



RV/Motorhome Fire Safety Tips

Whether camping, partying or just relaxing in your RV, fire safety is essential. It is critical that every member of your party know what to do in an emergency or fire. If you are one of the millions of recreational vehicle (RV) enthusiasts who love to take to the road and explore this great country of ours, ensure your family's safety while travelling in your RV by following these fire safety guidelines.

- **In an emergency, please make sure we can find you – SECONDS DO COUNT!** When travelling in an RV, it's crucial to know your location so emergency responders can find you in the event of an emergency. Be aware of your location and surroundings.
- Confirm the local emergency numbers for police, fire and ambulance – is 911 service available in the area?
- Most campgrounds are in more remote areas that may not provide cell phone coverage. Check your cell phone coverage.
- When you call 911 from a regular land phone line emergency services receive enhanced 911 data indicating the address and municipality of where the call is originating, should the caller be unable to provide this information. This enhanced 911 data is not available for cell phone calls, so ensuring everyone knows the exact location in the event of an emergency is critical in obtaining a timely response from emergency services.
- When vacationing in an isolated area, keep in mind that help from emergency services may be some distance away. It's vitally important that you eliminate your risk from fire and have a fire escape plan in place that everyone is familiar with and has practised. Have at least two escape routes – one in the front and one in the rear of the RV. Test all escape windows, hatches and door latches for smooth operation and keep all escape windows, hatches and doors clear of any obstructions. As soon as they are old enough, teach children how to open escape hatches and emergency exits and have them practise. [LINK TO ESCAPE PLAN REQUIREMENTS](#). Fire Escape Plan Guidelines

- The first rule of RV firefighting is to save lives first and property second. Get yourself and your family to safety before attempting to extinguish any fire. Only if you can do so without endangering yourself or others should you use firefighting aids on hand. Re-emphasize to everyone aboard that objects can be replaced, people can't! Never re-enter a burning RV to retrieve anything – **GET OUT & STAY OUT!**
- Install and maintain at least one [smoke alarm](#) in your RV near the sleeping area. Special 12v smoke alarms, designed specifically for RVs, are available from specialized retailers. Depending on the size of your RV and placement of sleeping areas, more than one smoke alarm may be required.
- Install and maintain at least one [carbon monoxide alarm](#) in your RV near the sleeping area. Special 12v carbon monoxide alarms, designed specifically for RVs, are available from specialized retailers. Be aware that residential style carbon monoxide alarms that plug directly into the electrical outlet require 110v power and would only work and sound an alarm when your RV is plugged into an electrical source at a campground, but would not function when you are on the road or operating off of your 12v battery supply. Consider that some low cost detectors cause false alarms, so be sure to obtain a quality unit. Do not select a detector just on its cost. It may not be adequate to do the job that is necessary when the time comes.
- Install a propane leak alarm at floor level, no more than 6 inches above the floor or lowest level to alert you in the event of a propane leak. Propane gas, like gasoline fumes, tends to pool in low-lying spots and even a small spark can ignite it. If you have a leak, immediately evacuate the area and shut off the propane at the tank, if it is safe to do so.
- Ensure that all travellers in the RV know what the sound of each type of alarm indicates and what to do when they hear it.
- Test all [smoke alarms](#), [carbon monoxide alarms](#) and propane leak alarms weekly when the RV is in use.
- Install a fully charged [multi-purpose or ABC fire extinguisher](#) in a visible, easily accessible location near an exit where escape is also an option. Make sure everyone knows where it is and how to use it. If you already have a fire extinguisher installed, check the pressure gauge to ensure it's fully charged, indicated by the needle in the green area. A partially discharged fire extinguisher is always considered an empty one – have it refilled or replaced immediately. Also keep in mind that the dry chemical inside the extinguisher tends to pack down in the bottom of the extinguisher over time,

which may make it ineffective. Once a month pick up the fire extinguisher, check the gauge or pin for pressure, turn it upside down and hit the bottom sharply with your hand, then shake it well. This should dislodge any compacted dry chemical inside the extinguisher. Most fire extinguishers have a lifespan of 5 to 15 years.

