Get Ready to Roll in 2012
RV Spring Preparation Special
Top 7 Tips for Aging RV Tires

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The laptop we would've used to keep in touch with the kids.

The guy from Ed's Towing. Spent three hours with him.

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It’s almost that time of year again. Time to take the RV out of storage and get it ready for another great camping season and **JUST RV IT!**

But how do you get your RV ready? What do you do to make sure when you head out on a trip the RV will work the way it’s supposed to work? That’s what this issue of RV Consumer is all about. From de-winterizing your RV to checking the tires we’re going to cover it all.

I also had the opportunity to interview Mike Gast, Vice President of Communications with KOA. See what Mike has to say, and enjoy this month’s information packed issue of RV Consumer e-Magazine.

Happy RV Learning,

Mark

www.rveducation101.com
www.rvconsumer.com
www.rvuniversity.com
De-Winterize the RV Water System

Let’s start our spring RV preparation with de-winterizing the RV plumbing system. Depending on how your unit was winterized it will need to be de-winterized, but make sure the freezing temperatures are over for the season before you do.

Basically what needs to be done is to get all of the non-toxic RV antifreeze out of the plumbing system. Chances are, on average you used 2 to 3 gallons of RV antifreeze to winterize the unit. You can flush most of it out by running fresh water into the water system, either through the city water inlet or the fresh water holding tank, using the water pump. Open all of the faucets (hot & cold) and run fresh water through the system until it flows clear. All remnants of the antifreeze will go into the holding tanks and can be emptied later.

If for any reason you added RV antifreeze to the fresh water holding tank it will need to be drained before adding any potable water to the fresh water tank.

Note: You will need to decide the best method for draining and disposing of the RV antifreeze. Much of it can be drained into a large bucket. Most RV antifreeze is biodegradable and safe to the environment, but you should check before disposing of it.

Another method, if the RV antifreeze you used is biodegradable, is to open drains and drain the non-toxic RV antifreeze from the system into a container. If you do not have a bypass kit on the water heater drain the antifreeze from the water heater too, but keep in mind it will be 6 or 10 gallons depending on the size of water heater tank.

After draining the antifreeze close all of the drains.

Re-connect the outside shower hose if it was removed.

To remove antifreeze from the 12-volt water pump add potable water to the fresh water holding tank, turn the pump on and open all water faucets. Run water through the system until clear and then turn the pump off.

Take the water heater out of the bypass mode and hook your drinking water hose up to the city water inlet. Turn the water on and open all water faucets (hot & cold). Run fresh water through the system for several minutes. Don’t forget the outside shower if equipped. It will take a couple of minutes to fill the water heater tank before water will come out of the hot water faucets.

Fill and flush the toilet. Add some additional water to the black water holding tank and treat it with holding tank chemicals so it is ready for use.

Re-install any water filter cartridges you removed prior to winterizing.

With pressure on the system check the entire water system for leaks. The RV is de-winterized.

RV 101
Sanitizing the RV Water System

At this stage of the RV spring preparation process I like to sanitize the water system. It’s not that difficult to do, just follow these simple steps.

1. Take a quarter cup of household bleach for every fifteen gallons of water that your fresh water tank holds. Mix the bleach, with water, into a one-gallon container and pour it into the fresh water holding tank.

2. Fill the fresh water tank completely full of potable water.

3. Turn the water pump on, open all hot and cold faucets, and run the water until you smell the bleach at each faucet.

4. Close the faucets and let it sit for at least twelve hours.

5. Drain the entire system and re-fill the fresh water tank with potable water.

6. Open all of the faucets and run the water until you no longer smell any bleach. Once this is done it is safe to use your water system. It’s also a good idea to use a water filter at campgrounds and keep bottled water on hand for drinking. RV 101

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Did you know that your tires can lose up to 2 psi of air pressure every month? That means if the RV is in storage for 3 or 4 months the tires could be seriously under inflated. Try to get in a habit checking tire pressure before each trip you take with your RV. Don’t forget to check your automobile tires periodically too. Always check when cold (before traveling).
Make your least favorite job at the campground much easier by using an EZ Coupler Bayonet Sewer System with rotating fittings.

