



# Travel Tips

More Americans than ever are touring the country in recreational vehicles. We would like to offer the following safety tips as you take to the roads with family and friends.

- **Checklist.** Several industry safety experts rank a departure checklist as the most important step for 'hitting the road'. We suggest the TravelStar laminated checklist with pen (AM-399), or a pad of sheets (LM-094).
- **Tire care and condition.** Considered by many experts to be the most neglected maintenance situation, tires should be replaced every five years for motor homes, and every four years for towable units, regardless of appearance and the number of miles traveled on them.
  - Tires deteriorate through usage as well as non-usage. When parked for more than two weeks at a time, it is recommended that a vapor barrier be placed under each tire, since moisture from ground and concrete is absorbed through the rubber and into the steel belt. Rusty steel belts are a common cause of tire blowouts.
  - Check the age of tires when purchasing a new unit or buying them as replacements. (Do not assume you are getting recently manufactured items just because they look unused.)
  - Make sure that the replacement tires fit exactly to the wheels.
  - UV rays are extremely damaging to tires. Cover tires if they will be subjected to extended exposure.
  - Check tire pressure in each tire before each trip, and after several hundred miles on same-day trips. Heat generated from driving temporarily increases the air pressure. Be responsive to a tire that registers an abnormal difference in pressure from the other tires.
  - Either laser or digital temperature gauges are recommended for checking tire temperatures.
  - Avoid tire products that contain petroleum-based substances, which may create or accelerate deterioration and cracking.
  - Periodically, weigh the tow vehicle fully loaded to prevent overloading and/or load imbalance, and to determine the proper amount of air in tires.
- **Propane.** Turn off propane at the tank while traveling. Because refrigerators are designed to remain under 40 degrees for 8 – 10 hours, turning off the propane will not cause food to spoil unless there is excessive opening.
  - Have propane tank and connections checked by a certified RV dealer each year.
  - Never paint the propane tank, since dark colors absorb the sun's rays and can cause the tank to overheat and explode.
  - Turn off propane when pumping gas or diesel. Vibration fatigue from rough road travel can create a spark to ignite.
  - Propane is a fire accelerant. Should an accident occur when the propane lines are open, additional damage may result.
- **More on Fire Safety.** It is recommended that at least two annually certified Class ABC fire extinguishers be mounted in visible, easy-to-reach areas in the RV, preferably at the entrance and in the back living areas. (For larger models, an extinguisher is recommended for the middle living area.) Other same-rated fire extinguishers should be placed outside the RV in an unlocked storage compartment as well as in tow vehicles or trailers.
  - Make certain all passengers know where the exits to the RV are located and how to escape through them.
  - It is important to teach each adult passenger how to disconnect from shore power, should a fire occur in a parked RV.
- **Brakes/Braking Conditions.** A fully loaded RV will take longer to come to a complete stop than an auto. To compensate, add 20 percent to your following distance behind another vehicle to help judge if you are following too close or have enough room to merge.

- Some motor homes, such as "diesel pushers," use air brakes rather than hydraulic brakes found in most cars. Air brakes have a slight delay when applied. Don't try to overcompensate by applying the brakes too hard. This will cause the motor home to make an abrupt stop.
- Most states require brake systems when towing. Police are stopping RV's to check and issuing fines up to \$400 if they find non-functioning or improperly installed brake systems.
- **Locks/ Locking.** Professional thieves can get into an RV or towed vehicle within six seconds.
  - When leaving your RV, activate door and lock bolts on all entrances. Lock basement doors.
  - After each stop and before resuming your trip, walk around all sides of tow vehicle and all towables, checking safety cables, pins, tires, and all hookups.
- **Animal Infestation.** When motor homes, travel trailers, 5<sup>th</sup> wheels and camping trailers sit for several months, mice and squirrels may make your leisure vehicle their home by eating through wires and lines.
  - Never leave edible items in the RV when not occupying it unless they are placed in double air-tight containers.
  - Starting your motor home every week or two may help to scare these animals away.
  - Regularly inspect camping and travel trailers for uninvited "guests."
  - Spray bug/roach repellent on the ground around your vehicle tires and any hoses resting on the ground to prevent insects from climbing into your RV.
- **Towing.** The tow bar should be fitted so that it is level between the tow vehicle and the towable. There should be no more than a one-inch difference.
  - Safety chains are required by law and should be crossed.
  - Never back up with tow bars.
  - Know the towing capacity of your tow bar and tow vehicle; include the total weight of the towable with cargo in it.
  - Drive with rear camera on and angled at the tow connection.
  - Always carry an extra set of pins.
  - Keep tow bar covered when not in use.
  - Lubricate latches with silicone spray.
  - Clean tow bar surface with soap and water periodically to eliminate road dirt buildup.
  - Check and replace loose, worn, or damaged bolts, cap plugs, or latch components.
  - Check for cracked welds and loose bolts on base plate. A good time to have a service person check for bolt tightness and cracks is when the tow vehicle is being serviced.
- **Emergency Info Card.**
  - Prepare an index card with vehicle description, license plate number, and emergency contact.
  - Upon arriving at the RV park or resort, add location name, address, telephone, space number and nearest emergency shelter location. This is necessary information if you need to place a 911 call or give information to an emergency responder.
  - Keep the emergency info card near your cell phone.

At ANPAC<sup>®</sup>, we are committed to providing security to you and your family. We encourage you to use an ANPAC<sup>®</sup> checklist, the Travel Tips above, and the RV Operator's Manual to help keep you, your passengers and your vehicle(s) safe while traveling.



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