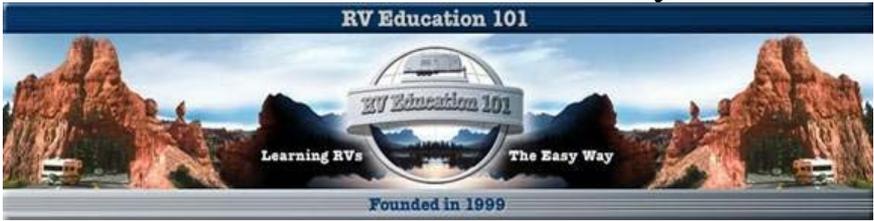


# RV Education 101 – Learn about your RV



I was first introduced to RV's as a teenager in the seventies. A good friend of mine, whose father was the General Manager for an RV dealership, would take us camping all of the time. Before long I was working for the dealership. I started out washing RV's, and soon I was working as an apprentice RV technician.

Not long after graduating from high school I joined the Army and was a wheeled vehicle and power generation mechanic. Six years later I graduated from Warrant Officer School, as an automotive maintenance technician, and was in charge of some very large maintenance operations throughout my military career. I retired from the Army in 1996 as a Chief Warrant Officer Three.

After retiring, I got back into the industry I had a passion for. I started out selling RVs for a dealership in North Carolina and was soon promoted to the sales manager. When we sold a unit we would give the new owners a walk through orientation of the RV. I quickly realized it was too much information for them to retain everything. I was concerned about the lack of education and safety awareness available to the RV consumer and started my own company, RV Education 101, in 2000. We produce and sell RV training videos on how to use and maintain RV's.

It started out with orientation videos for the different types of RV's and eventually expanded into more specialized videos and e-books on all types of RV related subjects. I found myself writing for RV trade and consumer magazines, RV newsletters and various RV web sites. In 2004 I started doing a television segment, called RV Savvy, for an RV television program that airs in the United States and Canada. I hope you learn something from the tips I have provided here.

Happy Camping,

Mark

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You can order Mark's complete line of RV Education 101 material from:

[www.rveducation101.com](http://www.rveducation101.com)

RV Education 101 is co-founder of the Circle of Trust RV Family

# RV Education 101 – Learn about your RV

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Every RVer should know what safety devices are available on their RV and understand how to use them. Most RVs regardless of what type or what size it is will come equipped with several safety devices. RVs come with fire extinguishers, LP gas leak detectors, smoke alarms, emergency escape windows, and in many cases carbon monoxide detectors.

## RV Fire Safety

There are approximately 20,000 reported RV fires each year. A large percentage of these fires are transmission related fires on motorhomes. Automatic transmission fluid leaking from the transmission can ignite, and quickly spread if it contacts any portion of the hot exhaust system. Before traveling in your RV inspect the underside for any signs of fluid leaking. Have any potential leaks checked out and repaired immediately.

## Fire Extinguisher Inspection

Over 30% of RV fires are caused by shorts in the 12-volt electrical system. Not only do you need a fire extinguisher, you need to inspect it before each trip to make sure it is charged. Look to see if the arrow is pointing in the green area in the sight gauge. If it reads empty or needs charging, replace it or have it recharged immediately. If it's a dry powder type fire extinguisher the arrow pointing in the green doesn't always guarantee that it will work. Every month you should turn dry powder extinguishers upside down, tap on the bottom of the extinguisher and shake it. It should sound hollow, sort of like a drum. If not, continue tapping on it until it sounds hollow and the powder that settled in the bottom is released.

## Types of Fire Extinguishers

There are four different types, or classes of fire extinguishers, **A**, **B**, **C**, and **D** and each type are used for a specific type of fire.

**Class A** extinguishers are used for fires caused by ordinary combustibles like paper and wood.

**Class B** extinguishers are used for fires caused by flammable liquids like grease, gasoline and oil.

**Class C** extinguishers are used for fires caused by electrical equipment.

**Class D** extinguishers are used for fires on flammable metals and often they are specific for the type of metal it is.