Here’s an RV holding tank tip!

RV Holding Tank Quick Tip

RV holding tanks need to be at least 2/3s full to drain properly. If it’s time to leave the campground and your holding tanks aren’t at least 2/3s full you can finish filling them with water and then empty the tanks. Just run water through the toilet to add water to the black tank, and in the shower or bathtub to finish filling the gray tank. If you use a hose to add water to the tanks do not use your RV drinking water hose. RV drinking water hoses are normally white. Take a different color hose along for holding tank maintenance or cleaning purposes so you can distinguish the difference. RV 101
Follow Mark’s vintage trailer restoration project from start to finish.

How-To go from This - to - This

RV Education 101 is the producer of the award winning online series titled “Mark’s RV Garage” If you haven't already watched the series get your favorite beverage and find a comfortable chair because there are 17 information packed episodes for you to catch up on.
We have a long working relationship with our friends at KOA, Kampgrounds of America. We travel roughly 6,000 miles a year in our RV, and stay almost exclusively at KOA campgrounds. Many years ago we realized the features and benefits KOA campgrounds had to offer RV owners, tent campers and outdoor enthusiasts. At the same time the folks at KOA felt strongly about the role education played to help make RV experiences safe, fun and stress free, so it was a good match.

I know why we continue using KOA as our choice of campground's when we travel in our RV, but I wanted to get some information straight from the source for our readers.

Today I will be interviewing Mike Gast, Vice President of Communications for Kampgrounds of America Inc. with home offices in Billings, Montana.

**MP:** Hi Mike. Thanks for taking some time to talk with RV Consumer Magazine.

**MG:** You are very welcome, thank you for thinking of KOA.

**MP:** KOA has been in the campground business for nearly 50 years now. Can you give me some of the key factors that contributed to the overall success of KOA throughout this nearly half-century period of time?

**MG:** This year is actually our 50th birthday. We were founded on the shore of the Yellowstone River in Billings, Montana by local entrepreneur Dave Drum in 1962. Key factors to our success began when Dave recognized early on the power of consistently asking your guests for feedback. Over the years, we've been fastidious about our customer survey practices, and we've always been the only camping company able to give our owners reliable, timely feedback for their specific campers about their particular campground. It's a powerful tool, and it's helped KOA stay ahead of the game by giving campers just what they want, when they want it. Research has led us to innovations over the years such as our simple camping cabins, off-leash dog parks, recreation programs, food services and even picking locations for new KOA campgrounds.

**MP:** The Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA) states that there are more than 16,000 public and privately owned campgrounds nationwide. That's a lot of campgrounds, but it can be difficult deciding where to stay or spend the night when you are traveling by RV.
If you could give our readers three reasons to stay at a KOA campground what would they be?

**MG:** Our guests constantly tell us they love KOA because "we know what we are going to get." That doesn't mean we can't provide them with pleasant surprises now and then, but we know an iconic brand such as Kampgrounds of America brings a sense of comfort to families traveling across North America. They know that they will be greeted by a friendly face wearing our familiar yellow KOA shirt. They know they will have a great convenience store at the park, clean rest-rooms and pools, security and a much better chance of having the camping experience they desire.

Another reason is that, with 485 locations around North America, KOA is nearly everywhere people want to go. We've just added our 5th location in the Orlando area, because we know some of our campers want to be on the doorstep of Disney (the Orlando/Kissimmee KOA) while others want to be in a more traditional campground location "in the woods" at a place like Orlando NE/Wekiva Falls KOA or Orlando NW/Orange Blossom KOA, both new parks.

The third reason is that we are the only place to camp that offers a rewards program through our KOA Value Kard Rewards Program. Our program offers campers points every time they camp with us, and those points can be redeemed for discounts on their future KOA camping.

