

Helpful Hints, Ideas and Solutions for Today's RVer

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Mirror Safety

More than once, a car has honked its horn as I began changing lanes in my 40' motorhome. There are blind spots with a two-mirror setup. However, this is no longer a problem for me since I added a small circular mirror to my top mirror. It is inexpensive and available in most auto parts stores and at Walmart. Now I make sure I check all three mirrors before changing lanes—no more horns!

Tom Sikora #125475

Must-Have Items for New RVers

As a fairly experienced full-time RVer, I am asked quite often by new RV enthusiasts what they should buy for their rig. I tend to give the same answers, depending on the specifics of the conversation, and I have narrowed the main list to nine items or kits. These are what we consider essential in everyday RV living. I don't include items such as propane tanks or refrigerators that are normal stock equipment in an RV. All items can be purchased from Amazon and most RV supply centers.

- 1. BLACK TANK ENZYMES:** Instead of only treating the black tank, enzymes actually break down the solids and minimize the threat of “poop dams” or other nasty mishaps from occurring. We purchase a product called “Odorlos” quick-release drop-in packets, which liquefy waste, lubricate valves and deodorize the tank, but there are other products available, too.
- 2. RIG SECURITY:** I installed six solar-powered LED motion-sensor security lights high up around our RV that are bright. They only stay on for four to five minutes without further motion so that they potentially won't disturb people in neighboring campsites. Also, I keep bear spray and personal taser devices as emergency intruder protection, be it human or wildlife. A high-lumen flashlight rounds out our security toolkit for night camping.
- 3. STRAP AND TIE-DOWN KIT:** My bungee cord set is among my favorite components in our fifth-wheel. I use a variety of bungee types and lengths, depending on the need, as well as a 50-ft. (or longer) rope and a 9x12 tarp when necessary. In addition, I have installed several tie-down loops around the living room and outside the trailer for securing various items while on the road.
- 4. POWER HOOK-UP KIT:** Along with your normal 30- or 50-amp power cord, you should have the alternate adapter (30-to-50-amp or 50-to-30-amp) for those occasions that offer only the source that doesn't match up with your cord. Also, a power cord extension will be necessary for the campgrounds that locate the power hook-ups farther than your 30 ft. cord can reach.
- 5. WATER/SEWER HOOK-UP KIT:** I highly recommend you include a water pressure regulator, with a gauge if possible, to prevent an unusually high water pressure in a resort from damaging your water supply system. Follow up with a fresh-water filter for your incoming



TIRE PRESSURE GAUGE

I just read your product review on the TireMinder pressure gauge in the September/October issue. I've had a hard time measuring the pressure of my dually tires. Getting something to reach, and at just the right angle, proved difficult. And then, if I managed to, I had to press it just right or I'd lose a lot of air.

I found something that solves all those problems and is rugged and accurate to ± 0.5 psi: the Jaco gauge and tire chuck are sold separately and can be found online at <https://jacosuperiorproducts.com/products/elitepro-digital-tire-pressure-gauge-professional-accuracy-100-psi> and <https://jacosuperiorproducts.com/products/lightning-dually-tire-air-chuck>. It's really the tire chuck that makes the difference. I just push it on, and it locks with next to no air loss. The chuck rotates 360 degrees, meaning I can match the valve stem angle precisely. The gauge has a bleed valve, so I can overfill a little and bleed out the excess. When I'm done, I simply press the button on the chuck and it releases, again with next to no air loss. This is a really solid, well-engineered product. You could keep your Tire Minder gauge and just replace the chuck, though because of the bleed valve, I'd go with the Jaco gauge too. The gauge and the special chuck run about \$30 each.

Jascha Lee #154626

street-water source, an extension hose for your sewer drain and, for those trips in potentially freezing climates, a heated water hose and heated trace for your water connections.

6. STEPLADDER: You can't always reach problem areas on top of your RV or on top of your slides, even from the roof, so it's vital that you have a stepladder to bring those spots within your grasp. My 12 ft. telescoping ladder squeezes down to a length that fits in the back of my pickup, but there are other types, such as folding scaffold ladders, that will work nicely. I often see them strapped to an RV's rear ladder.

7. WHEEL STABILIZING/LEVELING KIT: Stabilizer blocks and landing pads, whether purchased or made from wood, are also necessary for leveling and stabilizing an RV when camping, and there are many types of chocks, from simple plastic wedges to more elaborate X-chock devices. In either case, you definitely do not want your RV to move before you're ready.

8. MUSEUM GEL/PUTTY AND ANTI-SLIP MATS: I've found it time-consuming to take down and put away decor, small appliances and other items inside the RV when preparing to travel, only to retrieve items to set up once we arrive in a park. We found that museum gel and putty work great to secure small pieces to a counter, shelf or wall while still allowing them to be moved when desired. We also use silicone cookie

sheets as anti-slip mats under appliances such as our coffee maker and ice maker, and even our silverware carrier and laptops rest on one and hardly move at all during travel.

9. IN-RIG TOOL KIT A SMALL ASSORTMENT OF HAND TOOLS (hammer, screwdrivers, pliers, wrenches, etc.) It can be helpful to keep on hand inside the rig, eliminating the need to locate them in an outside compartment.

I could mention a generator or other alternate power source but that seems to be more of a luxury than a need. Supply yourself with the items on this list and you'll minimize inconvenience in your RV travels.

Jack Huber #135651

SmartWeigh Needs You

Escapees is seeking a dedicated group of detail-oriented personnel to weigh RVs and help educate RVers about their RV weight-and-load-management options. Individuals with a background or experience in the tire industry, or weight-and-load management, are encouraged to consider joining our Smartweigh team. In addition to a rewarding experience, the positions offer monetary compensation and flexible schedules.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, E-MAIL SMARTWEIGH@ESCAPEES.COM.

Gaylord Coston #106778, Smartweigh Director