

Helpful Hints, Ideas and Solutions for Today's RVer

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Voltage on an RV Frame

Mark Nemeth frequently posts questions from readers about voltage showing up on the frame of a rig. I ran across one a while back that might be a pretty common cause of such trouble. Multiple pedestals showed voltage on the neutral or ground. It had not been the case when I had set up a few days earlier. Systematically unplugging trailers from their pedestals revealed the problem disappeared when one rig was disconnected. Watching the voltage on his frame, he tripped his breakers one at a time, finally seeing normal readings when he shut off the water heater. The cause was a water heater element burned completely in half and shorted to frame. It occurred to me this might be a common problem, especially on older rigs, with an easy fix.

Russ Strait #96376

That does happen, and the worst part is that such a fault can affect other RVs plugged into the same electrical circuit. Refrigerator heating elements can do the same thing. Usually, the refrigerator will trip a GFCI (ground-fault circuit interrupter) if there is one on the circuit.

Mark Nemeth #45776



Pepper Spray vs. Bear Spray in Canada

Pepper spray is not permitted in Canada, but bear spray is permitted. I have crossed the border many times with bear spray. Just be careful what you call it and how it is labeled.

As long as the description on the product verifies that it is for use against animals, it should not be a problem. The Canadian regulation can be found online (Memorandum D19-13-2: Importing and Exporting Firearms, Weapons and Devices.) at: www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/publications/dm-md/d19/d19-13-2-eng.pdf (See paragraph 20.)

Frank Mengel #121007

NINE SMALL ITEMS THAT CAN ENHANCE RV LIFE

We've been full-time RVing for almost two years and have tried many products to solve problems during that time. Some have had successful outcomes; others, not so much. In addition to several significant inconveniences, your home can become a rolling earthquake on travel days, meaning belongings and essential equipment can shift, bounce, tumble, slip and topple while on the road. This requires special preparation before each trek, and some of that might be for naught. Here are a few inexpensive solutions that have actually worked well for us. Each of these items costs less than \$50.

9. ENTRY MAT—We found that our dog often tracked in the outside environment with ordinary doormats, and, even when we used them to wipe our own shoes, it didn't take long to use up what little protection they offered. The solution turned out to be a microfiber doormat. Ultra-absorbent, this doormat soaks up five times more dirt and water than normal mats to protect your furniture and floors from even the friskiest pup.

8. WALL-MOUNTED SOAP DISPENSERS—With counter space at a premium in both the kitchen and the bathroom, we found that commercial wall-mounted soap dispensers took a vital item off the counter and made it even more convenient to use.

7. ULTRA-SLIM VELVET CLOTHES HANGERS—Another spot of valuable real estate in an RV is the clothes closet. Regular hangers are bulky, and most closets are not tall enough for tiered hanging racks or stackable hanger devices. We found we can hang almost twice the number of shirts and pants using those ultra-slim hangers that are lightweight and covered in non-slip velvet.

6. REMOTE BINS—No, the bins aren't remote. Each room that has a television or entertainment center normally sports multiple remote-control devices that are frequently lost and often damaged on travel days. Simple stick-on bins, installed next to the couch or bed, easily solve both problems, in addition to never having to look for the remote.

5. FOAM MATTRESS CORNERS—It might sound silly, but with RV mattresses typically smaller than their full-size home counterparts, bed linens often bunch up or loosen in use on a bed. This can make sleep uncomfortable and the bed look sloppy even after it's made. We found foam pieces that were made to use on the corners of the mattress beneath the fitted sheet that helps the linen cling and stay in place.

4. CLEAR VINYL SCREEN-DOOR COVERING—Most RVs don't have storm doors and having to keep the outside door closed whenever the screen door isn't sufficient to keep

Holding Tank Tip

In the article, “6 Tips for Your Holding Tanks,” in the “Tips” section of the September/October 2019 issue, the author talks about using the right toilet paper, but doesn’t suggest putting no toilet paper into the tank.

As boondockers who need to get the longest time possible before needing to dump, my husband, Larry, and I put all toilet paper into a sealable 2-quart juice container lined with the plastic bags from the produce department of the grocery store. It all goes into the garbage when we empty our trash. Some people may think this is not a good idea, but it’s no different from the disposing of infant or adult disposable diapers, which contain much more waste than toilet paper.

Joyce Space #61818

KEYLESS REMOTE ENTRY SYSTEM

On the Northern Lite Truck Camper Facebook page, someone posted about having a new truck that uses a keyless remote entry system. He realized that it may be possible for someone to get into their truck while he and his travel companion were sleeping if the keys were on their table. Sure enough, he was able to get into his truck by putting his hand in front of the sensor. Now they store their keys in the back closet on a hook that is far enough away that the truck does not sense them and, therefore, allow someone to open the doors.

This could also be an issue for tow vehicles and trucks that pull trailers if parked too close to the living area.

Besides placing the keys far enough away, other solutions to this problem could be to put the keys in a metalized bag, such as a Faraday key fob bag, or a metal tin such as a cookie tin or Altoid tin. Storing the keys in the microwave should also work. It’s probably not a good idea to put your keys in the freezer or refrigerator. Batteries don’t like to be frozen or cold, and there are batteries in the key fob. It may be possible to disable the remote. Check your owner’s manual for instructions.

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hot or cold out can cause claustrophobia. Our solution was to cut a piece of clear vinyl to the exact shape of the top and bottom halves of the screen door and apply it with Velcro strips. When we want to open the air flow, we simply pull the vinyl cover off the Velcro.

3. NONSLIP MATTING—Smaller appliances or kitchen accoutrements that sit on the counter, such as an ice maker or a silverware holder, must typically be stowed before travel can begin and replaced when the rig is parked. This can be time-consuming and inconvenient. However, using a nonslip mat can eliminate this necessity, simplifying both the breakdown and setup processes. Our ice maker has been safely sitting on our kitchen counter for over 20,000 miles.

2. MUSEUM GEL AND PUTTY—Nonslip mats are not always applicable for securing an item, especially for trinkets and souvenirs on shelving or wall hangings that you’d want to fasten more safely than with a single nail or screw. A small glob of museum gel for horizontal surfaces or museum putty for vertical positioning not only can secure the item over the long term, but allows the item to be moved whenever necessary, using a twisting motion.

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1. MAGNETIC DOOR CLASPS—Like many RVs, our cabinet doors did not manage well to hold back their contents on the road. Like many RV owners, we strapped them with bungee cords and tension bars, but even those did not always hold. We came across a unique solution at an RV show that completely resolved our issue—magnetic cabinet clasps. The particular magnets this product used had a 40-pound pull strength, meaning that once engaged, it took 40 pounds of pressure to directly pull it apart. Since almost nothing the cabinets are storing weigh anything close to 40 lbs., we no longer use any bungees or rods to secure a door using the magnetic clasp. Pulling the door open takes a bit more strength than the usual clasp, but it’s not excessive, nor as inconvenient as marine-type push-button hardware.

We purchased these items either from Amazon.com or Walmart. Some of the items can be found at both stores, as well as Home Depot and Lowe’s. Obviously, this is not a complete list of everything we have purchased that has been beneficial, but it is a nice set of less-expensive solutions to typical RV difficulties or inconveniences.

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