**MP:** That answer kind of relates to my next question Mike. Maybe you can expand on it a little. In this day and age consumers are concerned about saving money wherever they can, and in spending their money wisely. What does KOA offer RV owners in the way of stretching their dollars?

**MG:** Yes, I would definitely point to our Value Kard Rewards Program as a great way for folks to save as they camp. If they camp with us often, they will eventually earn VIP status, which allows them to accumulate Kamping Points even faster, along with other great benefits. We also offer extended stay rates as most of our parks for our weekly and monthly guests.

And I'd also point out a relatively recent development – KOA Deluxe Cabins. These accommodations usually sleep up to 6 and have their own full bathrooms and kitchens. They are a great way to save, because you don't have to rent up to three motel rooms, and the ability to make your own meals is a great money saver.
We also find that our RV campers love to use our Cabins and Deluxe Cabins as additional space to bring along their friends and relatives. You may want to take your brother's family along for the trip, but you might not want them staying with you in your RV. They are a great way to affordably share the joys of camping with those you love.

I'd also like to remind campers that we will be having our 9th Annual KOA Come Kamp & Care With Us Weekend on Friday and Saturday, May 11 and May 12 at more than 400 participating KOAs across North America. You'll receive a free stay on Saturday, May 12 when you stay as a paying guest on Friday, May 11.

We'll also be raising donations for our wonderful charity, KOA Care Camps for children with cancer. To find out more about the event, you can visit the KOA site and to learn more about the Care Camps charity, go to www.carekamps.com.

MP: I spoke earlier about the importance of educating the RV consumer. What initiatives has KOA taken to further educate the RV owner, and where can they go to get additional information about KOA?

MG: We believe that, thanks to the internet and mobile devices, we will be in nearly constant contact with our campers. We started the conversation several years ago with our KOA Kompass electronic newsletter, which now goes to nearly a million campers each month. Our Kompass website, www.KOAKompass.com serves as a "home base" for our social media efforts, and a window to our Facebook, YouTube and Twitter channels.

We've also recently launched "Around The Campfire," a KOA social effort to link our campers with outdoors bloggers and others who have continuous online conversations on outdoor and camping topics we know are of interest to our guests. You can check out Around the Campfire by going to the Resources section at KOA.

It's all coming together very quickly in the digital world. We still print one million KOA Directories each year, and you can pick up your new copy at any open KOA beginning in March. But we've added a digital version of the printed KOA Directory so that campers can download the Directory directly to their personal computer or laptop. We also have a mobile version of our main website, KOA.com, that will display properly on campers' mobile phones and other mobile devices. It's a new world out there when it comes to communications, and we intend to keep KOA on the cutting edge.

MP: That's some great information for our readers. Thanks for sharing with us Mike, and maybe we’ll see you during some of our travels.

MG: Thank you Mark it was good talking with you.
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I don’t know about you, but I sure am.

Are we lost again?

Plan your RV trip, load it up, hook it up, fuel it up &

JUST RV IT!
Lots of RVers get started in the RV lifestyle because they don’t want to leave their pets when they travel. Traveling by RV affords the pet owner the opportunity to travel with their best friends. RV owners are some of the biggest pet lovers I have ever met. Our dogs Buck and Gracie have traveled with us in our RV since they were puppies. When they see us loading the RV they get excited, and I think nervous at times, wondering if they will be left behind. They both are great travelers and companions. Another dog entered or lives last year. This is Roxie’s story.

One day last summer my son came to us and said it looked like a dead animal was lying under our Jeep outside.

When we took a closer look we discovered it was a dog, or at least what resembled a dog. She could hardly stand up and walk, but was anxious and grateful to get some dog food. The dog was covered with mange and mites and engorged ticks were feeding on her. I was quite certain on the day we found her that she would need to be humanely euthanized. The next morning Dawn took her to our favorite vet, Dr Jack Hill. After a thorough examination he said there was a slim possibility he might be able to help her. Dr. Hill told us he was willing to try, and would split the cost in an attempt to save her life, if we were willing to take her in if she made it through this ordeal.