Some fire extinguishers have multi-class ratings like, **AB**, **BC** or **ABC** which means one fire extinguisher can be used to put out different types of fires. The National Fire Protection Agency rules that RV's must have a **BC** rated fire extinguisher near each exit. **BC** rated fire extinguishers are used for flammable liquids and gasses like grease, gasoline and oil, and for electrical fires. Many RV fires that happen inside an RV are type **A** fires caused by common combustibles like paper, and they require a type **A** fire extinguisher to put them out. This is why, in my opinion you need more than one fire extinguisher for your RV.

# RV Education 101 – Learn about your RV

It's a good idea to keep a **BC** type fire extinguisher in an outside storage compartment where it is easily accessible. You should also keep a **BC** type fire extinguisher inside the RV and keep an **A** type fire extinguisher inside the RV. If you tow a trailer keep a **BC** type fire extinguisher in the tow vehicle. Having these fire extinguishers available is a great idea but they are worthless if you and the other people traveling in the RV don't know what type of fire they are used for and how to properly use them. Get everybody who will be in the RV together, and make sure they understand the different types of fire extinguishers you have and where they are located in the event of an emergency.

The old style labeling for fire extinguishers, to designate what type of fire they are used for was with the letter **A, B, C or D**.



Newer style labeling for fire extinguishers include a picture designating the type of fire it is used for.



If it can be used for multiple types of fires it will show the pictures for the types of fires it can be used for and it will have a red diagonal line through the picture of what it cannot be used for.



## Using a Fire Extinguisher

The next step is to teach everybody how to properly use a fire extinguisher. There are different types and sizes of fire extinguishers, but for the most part they all work the same way. Teach everybody to remember the word **PASS**. This is an easy way to remember how to use a fire extinguisher, especially during an emergency. **PASS** stands for **Pull, Aim, Squeeze and Sweep**.

**Pull** the pin located at the top of the fire extinguisher.

**Aim** the nozzle at the base of the fire.

**Squeeze** the handle, standing approximately 8 feet away from the fire. Release the handle if you want it to stop.

**Sweep** the nozzle back and forth at the base of the fire until it is out.

Observe the fire to make sure it does not re-ignite.

# RV Education 101 – Learn about your RV

## Fire Escape Plan

Last but not least, you need to have an emergency escape plan. The National Fire Protection agency requires that RV's have emergency escape windows. Make sure everybody knows where the escape window is located and how to use it. It's a good idea to practice using it so you are familiar with how to get out in case of an emergency. You should have an escape plan for the front of the RV and the rear of the RV.

Most important, do not risk your personal safety, or the safety of others, attempting to put a fire out. The first step is to get everybody out of the RV or away from the fire safely. Have somebody call 911 for help and if you can't extinguish the fire within the first minute or so let the professionals put it out. Have a plan for everyone to meet at a pre-determined location once they are outside the RV. Account for everyone.

## LP Gas Leak Detector

Your RV also has an LP gas leak detector. This leak detector will set off an alarm to alert you if there is a potential gas leak. It's usually located close to floor level because LP gas is heavier than air and it will settle towards the floor. If you ever smell LP gas when you're camping, or if the LP gas leak detector goes off you could have a leak somewhere in the system. If this happens you should:

- Extinguish any open flames, pilot lights and do not smoke, or touch electrical switches.
- Evacuate the RV and turn off the main gas supply valve.
- Leave the door open and do not return to the area until the odor clears.
- Have the system checked out by a qualified technician before using it again.

False alarms can be caused by hair spray, perfume, cleaning solvents and low battery voltage. Whenever you go to have the LP gas refilled or when stopping to refuel the RV the all LP gas appliances should be turned off and the main gas supply valve should be turned off.



