 amps depending on your RV electrical system and the electrical supply you are plugged into. When you're plugged into an electrical source and you use DC appliances and accessories like fans, lights, pumps or the TV antenna booster you are drawing amps from the RV converter.

Your RV converter is rated for a certain amperage i.e. 30 amps, 45 amps, 55 amps. In other words a 45 amp converter is capable of running 45 amps worth of 12 volt appliances in the RV. When your RV converter is working at its maximum capacity, which in this case is producing 45 amps for 12 volt appliances and accessories, it is drawing around 5 amps out of the 30 amps available from the campground electrical supply.

Now, to help you out I am including some typical amperage draws for appliances and accessories commonly used in RV's. **Keep in mind I'm not an expert on electricity by any stretch of the imagination.** This is just a basic guide to assist you in how many amps you are using at any given time. If you need to know exact amperage ratings you can check the data plate on any motors, appliances or electronic equipment you are using. If you can't locate a data plate with this information check the appliance or electronic equipment owner's manual. This information might provide wattage requirements rather than amps. Here are a couple of simple formulas to help you convert some common electrical terms.

$$\text{Wattage} \div \text{Volts} = \text{Amps}$$

$$\text{Amps} \times \text{Volts} = \text{Wattage}$$

| 120 Volt AC Amp Ratings | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Appliance or Electronic Equipment | Estimated Amps |
| Air Conditioner (X number of A/C) | 12-16 Amps |
| Blender | 5-6 Amps |
| Coffee Maker | 5-8 Amps |
| Compact Disc Player | 1 Amp |
| Computer (Laptop) | 2-3 Amps |
| Converter | 1-5 Amps |
| Crock Pot | 1-2 Amps |
| Curling Iron | <1 Amp |
| Drill | 2-6 Amps |

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| Electric Blanket | 0.5-1.5 Amps |
| Electric Fan | 1 Amp |

| 120 Volt Amp Rating Continued | Estimated Amps |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Electric Water Heater | 9-13 Amps |
| Electric Skillet | 6-12 Amps |
| Hair Dryer | 5-12 Amps |
| Iron | 5-10 Amps |
| Light (60 watt % 120V) | <1 Amp |
| Microwave | 8-13 Amps |
| Microwave (Convection Oven) | 13 Amps |
| Refrigerator in AC mode | 5-8 Amps |
| Space Heater | 8-13 Amps |
| Television | 1-4 Amps |
| Toaster | 7-10 Amps |
| Vacuum (handheld) | 2-6 Amps |
| VCR | 1-2 Amps |
| Washer/Dryer | 14-16Amps |

| 12 Volt DC Amp Ratings | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Appliance or Accessory | Estimated Amps |
| Aisle Light | 1 Amp |
| CO Detector | 1 Amp |
| Fluorescent Light | 1-2 Amps |
| Furnace | 10-12 Amps |
| LP Gas Leak Detector | 1 Amp |
| Overhead lights (Per Bulb) | 1 Amp |
| Porch Light | 1 Amp |
| Power Roof Vent | 1.5 Amps |
| Radio/Stereo | 4 Amps |
| Range Hood (Fan & Light) | 2-3 Amps |
| Refrigerator (LP Gas Mode) | 1.5- 2 Amps |
| Security System | 1 Amp |
| Television (12 volt) | 4-5 Amps |
| TV Antenna Booster | <1 Amp |
| TV Antenna Booster 12 Volt outlet | Up to 8 Amps |
| Variable Speed Ceiling / Vent Fan | 4 Amps |
| VCR Recorder / Player | 2 Amps |
| Water Pump | 4 Amp |