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8 TIPS FOR SAFE RV TRAVEL

Whether you are going on a short weekend to the mountains or a cross-country trip across the United States, there are some vital steps to take in order to ensure that your trip is memorable for golden sunsets and amazing vistas – and not for how many times it was derailed because of unexpected events. Here's a few tips:

1. Map your route. Before you get on the road, make sure you know how to get from point A to point B. Learn all the nuances of the route you are about to take – and take into account the dimensions of your RV vehicle. You may be limited to major roadways because of the height and weight of your home-away-from-home.

2. Let technology be your friend. There are several mobile apps that can keep you in the know as you plan and execute your vacation. The Life360 app offers location sharing, along with other features that will let your family and friends know where you are on your journey. Mobile apps like Roadtripper or AAA mobile trip planner can also help you as you map out your trip. There are also great online sites for booking campsites such as Rover Pass. Also consider joining an RV camping club like Passport America, which lists participating campgrounds across the country and offer significant discounts in participating parks.

3. Create a timeline. Whether you are a drive-straight-through person or someone who likes to meander, recognize that and make adjustments to your schedule accordingly. Have a

backup plan just in case you turn from the hare to the tortoise, or vice versa.

4. Make a budget. While RV travelling can be cheaper than flying from one destination to another, you still will incur costs (gasoline, campground fees, food, etc.) that need to be accounted for. Knowing the costs associated with your trip will make you a better planner.

5. Buy RV Insurance. The first order of business after purchasing your RV – buy insurance! Remember that that you have made a substantial investment for both the RV itself and all that's inside the RV. There are several specialty coverages that you may want to consider, including vacation liability, emergency expenses, roadside assistance and personal effects. You may also want windshield coverage, which can be offered with a zero deductible. In the event of a total loss, you should be educated on your total loss options, which can vary from Actual Cash Value to Total Loss Replacement.

6. Pack in stages. Instead of packing all at once, take it one step at a time. For example, take one day to put clothing you will need in its proper place. The next day, move on to kitchen supplies, then perhaps devote another day to games and toys. When you pack everything at once, you're more likely to forget something important. And while you're at it, make sure everything is stored securely for travel. P.S. if you plan to cook outdoors, don't forget your outdoor grill and items such as charcoal, lighter fluid, fire extinguisher, folding chairs, etc.

7. Don't forget your paperwork. Include your insurance ID, RV manuals, useful phone numbers, and other important information that may come in handy.

8. Check road and weather conditions. On the day that you are leaving, make sure that you are on "go" as far as the weather and route that you have planned. If not, make adjustments accordingly.