## Smoke Alarm

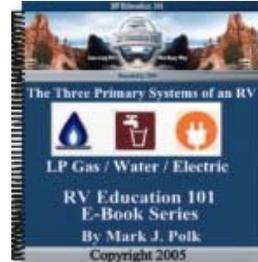
A properly working, battery operated smoke detector is critical. Test the alarm mechanism prior to each trip you take to make sure it is working. Change the batteries when you change your clocks twice a year. If you remove the batteries from any safety device while the RV is stored; remove the device from the wall or ceiling and place it where it will easily be seen as a reminder the next time you use the RV.

# RV Education 101 – Learn about your RV

## Carbon Monoxide Detectors

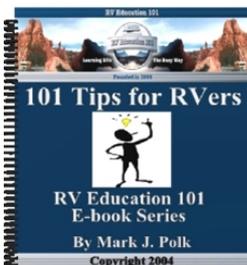
Many RVs come equipped with carbon monoxide detectors. If yours didn't, it's a good idea to purchase a battery operated carbon monoxide detector designed for use in RV's. You never know when you might be parked next to an RV that is running a generator. Carbon monoxide detectors should be located on a wall close to the ceiling since carbon monoxide is lighter than oxygen. Test the detector before each trip to make sure it is operating properly. Read the owners manual so you thoroughly understand how it works. And know what the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are:

- Dizziness
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Muscular twitching
- Intense headache
- Throbbing in the temples
- Weakness and sleepiness
- Inability to think coherently



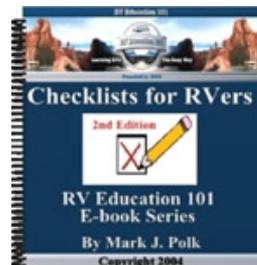
**Caution:** If you or anyone else experiences any of these symptoms get to fresh air immediately. If the symptoms persist seek medical attention. Never run a generator when you are sleeping in the RV.

**Caution:** Never use the range burners or oven as a source of heat. These LP gas appliances are not vented outside and because of the limited space inside the RV the lack of oxygen can lead to asphyxiation. When you do use the range top burners or the oven for cooking use the range vent fan or open a window.



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At RV University, you can learn more like this, and you can download informative ebooks – filled with information for RV travelers.



# RV Education 101 – Learn about your RV

## Emergency Weather Planning

There is nothing like exploring the back roads in your RV. You can go where you want and when you want, in your house on wheels, and because of this, often times you find yourself in a new destination everyday. Something many RVers do not consider, with this freedom to roam, is the weather conditions where you are traveling to, or spending the night. **RV's are great but they are not safe in severe weather like lightning and thunderstorms with high winds, tornadoes and hurricanes.**

When you are at home, you usually know what the weather forecast is from the newspaper, radio or television. When you travel three or four hundred miles a day in your RV the weather conditions can change several times. Many times when you stop for the night somewhere all you want to do is get some rest. The weather is the last thing on your mind. The problem with this is severe weather can occur without much warning, and if you are caught in it, it can be disastrous.

So, what do we do, what's the plan? Plan is the key word here. RVers need to have an emergency plan in case of a severe storm. For starters you need to be familiar with the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio or NWR. The NOAA Weather Radio is a nationwide network of radio stations that broadcast continuous weather information directly from a nearby National Weather Service Office. They broadcast National Weather Service warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a day. Alerts inform people if they need to take some type of action in order to protect themselves, such as "seeking shelter" or "to evacuate an area immediately!" What does this mean to RVers? It means if you owned a battery operated weather radio receiver you could monitor weather conditions no matter where you are!

## Portable Weather Radios

Every RVer should own a portable weather radio receiver. Receivers are available at most retail stores that sell electronic equipment. Prices can range anywhere from \$25 to \$200 depending on the quality of the receiver and its features. I personally own two weather radio receivers. My Midland™ WR-300 works off of AC power or four AA batteries when the power is out. It has an alert feature that alarms when the National Weather Service issues severe weather announcements or emergency information. I also have a portable handheld Midland 40 channel CB, with a 10-weather channel receiver. It works off six AA rechargeable batteries or any 12-volt receptacle. It is well worth the investment to know what type of weather to expect when traveling or camping in your RV. When we are at home, we use the weather radio receiver in the house. For more information on the NOAA Weather Radio visit their web site at [www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov)

## Emergency Weather Plan

OK, the first step to our emergency weather plan is to get a weather radio receiver if you don't already have one, and to always monitor it when you use your RV. The next step is to develop an emergency evacuation plan, to use in the event of severe weather. When you arrive at a campground, ask at the check-in desk about an emergency plan in case of a severe storm such as a tornado, or a thunderstorm with high winds. If they don't have a plan you need to make your own.

