



# Play it safe this summer when using your Recreational Vehicle

by  
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Whether you are heading out to the campsite, traveling cross-country over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday or living in a recreational vehicle (RV), it's important to know about fire and carbon monoxide (CO) hazards present in these movable structures.

In fact since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, the purchase and use of recreational vehicles has increased significantly. There was approximately a 7% increase in new campers in the U.S. during 2020. People changed their plans to fly or travel abroad and chose to either rent or purchase an RV and go out and explore the outdoors through camping.

## **Recreational vehicle fires**

According to the United States Fire Administration, from 2018 to 2020, there were an estimated average of 4,200 RV fires reported to U.S. fire departments each year. These fires resulted in approximately 15 deaths, 125 injuries and \$60,300,000 in property loss.

According to the National Park Service:

- Recreational vehicles include everything from folding camping trailers to truck campers to luxury motor homes.
- Eight million U.S. households own at least one RV.
- RVs travel an average of 4,500 miles each year.

Most RV fires occur:

- Between the hours of 2 and 3 p.m.
- During the months of May through August. July is the peak month.
- On Fridays and Saturdays.

## Carbon Monoxide in recreational vehicles

CO is an odorless, tasteless, invisible killer that can readily build up within the small area of an RV and cause severe illness and possibly death. Improper use of generators is a leading cause of CO poisoning. Malfunctioning gas-fed appliances are an additional source of CO poisoning.

### **E.S.C.A.P.E. Fire Safety shares these life-saving tips for the RV user**

- Check propane supply lines for kinks or damage. Test all fitting connections with a gas leak detection device.
- Turn off propane at the tank and turn off all propane-powered appliances while driving. If you have an accident or tire blowout while the propane is on, your injury and the damage to your vehicle can be significantly worse.
- Make sure generator exhaust is pointed away and downwind of the RV.
- Stay in the cooking area when preparing food. If you leave, turn off the burner.
- Have a portable fire extinguisher on board that you can easily reach. Adults should take a brief training course on how to properly use an extinguisher. Remember the acronym P.A.S.S. — Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep.
- Keep doors and windows clear for escape and make sure they open easily. Practice a fire escape plan with everyone staying in the RV.
- Don't overload the electrical outlets. Using too many electrical appliances at the same time can cause a fire.
- Have a trained technician thoroughly inspect your RV at least once a year.

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Source: U.S. Fire Administration Snapshot of RV Fires - [Data Snapshot: Recreational Vehicle Fires \(fema.gov\)](#)



