

## Top 5 Mistakes RV Owners Make & How to Avoid Them

There are lots of things to remember when it comes to owning, operating and maintaining your RV, and sometimes we learn things the hard way. In an effort to help prevent some of these mistakes from happening to you I want to offer my top 5 mistakes RVers make, and how to avoid them.

### 1) **Leaving the steps out or the antenna up while traveling.**

I'm sure you have probably seen an RV traveling down the road with the TV antenna up or the steps out just waiting to hit something, resulting in expensive repair bills.

#### **How to avoid it:**

The way to avoid this from happening is to follow a pre-trip checklist. It's easy to forget something when you are preparing to leave on a trip in your RV. Using a checklist helps make sure nothing was left out or overlooked. As added insurance I always make a final walk-around of the RV just before leaving in the RV.

### 2) **Not knowing or monitoring the height of your RV.**

Damage to the top of RVs is one of the top claims RV insurance claims that get filed. Your RV has what is referred to as soft and hard clearances. An example of a soft clearance would be a radio antenna. If something hits the radio antenna there will be little or no damage to the RV. An example of a hard clearance would be a roof mounted air conditioner. If something hits the air conditioner there could be significant damage to the RV.

#### **How to avoid it:**

Park the RV on a level surface and measure the height from the ground to the tallest hard clearance item on the RV. Record this information where it will serve as a constant reminder of how tall the RV is. When you are at the campground always use a spotter to watch for low hanging tree branches and other obstacles that could hit the top of the RV.

### 3) **Backing the RV into a site or parking spot at home without a spotter.**

I can pretty much guarantee if you don't use a spotter you will eventually hit something. RVs are large and it is nearly impossible to monitor what is happening behind the RV without a spotter.

#### **How to avoid it:**

The way to avoid backing incidents is to always use a spotter. You need to establish hand signals you both understand and always keep the spotter in view when backing. Never use two spotters at the same time and always do what the spotter tells you to do. When in doubt stop get out and look.

4) **Not properly matching the tow vehicle to the trailer.**

It's extremely important that you understand weight ratings and how much your tow vehicle can safely tow. An improper match between a tow vehicle and trailer is extremely dangerous.

**How to avoid it:**

A simple rule I use is, the tow vehicle's towing capacity should equal or exceed the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of the trailer you are towing. This way, even if the trailer is loaded to full capacity the truck is still rated to tow the weight.

5) **Neglecting the RV batteries and battery maintenance**

Poor battery maintenance results in short battery life. It's easy to forget to use battery disconnect switches, or to charge a discharged battery in a timely manner, or to check and add water to lead acid batteries. But, replacing 2 or 4 batteries at a time can get very expensive.

**How to avoid it:**

Battery maintenance is an integral part of using and owning an RV. It is important you get in a habit of using disconnect switches, checking water levels in lead acid batteries and testing and re-charging discharged batteries. Establish a preventive maintenance program for you RV that includes routine battery maintenance and your RV batteries can last for 6 plus years.

Well there you have it, my top 5 list of common mistakes we make with our RVs. Fortunately these mistakes are easily avoidable if we know what to look for and what to do. If you are looking for some great destinations to visit with your RV visit [www.koa.com](http://www.koa.com) and if you want to learn more about your RV visit [www.rveducation101.com](http://www.rveducation101.com)

Happy Camping,

Mark J. Polk

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