

Fire Safety Advice: Sherry – Safari Friends, message 11204

While at Quartzsite, I unfortunately got to watch a gal in our group's rig burn to the ground. It was horrific! subsequently Mac McCoy ("the fire guy" who teaches at FMCA or other rallies) gave an excellent talk on fire safety for RVers. He covered a lot of ground that I can't begin to reproduce here but some key things he said are worth sharing with everyone who RVs, so here goes...

1. When a fire happens in your RV, you will have 20 seconds to get out! You might get lucky and have more but plan for 20 seconds.
2. Do not try to fight the fire (except possibly a small kitchen one). Just get out.
3. Know where your emergency exits are.
4. Make an exit plan for each half of your rig then actually do it! Open and go out the emergency exit window! Back your rig next to a picnic table or other place where you can drop out safely. In an emergency, you make break a leg but that's easily fixed. Burns are not!

5. Make sure your emergency exit windows will open (and that you know how to do that). If they're stuck - most are - then gently tap all around them with your fist until they free up and will open. Once opened, lubricate the seals before closing again.
6. Consider buying a "safety hammer" that's designed to break safety glass. Neither you nor anything handy in your rig will break the glass fast enough if that window won't open. The hammer is designed to break safety glass with 1 or 2 hits then clear it out of the frame with a swipe or two
7. use a blanket over the window frame then crawl out *belly down*. The blanket will cushion your midsection and can be used to wrap around you once you get outside

Some important additional points:

- A. Know where your fire extinguishers are. Have one outside in a bay. Check that all are in operable condition. Know how to operate each of them!
Always aim for the base of the fire, not the flames.
- B. Shake your fire extinguishers hard until you can feel the powder inside moving. Tap repeatedly if they sound solid until the sound changes. Do this

every month! Settled powder compacts, especially from jostling down the road, so that the extinguisher won;t work when you need it

- C. Consider buying a halon extinguisher to install (velcro or screwed in via the clip) in your fridge outside compartment. **Fridge fires** are a major cause of RV fires.
- D. EVERY NORCOLD FRIDGE FROM 1996 TO NOW IS UNDER RECALL!!!! Even if yours was recently repaired under recall, do it again! The latest recall just happened on Jan. 15! Get yours fixed (free) and still install the extinguisher (\$174 from RV Safety)
- E. Make sure your CO monitor is mounted on the ceiling or no more than 4 inches down from the ceiling on a wall. CO is lighter than air. If you have a Winnebago, buy a separate CO monitor. (FYI for your friends: Winnebago installed them next to the propane detector close to the floor. Owners would be dead before that alarm would go off)
- F. Replace all your monitors (fire, propane, CO) every 5 years. The battery may still work fine but the sensing element won't.

- G. Close your bedroom door when you sleep. It will buy you a few extra seconds to get out in the event of a fire. If your fire alarm goes off, **before** you rush out of bed, raise your arm up. If the air feels hot, stay down below it by rolling off the bed onto the floor. Do NOT stand up! There's "super heated air" in your rig. Crawl to the RV door, be prepared to rush out the instant you open the door because the inrush of air can cause an explosion when it meets the super heated air.
- H. Always use the back of your hand to check for heat if you suspect a fire, not your palm. If you burn your fingers using your palm, you will not be able to grasp window latches, extinguisher handles, etc.
- I. Lastly, I highly recommend everyone take a fire safety class when you're at a rally that offers one.

Sherry

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