

## **101 tips- by RVers**

Here are 101 RV Tips, collected from contributions by members of the “Boomer” BOF, of the Escapees RV Club. I included all the tips submitted by everyone contributing. There are a few duplications, but that’s okay. It shows what people were thinking...and I needed them to reach the 101 goal

*Chuck Flanagan*

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1. Join the Escapees RV Club
2. Always have wheel chocks, or blocks of wood or something to prevent your unit from rolling on its own.
3. Throw away the cheap sewer hose that came with your new rig, and buy yourself a really good one. Actually, buy two – a 10 footer and a 20 footer, and be sure that you have a connector that will connect them together, come that dark evening when the sewer connection is 29 feet away.
4. Always be SURE that the hose is SECURELY attached to the sewer outlet and EASE the valve open. Before you get excited and slam the valve full open, be sure that someone’s foot, or a heavy rock is holding down the other end.
5. Have your “significant other” make it her job to ask you “Did you close both valves before you put the cap back on? Why don’t you check.” If you are doing this solo, someday you will suddenly know why this is an important step.
6. Join Escapees & FMCA and learn from their magazines and rallies.
7. Get the rig weighed on the corners before and after loading it with your “stuff,” and do not exceed the GVWR.
8. Check age/condition of tires and check pressure before each drive. Do a walk around check of rig every couple-few hours, when you’re traveling.
9. Develop a check list for departure.
10. Buy the RVSEF training program from RVSafety.com; \$29 and change with discount (SKP, GS, FMCA).
11. Take an RV driving class
12. Ensure a safe water supply with filtration.
13. Use a water pressure reducer at the source.
14. Check/replace anode in hot water heater.
15. Buy a multi-meter and learn how to check electric receptacles and to make sure the circuit breaker is off before plugging/unplugging.
16. Install an Awning Saver or some other device to prevent loss of same due to wind.

17. Start a library of RV maintenance books such as *The RV Handbook* by Bill Estes, ISBN 0-934798-44-3; *RV Electrical Systems* by Bill & Jan Moeller, ISBN 0-07-042778-X; *The RVer's Bible* by Kim & Sunny Baker, ISBN 0-684-82267-9; and *Managing 12 Volts* by Harold Barre, ISBN 0-9647386-1-9.
18. Take care when listening to well meaning but uninformed folks when it comes to solving problems.
19. Install fresh batteries in all detectors and ensure they are working.
20. Check all chassis and house batteries and know how to properly maintain them.
21. Get ready to experience a whole new life style and the freedom to make many COP's (change of plans).
22. Have multiple fire extinguishers on hand.
23. Take nothing on board that does not have at least two uses.
24. Never go out to dump your black water (or gray water) without a screwdriver! ALWAYS check the hose clamp that attaches your sewer hose to the rig's sewer outlet.
25. Have a "check out list" with everything you need to do BEFORE pulling out.
26. ALWAYS use your checklist.
27. Install some extra towel bars. We have 2 extra on the bathroom door, so towels can dry faster.
28. Store your medicine cabinet contents in small plastic bins (like those made for organizing drawers). Then if there's a spill, you won't have a big mess to clean up. We learned that liquid soap oozes out due to altitude changes.
29. Don't forget the old standard of buying two 25' fresh water hoses and cut one at 10', finishing each end with the proper connection. That gives you a ton of flexibility from 10 to 50 feet.
30. Let your wife be in charge of the dumping process. It's fun to watch!
31. Never put grease, coffee grounds or food down the drain. We always pre-wipe dishes with a damp paper towel to avoid a smelly tank with potential problems.
32. We put our toilet paper in the trash instead of down the toilet. That way it doesn't bulk up the black water tank when you're trying to make it last as long as possible out in the sticks, and, you can use any kind of toilet tissue you want instead of the special biodegradable kind for RV holding tanks.
33. Use Scott's single-ply toilet tissue; breaks down just as easy as the more expensive special use brands.
34. Save the dishwasher in a gallon container to use in the toilet instead of using precious water from your freshwater tank.

35. Label a bunch of clothes pins (Antenna, ALP, Chocks, Sat. Dish, etc.). As you deploy each of these, clip the corresponding pin to your steering wheel. This is your checklist.
36. Place a small container next to your entry door. In it, keep a flashlight, screwdriver, work gloves, and adjustable wrench.
37. Buy small single-plug surge protectors for every appliance in your rig. If you boon-dock, get the ones with switches, so that you can turn them off completely.
38. Turn on your water heater (LP mode) about 30 minutes before you need hot water. Turn it off when done.
39. Always chock your wheels.
40. Learn to back into sites using visual signals from your ground guide. (Hand-held radios are useful, but garbled radio transmissions lead to confusion.)
41. The ground guide is in charge. The driver should only do what the guide tells him/her (back, turn, stop, etc.)
42. If you lose sight of your ground guide – STOP!
43. Ground guides should use clear and exaggerated signals. Be seen!
44. Many parks provide someone to help you get into your site. They may not be as good as your partner at being a ground guide.
45. Only take directions from one ground guide at a time. Trust your partner!
46. Guys like tools, but they are heavy. Carry only the minimum and borrow the heavy ones from someone who hasn't read this.
47. Carry a small polarity checking device to ensure clean shore power. Use it every time.
48. Use a clear elbow sewer connection. It will let you see just how well you are dumping.
49. Never leave your RV alone with the main awning deployed. The wind will pick up.
50. Do not use standard extension cords for shore power. Buy a 30A (minimum) RV extension cord
51. Exercise your generator...or lose it. (Onan recommends two hours per month, under a load.)
52. Measure and know the height of your RV.
53. As part of your campsite setup, carefully open each cabinet and catch the items that have shifted...as they fall out.
54. Always let your black-water tank get at least half-full before dumping. It needs the liquid to keep the solid waste in suspension.
55. You can leave the gray-water valve open (when you have a sewer connection), but close it a few days before dumping the black. Dump the gray after the black to flush the hose.

