

Essential supplies for new RVers

Edited by Carl Lundquist

You've made the plunge and bought an RV. Now here are some of the 'extras' you need to make your trip a little easier and more enjoyable. These suggestions came from forum members and staff. These are items for which you may not see the immediate need. Nevertheless we all wind up carrying versions of them after a very short while.

Sewer and water

- Sewer hose. (The ones supplied with new RVs or by a dealer don't last very long). The Rhino hose, available at Camping World, will last a long time although it's more expensive.
- Clear elbow (45° or whatever fits your sewer plumbing configuration) to aid in knowing when the dump and flush are complete.
- Fresh water hose approved for RV use. These are usually white and are labeled for potable water use.
- City (fresh) water pressure regulator. Preferably, buy the ones sold at hardware stores for mobile home use as they provide higher flow rates than the ones sold at RV stores. Buy an inline water pressure gauge and mount it downstream from the regulator so you can check the water pressure. Keep the water pressure at about 45 psi.
- 25 feet of cheap colored garden hose for use with black and grey water tasks.
- One or two 2-gallon plastic painters buckets for holding your sewerage fittings and stuff.
- A pair of black neoprene gauntlets, the kind chemical workers use, for fussing with the sewerage tasks. Alternatively, buy the disposable rubber gloves.
- A gallon of plain Clorox bleach for sanitation including cleaning up accidents -- useful with laundry too. Keep an empty Clorox bottle around - they are handy for sanitizing chemicals. A spray bottle is useful for spray 1:9 dilutions of bleach on smaller spills.
- A spray wand for rinsing the black tank and dislodging crud from sensors -- not needed if your unit has a built in spray feature in its tanks.
- A box of the dry non-formaldehyde deodorant; Use only when desperately needed.
- Toilet paper that is approved for septic tank use. At the time of writing, Scotts for one is. As a number of forum members have found, Thetford is not. The forum occasionally runs a TP Test topic to evaluate advances in the field. Use the single ply versions of Scotts or any other paper used. They break up far better in the tank.
- Store your sewer hoses, fittings, clean up hose, and gloves separately from your fresh water hoses, regulator and cooking equipment like barbecues and tables.

Mechanical/tools

- A pair of curved-jaw Channel Lock pliers for tightening and loosening water hose fittings.
- A screwdriver and bit set that includes square drive bits.
- A 6" adjustable wrench.
- A good three D-cell flashlight, preferably Maglite.

- A 2-AA cell Maglite flashlight. (You can hold it in your mouth.)
- A tire inflator – absolutely essential with trailers. Get a 120VAC unit or a good quality 12VDC unit of the type off-roaders use. The cheap auto store DC units will not last.
- A cheap clicker torque wrench for keeping tabs on trailer tire wheel nuts.
- A gardeners' kneeling pad for those nice gravelly sites.
- A pair of lightweight leather gloves.
- A good tire gauge.
- Reflective hazard triangles in case you must change a tire.
- Tire wrench.
- Fire extinguisher - minimum 5 lb.
- Distilled water if needed for your batteries.

Electrical

- A roll of electrical tape.
- A cheap multimeter, Radio Shack is a good source.
- AC plug-in 3-light circuit tester for checking campground power faults.
- A cheap plug-in voltmeter, if one is not already installed in the RV. Use it to monitor low voltage conditions which could damage your air conditioner.
- Spare fuses and fuse puller.
- Needle-nose wire-cutting pliers.
- 15-foot very heavy duty extension cord for your power cable with a 30 amp or 50 amp RV plugs to match the cable.
- 25-foot grounded heavy duty 15amp extension cord for general use.

Kitchen

- You know what you will use in your cooking so provide yourself with the utensils for that.
- You will need a butane fireplace lighter for lighting stove, oven, water heater, and barbecue. Keep two on hand.
- Paper plates and plastic silverware for boondocking and other times when you may not have what you need to wash the regular kitchen utensils.
- A small charcoal or propane barbecue for use outside. Campground grills use charcoal like it is going out of style.
- Small garbage can.

Bath

- Towels and washcloths.
- Personal toiletry items to keep in the RV.
- Toilet paper appropriate for RV. (see sewer items)

Bedroom

- Your usual bedding for the beds to be used in your unit.

- A warm blanket for each of your beds. Campground nights tend to be a lot colder than nights in the city or suburbs.

Storage

- Plastic boxes to hold small items – size depends on storage compartments inside your trailer.
- Small plastic boxes to hold your pocket junk overnight.
- Assorted bungee cords – the smallest size are particularly useful.

Entertainment

- Small 13-15" TV that can be stowed away for travel in your unit, if your unit is not otherwise equipped. 50' of TV coax to hook up to campground cable.
- Books for reading.
- Games – dominoes are great for playing outside in the wind. Chicken Foot and Mexican Train are big RV games.

Outside

- Entry mat to keep dirt and sand outside the RV.
- Camp chairs and a small folding table or two.
- Tablecloth for picnic table.
- Tablecloth clips to keep outside table cloth from blowing away.

Miscellaneous

- Campground guides – Trailer Life or Woodall's.
- Tour books for the areas you will go thru.
- The Mountain Directory, West or East. It will give you highway pass grades and condition information that you will need.