# RV Education 101 – Learn about your RV

Locate a structure that is safer than your RV, like a bathhouse or the campground office. Always stay on the lowest level possible and away from doors and windows. Brief everybody with you on the emergency plan. Explain to children how to respond to different disasters and the dangers of severe weather, fires, and other emergencies. Instruct children on emergency exits. Instruct them on how and when to call 911. Make sure everybody knows exactly what his or her job is in case of severe weather. Monitor the weather radio for emergency information.

**Note:** Calling 911 on your cell phone when away from home may not connect you to the local authorities. Understand how your cell phone works with 911 when outside your home area.



## Emergency Supply Kit

Have an emergency supply kit made up and easily accessible. The kit should contain flashlights, batteries, rain ponchos, a portable weather radio, first aid kit, non-perishable packaged or canned food and a manual can opener, blankets, prescription and non-prescription drugs, pet supplies, bottled water and any special items for infants, elderly or disabled family members.

Remember, RV's are not safe in severe weather! This includes severe thunderstorms with high winds, tornadoes and hurricanes. Learn about different types of weather hazards, get a weather radio if you don't have one, create a plan with your family, practice and maintain the plan. Now go RVing and have fun.

**Note:** Emergency weather watches and warnings are for counties and towns. Always check a map for the county or town where you are staying.

# RV Education 101 – Learn about your RV

## Learning RVs the Easy Way by Video and DVD



### Producer Mark Polk

RV Education 101 produces professional RV training videos and DVD's on how to use and maintain your Recreation Vehicle (RV). Owners Mark and Dawn Polk, felt there is not enough emphasis placed on properly educating the RV consumer on the complexities of owning and operating an RV. They would like to provide you with as much RV information as possible.

One RV Consumer had this to say: *When we got our first RV we did everything we could to take notes when the dealer gave us our RV orientation, but with the gas system, water heater, A/C, water and waste tanks, dumping etc....our heads were in a whirl! We thought we had taken good notes, but, of course there were things we heard differently. These RV educational videos / DVD's are a must have for every RV'er!*



### RV Video/DVD Titles in our Library:

- Pop Up 101
- Travel Trailer 101
- Class A Motor Home 101
- Class C Rental / Owner
- Winterizing & Storing your RV
- EZ RV Upgrades
- Trailer Towing, Weights, Hitch Work & Backing
- Towing Behind a Motorhome
- Marks Recommended 10 minute RV Essential Items DVD

Relax in the comfort of your own home or RV and we will walk you step-by-step through all of the systems of your RV. Buying an RV is exciting and when you pick it up, the only thing on your mind is getting it home and planning that first trip. Yes, the dealer gave you a walk-through of the unit, but there was so much information and excitement that it was overwhelming. Now it's in your driveway and you can't remember everything they covered during the RV orientation, so we put it into video form so you can watch it again and again.

Visit our online education center at: [WWW.RVUNIVERSITY.COM](http://WWW.RVUNIVERSITY.COM)

