



## Green Maintenance Tips Before You Hit the Road:

Whether you prefer to travel by motorhome or towable RV, there's engine power involved in getting you and your RV from home to your ultimate destination and so many places in between. One of the best ways to conserve fuel, reduce emissions and keep costs down is by performing routine engine and vehicle maintenance including:

**Engine performance.** Optimize your fuel performance by having engines tuned and spark plugs replaced according to the manufacturer's specifications. Just a single misfiring spark plug can reduce fuel economy by up to 4%, says the EPA.

**Check engine warning lights.** Ignoring these indicators could result in poor fuel economy or worse, in costly engine repairs. Heed the warning lights – that's what they were installed for.

**Motor oil.** Before a trip, check levels and top off oil to keep the engine properly lubricated. Also follow manufacturer-recommended guidelines for the frequency of oil changes to maintain fuel efficiency.

**Air filters.** Replacing a dirty air filter at the end of its suggested lifespan can increase gas mileage by up to an incredible 10%, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

**Brakes.** While always important in a moving vehicle, the weight of an RV puts added pressure on the vehicle braking system. Brakes that are not maintained properly can create unwanted drag, which is like driving with your foot on the brake pedal. This will wear out brakes too quickly (expensive!) and cut fuel economy because of the resistance.

**Tire inflation pressure.** Properly inflating tires to the manufacturer's recommended pressure can also increase miles per gallon. Tires can lose about one pound of pressure

in a month and for every three pounds below the recommended pressure, fuel economy goes down by 1%.

**Tire wear.** Replacing worn tires with a manufacturer-recommended size and performance style can save hundreds of dollars each year and can increase safety on road surfaces and in inclement weather conditions.

**Reduce unnecessary vehicle weight.** Excess weight reduces fuel efficiency, so unless you are dry camping along the route, travel to your destination with minimal water in your waste and fresh water tanks, which can be filled up and emptied at the campground. Even purchasing heavy items like campfire wood once you arrive can cut weight and help you comply with local ordinances if certain types of wood from your region of the country are banned in another – this also helps preserve the eco-balance.

**Turn off before you lock up.** Before pulling out of the driveway, double-check that your home's energy consumption is minimized. Turn off lights or set a few on automatic timers, turn AC up or heat down, set hot water heater on vacation mode, shut off water to the house, pull shades to keep out the summer heat. Also make sure that computers are shut down and energy-consuming electronics like DVRs and cell phone chargers that cycle through energy consumption even when not in use are unplugged.

### Green Driving Tips for the Road:

**Avoid quick starts.** A smooth, steady starting acceleration and on-the-road speed save fuel and reduce wear and tear on the transmission, engine, tires and brakes.

**Keep to the speed limit.** Each mph over 55 decreases fuel efficiency by about 1%. So when holding steady at the posted 55 mph instead of pushing it to 65, you increase fuel economy by a whopping 10%.

**Use overdrive and cruise control.** Whenever possible, cruise control not only helps you keep to the speed limit, but the overdrive gears slow engine speeds, reducing wear and saving fuel.

**Hang on to recyclables.** With plenty of on-board RV storage, it's easy to keep recyclable waste with you to dispose of at local recycle stations along the way or through programs offered by many campgrounds.

**Limit summer AC use.** While driving on the road, open windows and vents and turn off the air conditioning system to avoid decreasing your fuel consumption.

**Refuel in cooler temps.** In the heat of the summer, try to refuel when temperatures are lower, like early morning and after sundown, to alleviate the vaporization of the fuel that escapes and aggravates smog formation.



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