“At that point there was hope and she was officially named Roxie, as we welcomed her into our hearts and our family.”

Our vet kept Roxie for several weeks while she endured a rigorous treatment schedule of medication, daily bathing, exercise and the long road to recovery. As the weeks passed we visited Roxie at the vets office, growing more attached with each visit. Finally Dr Hill let us bring Roxie home. We enjoyed her company as we kept up with the medicated baths, routine medication and daily commute to the vet for shots.
A few more days passed and Roxie began to relapse, bleeding from sores that broke out all over her skin. Roxie went back to the vet, and we had to leave a few days later on our planned 5 week long summer RV trip. Several weeks into the trip, and several thousand miles away from home her prognosis took a turn for the worse. Dr Hill told us to be prepared in the event she would need to be euthanized. The trip was fun but Roxie weighed heavy on all of our minds. Roxie continued to fight hard and slowly rebounded. By now everybody at the vet’s office loved Roxie. We think Roxie was born to the wild and fended for herself outdoors for most of her life. She has a very poor immune system, skin problems, and issues with her ears and larynx. During her long stay with the vet the workers made progress with housebreaking and crate training. Roxie came home when we returned from our trip and continues to shows signs of improvement every day. She will probably need to be on medication for the rest of her life.

We treat her ears, give her oral medication and a shot every two to three days to prevent her from relapsing and losing all of her hair again.

Roxie is a sweet natured dog, and took to living in a comfortable house very quickly. It took Buck & Gracie a while to accept her, into what I now refer to as our pack of dogs, but it all worked out in the end. Welcome home Roxie! RV 101
During our cross-country RV trip to Washington state we spent some time at the spectacular Yellowstone National Park. We stayed at the Jackson Hole/Snake River KOA in Wyoming. We had a wonderful time horseback riding and taking day trips to the Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. If you haven’t been, add it to your RV bucket list of RV destinations to visit.
On this RV trip we traveled from NC to Washington state, making a stop in Colorado to pick up the rest of the RV caravan. Dawn’s sister and brother and their families joined in the fun. From Colorado to Washington there were 2-RVs, 1-SUV and 15 people. We made several stops along the way. Here everybody is horseback riding in Jackson Hole Wyoming. The final destination was Camano Island, Washington to attend the wedding of Dawn’s nephew. JUST RV IT!

Jackson Hole is the gateway to an outdoor paradise that includes Jackson Hole, Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks, Bridger Teton National Forest, and the Snake and Hoback Rivers. The KOA sits right on the Snake River and the sites are shaded by aspens, cottonwoods, and giant spruce trees. Some of Dawn’s family stayed in the KOA Kabins overlooking the Snake River. The campground offers guided whitewater rafting and scenic float trips. One of our favorite activities was tubing on the river. Other close by activities include fishing the Snake River, hiking the Wind River Range, soaking in Granite Hot Springs, or taking a horseback ride right across the street. The shops, galleries, and restaurants of Jackson are only 10-minutes away.

Visit a natural hot springs whenever you get the chance. Sure wish I had one of these in the backyard!

Jackson Hole in the distance. What a great place to visit. We hope to get back one day and spend more time.
Have you ever considered taking the ultimate RV road trip, but weren’t sure where to begin? I have and during my research I found a great resource. It is the official Alaska state vacation planner, and it’s packed with great information about the people, places and beauty Alaska has to offer. The website offers great information about traveling and vacationing in Alaska. The vacation planner is free, but you need to fill out a short registration form and answer a few questions to get it. The beginning of any trip is research and planning the trip. Go here to get your free Alaska State Vacation Planner.