56. Corning Corelle dishes are fairly light and break-resistant.
57. Service for four is plenty. (Dishes, flatware, glasses)
58. Use acrylic glasses; they're light and strong.
59. Use a surge protector in campgrounds to protect electronics. We ruined a computer!
60. Use water filters – one to filter sediment and one for taste. Recently, we have taken to buying bottled water for drinking. You never know what's in the water at a campground.
61. Remember to stop and smell the roses. It's not a contest to see how much you can see before you die.
62. Volunteering is so rewarding and fun. You'll meet the greatest people!
63. One more tip on black tanks: Wear disposable gloves.
64. Get and use a small plug-in AC voltage monitor (\$15-19).
65. Get a front-end alignment...after loading down your rig (motorhomes).
66. Flush your water heater annually and check the condition of the anode.
67. Always check your lights and signals before starting out.
68. Keep a spare key outside your rig (magnetic Hide-a-Key) in case of a lock-out.
69. UV light is bad for tires. Cover them whenever you're parked for more than a couple days.
70. Turn off your LP tank when traveling. In case of an accident, it reduces the chance of an LP leak.
71. Turn off your refrigerator when traveling. If you keep the door closed, the food will stay cold. Turn it on when you stop for lunch; off when you start again.
72. Always check to ensure that your refrigerator, water heater and stove are off before refueling.
73. Install a small sprayer/cut-off device on your kitchen faucet. It'll help save water.
74. Use 303 on your tires to protect them from UV.
75. Get a copy of The RVer's Friend; a guide to RV friendly truck stops.
76. Valid military I.D.? Get the Military Living's Military RV, Camping & Outdoor Recreation... guide.
77. Don't join an RV campground organization immediately. Wait until you've been RVing for a while to make sure that the one you join (if you join any) meets your camping lifestyle/needs.
78. Don't leave storage bays open and unattended when there are critters (mice/chipmunks, etc.) about.

79. Do not leave food/trash outside where critters (mice-to-bears) might be attracted.
80. Get a windshield sunscreen to reduce heat build-up. (Those that mount on the outside seem more effective than those that mount inside.)
81. Don't leave pets outside unattended. That's where coyotes look for lunch!
82. Mount a magnetic bar (double row of magnets) in the kitchen area, to hold your knives. Then you won't cut yourself rummaging through the drawers.
83. Set your VCR clock to match that of your satellite service. It saves the confusion of converting from local time, when you program it to record.
84. Be sure to make reservations, or go somewhere remote, for Memorial Day, July 4th, and Labor Day weekends.
85. Install a transmission temperature gauge...and monitor it.
86. Don't forget to add miles towed, when scheduling chassis lubes and wheel bearing services, and tire rotations, for your towed vehicle.
87. Install an external cell phone antenna for those times when you're at your cell service's fringe areas.
88. Use side clamps and tie-downs on your main awning. If it gets too breezy, or you leave for a while, stow it away. The wind WILL come up.
89. Keep a supply of ant bait handy. Use it around tires, jacks, hoses and cables, whenever you're in an ant-infested area.
90. Before starting off, do a walk-around check of your rig. Antennas down; step up; awnings in; jacks up; all shore connections stowed; parking brake (towed) off; etc.
91. Before leaving a campsite, walk your exit route. Check for clearances and a convenient place to attach your toad (towed vehicle).
92. Don't idle your diesel engine needlessly. A couple minutes cool down (just getting off the highway and into camp); and a 5 minute warm up (airing up the bags or hooking up the fiver) is all it needs. More is just discourteous and bad for your engine.
93. Before driving off, do a last walk-around and check all connections, lights, and safety chains.
94. Know your turning radius. Don't cut too sharply and take out a stop sign...and side panel.
95. Place rubber non-skid matting on all shelves.
96. Place a metal mesh wasp/bug shield over your furnace exhaust.
97. For starting the grill (and some stoves) get a ceramic piezeo-electric lighter. Looks like a butane starter, but lasts much longer.

98. If you're staying at a park with lots of activities, volunteer to lead one. It's a great way to meet new friends.

99. Vacuum your carpet daily.

100. Keep a spare jacket/sweater in your driving around vehicle. The weather will change for the worse.

101. Have fun!

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