

Disclaimer

This is another in the series of articles I wrote to help newbies (new to RVing) with questions around popular subjects. I am an avid and experienced RVer but am not a professional engineer or professional anything else for that matter. What follows are my opinions and are worth what you paid for them. They are based on my 50 years of RVing. I believe them to be factual. If you disagree, do your own research and act accordingly. Here we go.

Stuff that **Tess says** should always be in your RV. This way you only need to load perishables and refill the water tank when you want to head out on an adventure:

- Bedroom:
 1. Bed sheets, pillows, pillow cases
 2. Blankets and a comforter (an electric blanket is really nice)
 3. Camping clothes
 4. Books, magazines, DVDs, etc

- Bathroom:
 1. toilet paper, soap, shampoo, conditioner,
 2. face, hand and bath towels, shower mat, squeegee, sewing kit
 3. toothbrush, toothpaste, mouthwash
 4. toiletries like razor, shave cream, Q-Tips,
 5. first aid kit
 6. toilet chemicals, cleaning stuff like Comet, Soft Scrub, Magic Eraser, etc

- Kitchen:
 1. dishes, mugs, plastic glasses, spatula & whisk (for pancakes), cutlery
 2. pots and pans
 3. coffee maker, filters, & coffee
 4. dishwashing soap, paper towels, dish cloths, tea towels
 5. strike anywhere wooden matches, candles, flashlights

- Kitchen Cupboards:
 1. spices, coffee, tea, hot choco, powdered coffee creamer
 2. canned food (soups etc), dry food (Kraft Dinner, spaghetti, etc)
 3. treats like cookies, Spitz, peanuts, marshmallows, microwave popcorn, etc
 4. liquids – beer, juice, pop, wine

➤ Closet:

1. sweaters, coats, rain gear, umbrellas
2. gum boots, flip flops, runners, etc
3. small vacuum cleaner, broom

➤ Dog

1. bed, toys, food and water dishes, leash, shampoo, poop bags, etc

Restock the RV after each trip. Keep a list of what you need to replace. When winterizing in the fall, remove all liquids including soup, soap, and beer.

Greg's list of guy things to take:

➤ Tools

1. SAE and/or metric socket and wrench set, screw drivers, vise grips, lineman and needle nose pliers, side cutters, wire stripper, hacksaw & blades, etc
2. Duct, electrical, Eternabond, and Teflon tape
3. Digital multimeter, 12 volt circuit test light, fuses, wire terminals, zip ties, hose clamps
4. Light bulbs, bailing wire, ¼" nylon rope, misc nuts & bolts, Goop
5. 120 volt plug tester (for checking campground electrical supply)
6. Hydraulic jack and axle stand if you can change your own flat tire

➤ Supplies

1. engine & transmission oils, brake & power steering fluids, radiator coolant
2. spare fan/serpentine belt, jumper cables,
3. a piece of carpet to lie on, spool of 12 gauge wire
4. two 6' long 2x10s (to level trailer side to side)
5. heavy duty rubber gloves and foam kneeling pad (for dumping tanks)
6. spray bottle with 5% Javex real bleach solution (for disinfecting water connections)
7. 75' of white water hose for refilling tanks (no green hose taste)
8. 25' green garden hose for flushing dump area and connecting to black tank rinse connection. Never use for drinking water.
9. 25' 30 amp or 50 amp extension cord & 100' 15 amp 12 gauge extension cord
10. Adapters to reduce power connection for 50 to 30 to 15 amps
11. Buy a good quality brass water pressure reducer and use it at the supply tap.
12. fire starters or newspaper, wooden strike anywhere matches, firewood
13. ground cover / carpet, plastic table cloth and clips to hold it to the table

14. wiener sticks, lawn chairs, portable bbq, trash bags, splitter (not an axe)
15. Buy or make 1 foot by 1 foot pads about 3 2x6 boards high to place under the feet of your hydraulic jacks. This will give you enough lift for most uneven sites and prevent the jacks from extending so far that there is flex in them that you can feel inside the rig. There are stackable yellow plastic ones available which are lightweight but pricey. If you ever need to call the road service to change a flat, you can raise the wheels off the ground with the jacks on a pad or two.

Things you may forget:

- The following things will not work unless you are plugged in to shore power or a generator:
 1. microwave oven, toaster and other kitchen appliances
 2. TV and related equipment (may work if you have an inverter)
 3. roof or basement mounted air conditioner

Tips

- Levelling (5er or trailer)
 1. Make sure there is enough room to extend the slides!!!!
 2. First get the trailer level side-to-side using boards or blocks
 3. If you don't have a tilting hitch (5th wheel), level the truck too so it is easier to disconnect after step 5
 4. block the tires so the trailer can't escape, even if it looks level
 5. disconnect the wiring then unhitch from the truck
 6. use the landing gear to get level front-to-back
 7. lower the stabilizers at the back and sides.
 8. Optionally, you can add the tripod for even more stability.