Respect the Environment

There are lots of beautiful places for us to visit with our RVs and it is up to us to protect these areas during our stay. Don’t litter or put trash into the streams, rivers and lakes. Don’t start a fire if there is a fire restriction, even if there is a fire pit. Never empty your gray or black water tanks anywhere except in specified dump stations and campground sewer systems. Always leave the campsite in the condition you found it, or in a better condition. RV 101

Join the JUST RV IT campaign. Bumpers stickers are available for $2.95 BuY NOw

Watch Video
You probably heard the term “Toy Hauler” before, but this is my idea of taking your toys with you when you go camping. Now you have your favorite ride when you arrive at your destination. What a great way to explore the area, or just go to the store for a loaf of bread and gallon of milk. Very cool! For more information visit Hydralift.

If your idea of camping is spending lots of time at your all-time favorite destination a Park Model Trailer might be the best choice for you. There are all different types and sizes of Park Model Trailers available to choose from. Visit an RV show or the Recreational Park Trailer Industry Association RVTIA for more information.

To keep up with what’s happening in between magazine issues visit our Blog for RV news, RV tips & RV information.
Do you still like the thought of tent camping, but want some of the amenities RVs have to offer? If you said yes this **Little Guy** set up might just be for you. You have your tent, but when you go through the small door pictured at right, you have your tear drop trailer too.

Here’s what it looks like from the opposite side. You have your solar panels, flat screen TV, cooking area & sleeping area. Now you can have the best of both worlds!
When I talk about exploring the backwoods by RV I am usually referring to a pop-up or truck camper. Gizmag reports a brand new concept for the avid adventurer. It’s called the Action Camper and it combines one of my all-time favorite vehicles (Jeep Wrangler) with a drop-in camper for two, resulting in the ultimate all-terrain RV.

If you enjoy traveling and camping in out-of-the-way places, and you own a Jeep or are considering purchasing one, the Action Camper might be a great fit for your lifestyle. Click to get more information and pictures of the Action Camper.

While I was at Gizmag checking out the Action Camper I stumbled across an article on the all-electric concept Ecco Camper from NAU. Is this the future of RVs? It boasts room for five with a sleek aerodynamic shape for traveling, yet roomy when you arrive at your destination. Click here for more information on the Ecco Camper.

Source: Borgobello, Bridget “Futuristic all-electric Ecco Camper concept from NAU” Gizmag June 2011
Are you looking for a great deal on an RV resort to call home in the heart of the Nature Coast of Florida? A place with some of the greatest outdoor recreation Florida's Nature Coast has to offer. From fresh & saltwater fishing to golfing, shopping, local attractions and much more? If so this is a great opportunity.

A few years ago our friends purchased a lot at Nature Coast Landing RV Resort. The resort is located just north of Tampa, Florida. The lot (pictured at the left) has an extended concrete pad with 30 & 50 amp service, water, sewer, and WiFi. The ownership maintenance fees are less than $100 a month and include water, sewer, WiFi, lawn maintenance, club house and all the amenities this gated community has to offer with access to the Gulf of Mexico next to the resort.

Our friends can no longer use the lot and are selling it at a huge loss. It is listed on the MLS for close to $50,000, but they are letting it go for $29,999 firm. RV resort amenities at Nature Coast Landing include large oversized sites with 50 amp service, recreational lodge with extra clean restrooms, showers, kitchen, laundry & exercise room, screen enclosed heated swimming pool, recreation area with badminton, croquet, horseshoes, & volleyball. You can also enjoy planned social activities, fenced RV & boat storage, paved bike trail to Gulf of Mexico, boat ramp within 1000' of the resort into the Barge Canal with only 4.5 miles trip to Gulf of Mexico. This lot can be used as your RV home-base or you can rent it out or do both! If you’re looking for a great place to spend the winters or a great year around RV destination this could be the place for you. For more information on Nature Coast Landing RV Resort and this particular lot you can contact Linda by e-mail at draganncl@yahoo.com or phone of 860-841-8419.
When a tire on an RV fails it can be extremely dangerous and can cause extensive damage to the RV. There are lots of reasons for tire failure, like under inflation, over inflation, overloading and the age of the tires. Today I want to discuss how the age of your RV tires, and exposure to the elements, can lead to tire failure, and what can be done to try and prevent aging tire failure.