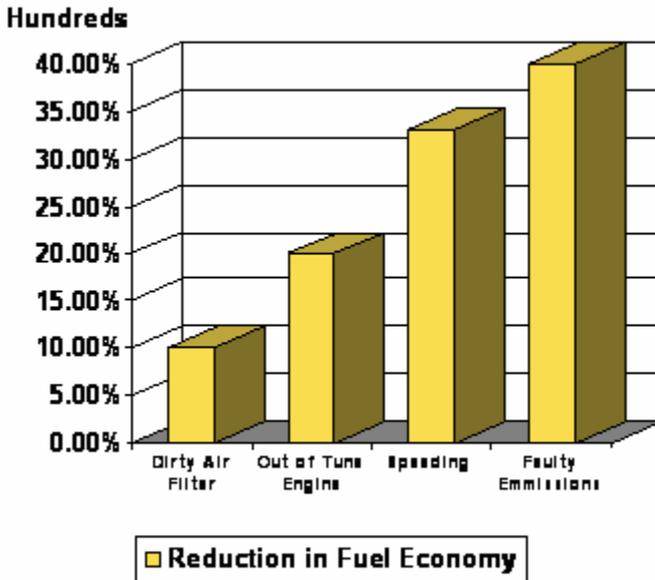
# RV Education 101 – Learn about your RV

## Maximizing Fuel Economy

Now we're going to discuss something near and dear to every RV owner. How can you improve your fuel economy? The cost of gasoline is steadily rising and it is safe to say that it probably won't go down in the future. It takes a while, but as with everything else you eventually accept the fact that higher fuel prices are here to stay. I for one am not going to let sky rocketing fuel prices change my plans for using and enjoying our RV. So, with that said and a motorhome that averages 7 to 8 miles to a gallon I am forced to find ways to save on fuel rather than waiting and hoping that fuel prices will go down. After a little research I was surprised to learn how easy it can be to improve our fuel economy. Whether you're towing a trailer or driving a motorhome there are many ways to improve fuel economy. By performing some simple maintenance procedures and changing our driving habits a little we can save a significant amount of fuel.

One shocking discovery I made was that for each 5 mph you go over 60 mph is equivalent to paying 10 cents more per gallon. So if traveling down the Interstate at 75 mph add 30 cents to the price on the pump!

### Reductions in Fuel Economy



**Note:** Do you know how many miles you get to a gallon of gas? Here's how to find out. Fill the fuel tank and write down the odometer reading. The next time you stop for gas fill the tank again. Now divide the miles you traveled between fill-ups by the amount of gas you bought the second time you filled up. This is how many miles you are getting to a gallon of gas.

# RV Education 101 – Learn about your RV

## So How Can We Improve Our Fuel Economy?



- Talk to other RVers that have a motorhome or tow vehicle and trailer similar to yours. Compare gas mileage. If there is a significant difference compare notes and try to determine what makes the difference.
- Something as simple as a clean air filter can improve your fuel economy up to 10%.
- Checking and adjusting your tire pressure to the proper pressure can increase fuel economy by 3%, not to mention preventing premature tire wear and failures or blowouts caused by over or under-inflated tires. Tires can look normal when they are seriously under-inflated. Use a quality air pressure gauge and check your tires when they're cold, before traveling more than one mile.
- Excessive idling wastes fuel. If you're going to be sitting still for more than a couple of minutes shut the engine off.
- Using overdrive whenever you can saves fuel by decreasing the engines speed.
- Using the cruise control whenever possible saves fuel because it keeps the vehicle at a constant speed rather than variable speeds. This applies when you are driving on a relatively flat surface. Keep in mind the over 60 mph rule applies here too.
- Keeping the vehicle tuned up and in top running condition saves fuel. A poorly tuned engine can lower fuel economy by 10 to 20%.
- Poor emissions and/or a faulty oxygen sensor can cause a 40% reduction in fuel economy. Can you believe that? A 40% reduction.
- Following the recommended service and maintenance schedules will save you fuel.
- Using the recommended grade of motor oil will increase fuel economy by 1 to 2%.
- Using synthetic oils will increase fuel economy by 2 or more percent.
- Speeding and rapid acceleration reduces fuel economy anywhere from 5 to 33% depending on your individual driving habits.
- Added weight that you don't need reduces fuel economy significantly. We're all guilty of this one!
- Only using the dash air conditioner when it is absolutely necessary will save a significant amount of fuel.
- Use regular gas unless your owner's manual specifies a higher octane gas. You're just throwing money away when you pay the extra money for premium fuel