- Most residential fire extinguishers discharge in 8-10 seconds with a range of only 2 – 3.5 metres (6'–10'). They should only be used to extinguish small, contained fires or to reduce a fire sufficiently to allow escape.
- Remember, **DON'T FIGHT A FIRE** unless you call the fire department first! A fire extinguisher is no substitute for the fire department.
- Ensure family members know [how to use the extinguishers and understand which extinguishers are effective on what types of fires](#).
- Have your fuel-burning appliances checked at the beginning of each camping season to ensure they are properly vented, free of any obstructions such as cobwebs, birds nests, etc., and working well.
- Gas cylinders, pipes, fittings and connections should be checked regularly, particularly after driving on bumpy roads, which may loosen connections.
- Only a certified propane fitter may legally install or remove propane piping, tubing equipment and appliances in an RV. Be sure to look for approved products bearing the Canadian Gas Association (CGA), Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or Underwriters' Laboratory of Canada (ULC) logos on the rating plate of new appliances.
- Maintain the RV's mechanical systems, such as radiator hoses, fuel lines, brake systems, transmission, etc., in good working order to eliminate the risk of any leaks or malfunctions that may result in a fire.
- Ensure that the extension cord for connecting your RV to a campground's 110v electricity supply is in good condition and of suitable gauge wire to handle the electrical load placed upon it. Damaged extension cords must be replaced immediately.
- Check all electrical appliances for frayed cords and any other visible
- Electrical generators produce exhaust gasses, which contain carbon monoxide. It is important to have the exhaust pipes extend sufficiently past the side walls or rear of the RV so that prevailing air currents can disperse this lethal gas away from the vehicle and not have it drawn back into an open window on the RV.
- Ensure that you allow the generator to cool down before refuelling. Always shut off the generator and any other fuel-burning appliances

- Driving with propane on can add to the danger if you are involved in an accident or have a fire. Shut off the propane at the tank and turn off all propane-powered appliances while driving. Operate your refrigerator on 12v battery power or simply leave it turned off. Most refrigerators will keep food cold or frozen for several hours, even when turned off.
- When refuelling the propane tanks or the RV's fuel tank it is important to shut off all interior burners, pilot lights, appliances, automatic ignition switches, as well as the RV's motor and have all passengers exit the vehicle.
- Propane cylinders, relief valves and regulating equipment must be located either outside the vehicle, or in a compartment gas-tight to the interior to allow any possible leaks to flow to the outside air. Keep propane cylinders outside unless a properly designed storage compartment has been fitted on your RV.
- Propane cylinders should not be mounted on the roof of an RV. Propane cylinders mounted on the back of the RV pose a hazard in the event of a rear-end collision unless substantial protection to the tank is provided.
- Show all travellers how to shut off propane valves and how to unhook 110v electrical supply cord, should either be required in an emergency.
- Store all flammable liquids, including small disposable propane cylinders outside of the RV.
- Whenever using the stove in your RV, open an overhead vent or turn on the exhaust fan and open a window a small amount to allow fresh air in and carbon monoxide gases out
- The stove should never be used to heat the interior of the RV.
- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Store all clothes, linens and other combustibles well away from the kitchen area. In the compact kitchens in RVs combustibles such as paper towels and curtains are likely to be closer to the stove, so exercise even greater caution than you do at home when cooking in your RV.
- Keep all lighters and matches safely out of the reach of children.
- Leave plenty of clearance between your propane lamp or lantern and any combustible materials. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for space clearance. Select a level surface on which to place the lamp or lantern. Ensure you have adequate ventilation whenever using a propane-powered appliance.

- A lantern is not a space heater. Use it only as a light source. Always detach the propane cylinder before transporting a lantern and secure the cylinder in a vertical, upright position.
- Recreational travellers to the United States should be aware that effective April 1, 2002 many states in the United States have adopted a requirement that all propane cylinders with a capacity from 4 to 40 pounds must have an [Overfill Protection Device \(OPD\)](#). All propane cylinders without an OPD are prohibited from being refilled by anyone. The OPD serves as a safety shut-off device and prevents overfilling of propane cylinders to avert propane release, fire and possible injury. Propane cylinders equipped with an OPD have the letters “OPD” stamped on the valve hand wheel and on the side of the valve. Most propane cylinders with a triangular valve wheel have an OPD. Propane cylinders with a round or star-shaped valve wheel usually do not have an OPD. Canadian provinces have not yet adopted the requirement for OPD devices on propane cylinders in order to refill the cylinder. (NFPA 58, Section 2.3.1.5, the LP-Gas Code)
- Establish safe campfire rules to be followed when camping.