So, when tires sit still, like in storage they start to dry out, causing them to age faster. Weather cracking or checking occurs on all tires when they are exposed to heat and sunlight. This is especially true of the tires sidewall. Ozone in the air and UV rays from the sun shorten the life of your RV tires. It's not uncommon to see RV tires with low mileage and plenty of tread that are ruined by the damaging effects of ozone and UV rays. Ozone in the air and UV rays from the sun cause tires to weather crack and dry rot. This damage occurs faster in tires not being used.

Tires are designed and built to be used. Rubber used in tires ages faster when tires are not used, so more use results in longer tire life. The problem is lots of RVs don’t get used that often. When tires are manufactured there are compounds added to help protect the rubber from weather cracking and ozone damage. The problem with this is the tire needs to be rolling down the road, heating up and flexing for these compounds to work their way to the surface and help protect the rubber from damage.

You need to inspect your RV tires for weather checking or cracks in the sidewalls before each trip. Cracks less than 1/32 inch deep are ok, but if the cracks are more than 2/32 inch deep the tire should be replaced immediately. If you notice cracks or damage to the tires, and you’re not sure what the extent of the damage is, have them inspected by a tire professional.
This faster aging and weather cracking are why some tire professionals recommend replacing tires on RV’s when they are six years old, especially if the RV isn’t used much. So how can you tell the age of your RV tires?

All tires manufactured in the United States have a DOT number. The DOT number may be on the inside or outside sidewall. At the end of the DOT number the last three or four digits identify how old the tire is. Older tires used three digits. The first two identify the week of the year the tire was built and the third identifies the year. Newer tires use four digits. For example 3305 would be the 33nd week of the year, and 05 is the year 2005. If you question the age of your tires, especially on a used RV, and you can’t find the DOT number have them inspected by a qualified tire center.

Even though there are many other factors that can affect the life of your RV tires you can see that the age of the tires is one of the most important considerations. Now that we know how age and the elements can affect the life of your RV tires what can we do to help extend the life of tires when they are not being used?

“Considering where and how your RV is being stored can add life to your tires. Of course a covered, dry garage is the best scenario, but we know this isn’t always possible.”

Some of these RV tire tips are excerpts from Bridgestone Firestone RV Tire Care brochure

1) The first step is to clean the tires. Clean the tires with a mild soap and water. Sidewall rubber contains antioxidants and anti-ozones that are designed to work their way to the surface of the tire and help protect them. When you wash tires excessively it can actually remove these protective compounds and can age your tires prematurely. The same is true of many tire dressings designed to make your tires shine.

2) Inflate the tires to the manufacturers recommended inflation pressure when in storage.

3) Avoid storing tires on petroleum based products like asphalt and other heat absorbing surfaces, and avoid storing tires on frozen ground.

4) If stored outside you should place some type of barrier between the tire and ground. Make sure the blocking is wider than the tires tread and longer than the tires footprint. If not blocked properly the tire sidewalls can be damaged.
5) Avoid any exposure to heat and sunlight. If the RV is stored outside cover the tires with covers that block out the sun.

6) The RV should be stored with the least amount of weight on the tires as possible. This means it should be unloaded prior to storage.

7) You should move the RV every couple of months to help prevent sidewall cracking from the tire sitting in one position for too long.

Following these simple tire storage tips can add life to your RV tires, but keep in mind that tire age and exposure to the elements are leading causes for tire failure. Make sure you know the age of your RV and automobile tires and always inspect your tires for signs of weather cracking before each trip. RV 101

The only way to correctly measure the inflation pressure in your tires is with a quality inflation pressure gauge. Kicking or hitting the tire is not an accurate way to check it, and never depend on your eyes to check tire inflation. There can be as much as 20 PSI difference between tires that look the same to your eye. You need to invest in an accurate pressure gauge. You should get one with a double, angled foot. This makes it much easier to check the outer tire of a dual set.
RV Product Spotlight

Shaded Globe Patio Lights

Patio lights are a great accessory to add to your outdoor living space. Watch how easy they are to install Play Video Now

Recently I began a campaign called **JUST RV IT!** My goal is to start a new movement among RV owners to get out and use their RVs. It doesn’t matter if you take a short weekend excursion 20 miles away from home, or a 1,000 mile week-long RV adventure, the important thing is you **JUST RV IT!** We purchase RVs with thoughts and dreams of going on adventures, exploring the country, and building lasting memories with our family and friends. Too often these dreams get pushed aside because of busy schedules, work commitments and a lack of planning.

