

An RV is part vehicle, part home, with twice the systems that can fail. 30 to 60 minutes before departure saves days on the road. Print this checklist, keep it in the glovebox, and work it before every long trip.

PRE-TRIP CHECKLIST

Tires & Wheels

- Check tire pressure on cold tires (use placard PSI, not sidewall max).
- Test tread depth with the quarter test.
- Inspect sidewalls for cracks, bulges, or weather checking.
- Verify DOT date code on every tire. Replace anything 7+ years old.
- Torque lug nuts to manufacturer spec with a calibrated torque wrench.
- Check the spare for inflation and condition.
- Inspect wheel bearings for play or wear (especially on trailers).

Electrical & Battery

- Test brake lights, turn signals, headlights, and running lights.
- Check battery terminals for corrosion. Clean with baking soda paste.
- Confirm battery charge. Recharge anything sitting low.
- Top off battery fluid in non-sealed batteries with distilled water.
- Replace any battery not holding a charge.
- Test GFCI outlets with the test/reset buttons.
- Confirm the converter and inverter are working.

Hitch & Towing

- Inspect hitch, coupler, and safety chains for wear, cracks, loose bolts.
- Verify breakaway switch cable connection and battery charge.
- Test trailer brakes independently before merging onto the highway.

Engine & Drivetrain (Motorhomes)

- Check oil, transmission fluid, coolant, brake fluid, power steering.
- Inspect belts and hoses for cracks, soft spots, or fraying.
- Verify the air filter is clean. Replace if needed.
- Test windshield wipers and washer fluid level.

Safety Equipment

- Confirm fire extinguishers are charged and accessible.
- Test smoke, carbon monoxide, and LP gas detectors.
- Stage roadside kit: triangles, first aid, flashlight with fresh batteries.

MONTHLY (WHILE ON THE ROAD)

HVAC & Climate

- Clean or replace A/C filters (clogged filters cut cooling by up to 15%).
- Run the furnace to confirm ignition and proper venting.
- Inspect A/C shroud and condenser fins for debris.

Seals, Slideouts & Exterior

- Walk a full exterior inspection of roof, sidewalls, seals, tires.
- Inspect slideout seals and rubber gaskets for tears or compression.
- Check hydraulic fluid levels (hydraulic slideouts only).
- Examine window, door, and compartment seals for cracking.
- Apply UV protectant: alcohol-free, silicone-free, petroleum-free only.

Generator

- Run the generator under load 2 hours at ~50% capacity.
- If sitting unused, add fuel stabilizer to the tank.

Plumbing

- Check for leaks under sinks and around toilet seals.
- Test water heater on both electric and propane settings.
- Sanitize fresh water tank if RV has been sitting more than 2 weeks.

QUARTERLY (EVERY 3 MONTHS)

Roof Inspection (#1 Damage Prevention)

- Check sealant joints around vents, antennas, skylights, edges.
- Inspect roof membrane for soft spots, punctures, tears, discoloration.
- Clean roof with cleaner appropriate for material (rubber, FRP, TPO).

Undercarriage

- Flush underside to remove road salt, mud, and corrosive debris.
- Inspect for rust, loose components, damaged underbelly material.

Appliance Deep Check

- Clean range hood grease filters and inspect vent fan.
- Clear refrigerator ventilation areas of dust, cobwebs, nests.
- Inspect water heater anode rod. Replace at 75%+ depletion.
- Check appliance vent screens for insect nests or obstructions.

Slideout Tracks & Mechanisms

- Clean tracks/rails and remove grit.
- Lubricate to manufacturer specifications.
- Verify smooth, full extension and retraction.

ANNUAL & SEASONAL

Annual Professional Inspection

- Wheel bearing repacking and inspection.
- Brake inspection: pads, drums or rotors, brake fluid condition.
- Suspension check: bushings, shocks, leaf springs.
- Propane leak test and regulator inspection (soapy water + pro repair).
- Tire balancing and alignment if you've noticed uneven wear.

Spring De-Winterizing

- Flush all antifreeze from plumbing until water runs clear.
- Sanitize freshwater tank: 1/4 cup bleach per 15 gallons. 12-hour soak.
- Recharge or replace house batteries disconnected during storage.
- Inspect roof and all exterior seals for winter damage.
- Test every appliance: fridge (AC/DC/propane), water heater, furnace, A/C, cooktop.
- Lubricate locks, hinges, latches, entry step mechanisms.

Fall Winterizing

- Drain and blow out all water lines, or pump non-toxic RV antifreeze.
- Disconnect and remove house batteries. Keep on maintenance charger.
- Clean interior thoroughly to prevent mold and pests.
- Cover tires or move RV to covered storage to prevent UV damage.
- Close tank valves and protect sewer connections from freezing.

MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Frequency	Key Tasks	Why It Matters
Every Trip	Tires, lug nuts, lights, hitch, fluids, safety gear	Prevent roadside emergencies
Monthly	A/C filters, seals, generator run, battery check	Stop small issues from becoming big ones
Quarterly	Roof inspection, undercarriage flush, appliance vents	Prevent water damage and corrosion
Every 6 Mo.	Full sealant inspection and reapplication	#1 cause of major RV damage
Annually	Brakes, bearings, propane system, suspension	Structural and mechanical safety

