

## **RV Trip? Make Happy Trails, Not Painful Travails**

The concept of sightseeing no doubt predates the invention of the wheel. The cave man equivalent of “Kilroy was here!” has been discovered from the highest mountaintops to the deepest caves. When the weather is right and the mood strikes, there is clearly something in humans that cries, “Road trip!”

Of course, it is no coincidence that motor courts, auto parks, and motels (short for “motor hotels”) developed soon after the advent of motor cars. And today, many folks long for a home away from home when hitting the highways. That means the recreational vehicle (RV).

Your RV may be your retirement home, your favorite alternate lifestyle possession, or a temporary rental. Your pleasure may be a long-term tour to escape winter weather, an extended visit to friends and relatives, or just a short vacation. In every case, your Trusted Choice® agent wants your travels to be safe. That starts with a review of your current auto coverage to be certain the vagaries and unique exposures of RVs are properly covered, and it also includes a focus on safety in your planning and vehicle operation.

To get your safety brain engaged, here are a few solid recommendations from RV experts:

- If this is your first trip in a particular RV, be sure to take it for a test drive. RVs, especially when fully loaded, have a myriad of driving considerations that go far beyond a typical auto’s. Cornering, turn radius, braking distance, blind spots, towing, acceleration, and height are just a few of the operational considerations you should be comfortable with before beginning your trip.
- Propane safety is important in any motor home. From cooking to overall operations, the amount of propane stored represents a significant hazard. Be certain your equipment is properly inspected. Make sure you understand proper filling procedures, your maximum capacity, and what to do if you suspect or discover a leak.
- For safety purposes, consider a motor home as a combination of your home and car. Tips important to both also apply here, including: Install deadbolt locks; make sure smoke alarms and fire extinguishers are operational; inspect headlights, turn signals and all belts and hoses; and check all other operational equipment to be sure it is defect-free.
- Assemble a safety kit with flashlights, batteries, road flares, repair tools, tape, jumper cables, and emergency food and water.
- Always wear seat belts when the RV is moving. This is particularly important since passengers often act as they would in a home — sitting around a table

playing games, snacking, and cooking. They forget they are in a moving vehicle and subject to being thrown about by a sudden stop or collision.

## **'Boy, You're Gonna Carry That Weight'**

The Beatles had it right on "Abbey Road." If there is one RV operational risk even experienced RV operators must understand, it's the threat to your safety from overloading — which is the leading cause of RV accidents. While it may seem obvious that RVs are going to be far heavier, and thus more difficult to drive, than a standard vehicle, don't overlook the further complication of your own cargo and how you load it. Key weight considerations include:

- Gross vehicle weight of RV itself.
- RV weight when fully loaded. (Don't overlook the significant weight of filled water and propane tanks.)
- Distribution of weight, so RV is not overbalanced and awkward to drive.
- Be certain tires are properly rated and inflated to handle your load.

RVs can add immeasurably to the enjoyment of your road travel, as long as proper preparation takes place before the trip and safety precautions are followed during. Your Trusted Choice® agent stands ready to offer helpful advice and assure the proper insurance protection for you and yours. Safe travels!

Sources:

<http://www.funroads.com/rv-travel/safety/checklist/>

[http://www.sharetheroadsafely.org/cardrivers/RV\\_Safety\\_Tips.asp](http://www.sharetheroadsafely.org/cardrivers/RV_Safety_Tips.asp)

<http://www.dmv.org/how-to-guides/rv-handling.php>

<http://www.funroads.com/rv-travel/safety/overloaded/>

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