- Fridge
 1. Start the fridge the day before you fill it up as it takes a while to get cold from start
 2. Propane works better than 120v
 3. 12v cooling will drain your house batteries in 24 hours
 4. We always leave the fridge running on propane even when driving.
 5. Turn off the hot water heater before travelling. It has a big flame that could blow back and scorch the siding.
 6. Turn off everything before pulling into a fuel station. The fridge and the hot water heater have open flames. An explosion will ruin your day.

➤ Slideouts

1. don't overload the motor; if a slide sticks, stop and retry or reverse it for an inch then try again.
2. If you don't have mini awnings over the slides, watch for leaves and debris on the slide roofs as they come inside the RV when retracted. Watch for squirrels too.
3. Always fully extend all slides, don't leave them partially out.
4. Don't stand in a slide when it is moving

➤ Hot water heater

1. Don't use when travelling
2. The second highest propane user (after furnace)
3. If the red fault light comes on, turn it off, wait a few seconds then turn it back on. This usually only happens after you have run out of propane and the line is empty. When the heater is working properly or if it is turned off, the red light is out.

➤ Holding Tanks

1. Put one package of chemical down the toilet and flush it for 30 seconds before you use the toilet.
2. You should not need to add more chemicals for 3-5 days if it is not too hot. Your nose will tell you when you flush if you need more.
3. Most people do not add any chemicals to the grey water tank(s). If you smell skunky water, add a quarter package through a sink.
4. Do not dump the black (toilet) tank unless it is at least half full. More is better. You want lots of liquid to carry the poopies through the stinky slinky and away.
5. Dump the black tank first and let it drain completely before closing the valve. If you are not going to go out again for a while, flush the toilet for 30 seconds while the valve is open. If there is a power rinse connection, that is better. If not, try putting the green hose down the toilet and turning it on for 30 seconds. Wait for it to drain then close the black valve.
6. Dump each grey tank in turn, closing the valve before opening the next one.
7. Rinse the slinky hose with the dump station water hose or your green one
8. Rinse the dump station apron for the next RVer
9. When you are staying for a few days with a sewer connection, leave the black tank valve closed and the grey tank valves open. A day or two before you leave, close the grey tank valves then do a normal dump just before leaving. If you leave the black tank valve open, the liquid drains away leaving a pyramid of poopies that will turn into kryptonite which you will have to chip away with a hammer and a chisel. Not much fun through the toilet hole.

➤ Maintenance Stuff

- check tire pressure before each trip until you know they don't ever lose any air. Inflate to 5psi more than the number on the sticker inside the RV. ST and LT tires show the minimum pressure required to carry a specific weight, not the maximum like car tires do. Check the spare too.
- Same tire pressure rules for the truck. You can drop the truck down to 40psi if you are not hauling the trailer; the ride will soften up quite a bit.
- Grease the slide-out rack & pinions and the hitch pin a couple of times per season
- Lube the slide seals with slide lubricant
- An RV is considered severe service when deciding when to service the truck or motorhome drive-train

➤ Things to think about for the future

- A generator bolted to the truck box or trailer pin lets you use the microwave, TV and so on no matter where you are. It will recharge the battery too. A 2,000-watt unit will run everything except the air conditioner. You'll need 3,000 watts to run the roof air, 5,500 to run two roof airs. Buy a Honda or Yamaha inverter type – very quiet and fuel efficient. And expensive. Do not buy an industrial or el-cheapo unit!
- Trailers often have load range D or E tires. Move up to load range E or F at replacement time for an added margin of safety. PSI requirements do not change with stronger tires.
- When you need to replace the sewer hose, buy the best you can find. Even one leak in a hose is too many. Buy a set of adapters to mate the hose to the RV park receptacle.
- A spoiler for the top of the truck might be worthwhile – the pros use them on their semis to save fuel. Your trailer may be the same width and height as a semi. Talk to people in RV parks who have them to see if they think they are worthwhile.
- A backup camera (wireless) is a great help in backing into a site. Some even have one or two-way voice to you can hear your partner yelling at you to stop.
- Good Sam club, FMCA and others offer excellent emergency road service. Be sure to read the fine print about what is covered, especially towing and flat tire changes.