

## Storage Preparation Checklist

Traveling across the country with all the amenities of home is one of the great pleasures of owning a recreational vehicle. However, at one point or another, you're going to have to put that rig in storage. Whether you've run out of space at your home or want to keep your RV safe during the traveling off-season, here are some self-storage tips to keep your motor home in great condition.

### Clean out the motor home

You'll want to make sure that your RV doesn't have any scrap food lying around before you put it in storage. Even non-perishable, canned food items can spoil or become stale prematurely in extreme heat or cold. Clean out the refrigerator. Take out any unopened cans or bottles of soda – those can freeze and pop in extremely cold temperatures as well.

- Remove all your blankets, sheets and extra linens and run those through the wash.
- If you really want to do a thorough job and it fits your budget, you can get the inside of the RV professionally detailed.

- Don't leave any important items like keys, registration papers or insurance cards inside the vehicle.
- After you clear everything out, you can also place boxes of baking soda in any empty compartments to absorb odors.
- Take out any electronic devices like alarm clocks, cellphone chargers, external lights, etc.

### Check the plumbing

A long hiatus from the open road will affect your RV's water systems more than any other. You'll want to take extra precautions to make sure that all the piping and holding tanks are secure before you put your vehicle in storage. Frozen or stagnant water filled with pollutants is not good for your RV. Even if you live in a warmer climate, you'll want to get rid of that water.

- Empty the fresh and wastewater tanks at a nearby gas station or at the appropriate section of a camping ground.
- Unfasten the holding tank drains to get rid of any lingering fluids.
- Run the faucets and shower to remove as much water as possible.
- Dump out the water in your toilet and water heater.

- Any holding tanks should be scrubbed down and then rinsed out.

### Check the liquefied petroleum (LP) gas system

RVs don't use gas like household stovetops. The gas is in liquid form and then released as a vapor. Your main concerns about the gas system should be:

- LP gas appliances
- Propane containers
- Fuel lines
- Vents

After you've checked that there aren't any leaks in any hoses or containers and that all the appliances are working fine:

- Fill up the propane tank.
- Shut off the fuel supply completely.
- Cover the tank to keep off any dirt or dust.
- If you have a removable tank, take it out of the RV and cover it appropriately.

## Storage Preparation Checklist (cont.)

### Battery care

While in storage, you can either leave the battery in or, if you live in colder climates, take it out completely. If you plan on starting the RV every few weeks, you don't have to take the battery out. You can also connect the cells to shore power while the unit is in. If you decide to take the battery out:

- Turn off the RV and set the emergency brake.
- Consult your owner's manual to locate the unit.
- Disconnect the cables, negative (-) side first.
- Clean the unit with a solution composed of 1 cup of water and 2 tablespoons of baking soda.
- Apply the solution to the corrosion on the battery terminals and scrub it off with a wire brush.
- Open the fill cap at the top of the battery and fill with distilled water.
- Attach the red (+) cable of the charger to the positive end of the battery first.
- Then attach the black (-) cable to the other end.
- Allow the cell to charge completely.
- Remove the cables.
- You won't have to return the battery to its terminal until you are ready to drive your RV.

### Tire care

RV tires take a pounding year round. While in storage, the effects are much harsher because the weight doesn't redistribute around the tires, resting on only one spot week after week.

If you're lucky enough to have a leveling system, you should consider using them to support the vehicle's weight on the jacks instead of the tires. But if you will be using these jacks long-term, make sure to consult the device manufacturer and review the owner's manual to see what they recommend. Using a set of outside jacks or blocks for each axle will be your smarter bet, and save you on replacing your tires before their time.

If you live close enough to your chosen storage location, a great method to save your tires and your wallet would be to move the RV one-half turn every month or so to distribute the weight around your tires.

### Engine Care

Engines should be prepared for long stretches of inactivity—especially in harsh climates.

Fuel stabilizers (an engine additive) can be purchased at most automotive or RV supply stores can protect your fuel system when the weather dips. If you do decide to use one:

- Top off the gasoline tank.
- Be sure to add the right one for your engine type (gasoline or diesel).

- Idle the engine to allow the additive to flow throughout the whole system.
- Check the instructions on the label for additional steps.

Other fluids should also be topped off to help with freezing or drying out. Check and refill these fluids:

- Oil
- Coolant/anti-freeze
- Windshield wiper fluid
- Transmission fluid
- Brake fluid
- Power steering fluid

### Questions to consider before putting your RV in storage

- What sizes are available? Do some research to figure out what size fits your RV.
- Open or covered unit? Covered units add extra protection against the elements.
- What fits my budget?

### Make sure you have all the important paperwork

RV storage does have a few requirements:

- RVs must be in running condition or loaded on a trailer.
- You will be asked to show registration and/or title.
- Depending on the state, vehicle storage tax will vary.

## Notes

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