Sadly the enthusiasm and expectations we had for using the RV result in it sitting idle in the backyard. I contribute much of this to a lack of planning. **When you plan a trip you take a trip, even if it’s just a quick weekend getaway.** Planning an RV trip in advance gives you time to budget money for the trip, and to make any necessary arrangements to go on the trip. Don’t give up on your dreams of exploring the country in your RV; plan to make your dreams come true. You worked hard to buy the RV, now you need to work on enjoying your RV. Plan your RV trip, load it up, hook it up, fuel it up and **JUST RV IT!**

Enjoy the video
RV Spring Check-Up

It’s that time of year again; time to get ready for another great camping season. We need to wake the RV up from its deep winter sleep and give it a good spring check-up. If we take a little time and check everything now the RV will be ready to go when you’re ready to hit the road. In the military we referred to this as preventive maintenance. It is maintenance you perform on your RV before a problem exists. Maintenance designed to prevent or identify potential problems that could lead to mechanical breakdown, malfunction or failure of a component or system on your RV. Basically it consists of cleaning, inspecting, lubricating, adjusting and servicing your RV. Let’s get started.

Follow the de-winterizing and sanitizing guidelines found at the beginning of this month’s issue.

- With water in the fresh water holding tank turn the 12-volt water pump on and pressurize the water system until the pump shuts off. If the water pump cycles back on, even for a short period of time, there is a leak somewhere in the system. Locate the leak and repair it or take it to an authorized RV service center to be repaired.

- Check the operation of the toilet. Add several bowls full of water to the black water holding tank and treat the tank with holding tank chemicals.
- Wash the unit thoroughly. This is a good time to inspect the roof, body seams, and window sealants for cracking that would allow water to get in. Inspect sealants everywhere the manufacturer cut a hole in the RV. Consult a dealer for sealants compatible with these materials.
- Inspect the operation of the awning. Clean and check the awning fabric for damage.
- Inspect the tires for signs of dry rot. Inflate all tires to the recommended cold tire pressure.
- Lubricate all hinges and locks with a graphite spray lubricant.
- Remove any protective covering you may have put over LP gas vents to keep insects and rodents out. Check any mousetraps you may have put out. Open all doors and compartments and check for rodent intrusion and water damage.

Free RV Maintenance Guide

To help make taking care of your RV easier I put together an RV Care & Maintenance Guide that you can download and use. It doesn’t cover everything, but it’s a good start. Click here to download your FREE Guide
Inspect and clean the interior of the RV. 
Plug in any appliances that you unplugged for storage and replace any dry cell batteries you may have removed. This is a good time to put new batteries in items like smoke alarms.
Test the operation of the carbon monoxide detector, LP gas leak detector and smoke alarm.
Check the fire extinguisher. Be sure it is fully charged.
Reset any breakers you may have turned off. If you removed any fuses for storage re-install them.
Clean or replace air conditioner filters if it wasn’t done prior to storage and remove any covers that were put over roof top air conditioners.
Open vents and windows and air the unit out.
If you removed the coach and chassis batteries for storage install them now. Whether they were removed or not check the water levels, clean the terminals and clamps, and check the state of charge in all batteries. Recharge batteries as required.
Check the operation of the electric steps if applicable. Lubricate step mechanism.
Test the operation of the hydraulic jacks if applicable. Check hydraulic fluid level.
Test the operation of the back up camera and monitor if applicable.

If you didn’t change the oil and filters in the generator prior to storage this is a good time to do it. Inspect the generator exhaust system for any damage prior to starting it. Start and run the generator for two hours with at least a half-rated load on it. Consult the generator owner’s manual for proper load ratings.
Turn the generator off and plug the unit in to shore power. Turn the refrigerator on in the electric mode. Allow sufficient time for it to cool and check for proper operation.
Check all 12-volt interior lights and accessories.
Test the monitor panel for proper operation.
Check the operation of slide-outs if applicable.
Check the remaining 120-volt appliances for proper operation.
Test the Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) for proper operation.
Turn the refrigerator off, leave the doors open and allow sufficient time for it to get to room temperature so it can be checked in the gas mode.
Turn the LP gas valve on and check the operation of all LP gas appliances. Be sure the water heater is full of water before testing the water heater. If a gas appliance is not operating properly have it inspected by a qualified technician. Insects are attracted to the odorant added to LP gas and build nests that can affect the appliance from operating properly.
It really doesn’t take a lot of time to get your RV ready for another camping season, and you can rest assured that when it’s time to go camping your RV is ready too. Now for the fun part, load your clothes, food, and personal belongings, hit the road and have fun exploring this wonderful country we live in.

RV101

- Our RV Care & Maintenance DVD addresses topics like: proper care and maintenance on the interior of your RV, the exterior of your RV, RV appliances, LP gas system, water system, electrical system, RV generators, RV battery’s, chassis, frame and RV tires. Let RV expert Mark Polk help you thoroughly understand how to take care of your RV.

More Information
When you purchase an RV your insurance should protect your new investment. Our friends at Explorer RV Insurance explain it best: “An article appeared in a recent issue of Independent Agent magazine, which we receive as a part of our membership in the Independent Insurance Agents Association. The article referenced an advertisement from the 1940s from the Catholic Knights of Wisconsin – agents offering Hospital, Medical, Surgical, & Income Protection plans, and was titled, **Something to Think About**”

“When you buy for price, these days, you can never be sure. It’s unwise to pay too much, but it’s worse to pay too little. When you pay too much, you lose a little money – that is all. But – when you pay too little, you sometimes lose everything because the thing you bought was incapable of doing the thing it was bought to do. The common law of business prohibits paying a little and getting a lot – it can’t be done. If you deal with the lowest bidder, it is well to add something for the risk you run. And if you do that, you will have enough to pay for something better.”

Although this was written over 70 years ago, it still holds true today. So how does this apply to RV Insurance? The two main ways of insuring an RV are by adding it to a policy with the family sedan, or by selecting a Specialty RV Insurance policy. When adding your RV to the family auto policy, it is insured in a similar manner as the typical automobile. Most likely the value at time of loss will be no more than the Actual Cash Value at that moment in time, and you may be very limited in the coverage options available. Specialty RV Insurance, such as offered by Explorer RV, has coverage options designed specifically for Recreational Vehicles. Coverage such as Total Loss Replacement, Agreed Value, Personal Property for RV contents, Full Timers and Vacation Liability, Roadside Assistance and Extra Expense coverage. Many auto policies do not offer these options. Do you have to purchase Specialty RV Insurance? No, of course not. It is your choice as to how you insure your RV. Our recommendation is that you compare the coverage available on a Specialty RV policy to those provided by a typical auto insurance policy. Know what is and isn’t covered, and then choose what works best for you. You may wish to ‘self insure’ for the options an auto policy cannot include. The key is to know what to expect so that you can make an informed decision. It is important to understand your policy before a loss occurs. You may find that purchasing a Specialty RV policy is more cost effective and convenient than insuring your RV on your auto policy, and self insuring for the coverage it does not provide. At Explorer RV, we specialize in insuring Recreational Vehicles. Our licensed, professional agents are happy to assist you in evaluating your options. Understanding your coverages will allow for a more stress-free RV Lifestyle. For more information call 888-774-6778 or visit [Explorer RV Insurance](http://www.explorer-rvin.com)
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