



RV First Aid!

Getting a first aid kit together for your RV is vital, says our resident Techspert from [Southern Spirit Campervans](#)...

I regularly have people calling me and reporting a problem when they are on the road. Often they are in trouble in a remote location where there are no repairers, or where a repairer doesn't have the time and/or parts to solve their problems. In some cases I've been able to help customers over the phone by troubleshooting the problem, but a lack of basic tools on board becomes a real roadblock in helping them get going again.

It's common sense to carry a first aid kit when travelling, but how many of you have an RV first aid kit to basically patch up your vehicle at least enough to get it somewhere for proper repairs? Even if you're not a very handy person you should carry one, as chances are you can find a helpful soul out on the road to assist. Here's a list of things I recommend you pack away "just in case" when next you hit the road...



Fuses

I can not say it often enough: Check where the fuses are in your RV and which ones are used, then always carry some spares. Fuses have been designed to protect appliances and 12-volt circuits, however no fuse is built to last forever. They can blow due to an electrical overload (their job), but occasionally just fail due to age, vibration or whatever.

Fuses are the first things to check if any of your 12 V appliances aren't working. Take the fuse out and check if the 'wire' is broken, which means it has blown. Often you will find several items are protected by one fuse. For example you have a fuse for the 12 V lights but there is only one fuse for several lights. So if one unit has a problem you loose use of them all. Having a spare fuse, plus maybe using some insulation tape after disconnecting the faulty light from the circuit, will fix the problem temporarily and let you use the remaining lights.

The average RV has either automotive style blade fuses (the ones with coloured plastic bodies for different amp ratings) or glass fuses. Some of them are easy to find as there is an obvious fusebox; some – like Project Polly's – are hidden behind a little panel by the switch, while others are fitted to a inline fuse holder. Also, you might find some 12 V circuit breakers

– grey little blocks that are wired inline with the cables. The little 12 V circuit breakers often have a auto reset, which means they do trip and cut of the power, but after a moment they come back on again.

Have a look inside you RV. Often you'll find fuses close to the area where your house battery is located or as mentioned above, in the switch panel. Where ever they are you must become familiar with their location and how to change them.

The colour coding of blade fuses makes it easy to see how strong (in amps) the fuse is and makes the changing with the correct replacement even easier. Colour codes for blade fuses are:

- Brown: 7.5 amp
- Red: 10 amp
- Blue: 15 amp
- Yellow: 20 amp
- Clear: 25 amp
- Green: 30 amp

Just be sure to replace like-for-like!





Tools & Other Essentials

You need a basic tool kit and the following tools will come in handy in a lot of day today scenarios:

- Shifting/adjustable spanner
- Hammer
- Small screwdriver
- Medium screwdriver
- Pliers

Check what sorts of wood and metal screws are used in your RV and buy a packet or two. They will come in very handy to replace the ones that invariably fall out as you travel!

Cable ties are another essential. Buy a selection of different sizes as they come in very handy to temporarily secure loose items or even replace a missing bolt. At a pinch you can even join them together daisy-chain style to make them longer if required! Some examples of use include securing wires, cables or plumbing hanging beneath your vehicle or for keeping a broken

awning in its box until you can get it repaired. Of course, the heavier the job the larger/thicker cable tie you'll need to use.

Velcro one-wrap straps are also good things as they are reusable. They're ideal to neatly store away a 240 V extension cord, ropes, use as curtain ties, hold in place small items, or used on an awning rafter to hang small things up, etc.

SOS Emergency/rescue silicon tape is absolutely essential! It's available from different manufacturers under various brand names and can be used to fix:

- Holes/splits in pipes/hoses in the plumbing system (hot and cold)
- Damaged 240 V extension leads
- Holes/splits in fresh or grey water connection hoses
- Broken shower hoses or failing washers from shower head to hose
- Insulate exposed 12 V wiring ends or damaged cable skins

You can even completely wrap a house water pump if it's leaking badly, which should help enough until you can get a proper repair. It also can fix radiator hose leaks and much more. Make sure your read how to use it for best results. However, the main secret is to apply and wrap around very tightly. You can find some videos about the use of them for example by clicking [HERE](#).

Lanolin spray can be used for protection, lubrication purposes and maintenance. It's ideal for use on:

- Roof scissors that are stiff and hard to operate
- Metal drawer slides
- Hard to operate wind-out awning mechanisms
- Sliding door tracks and mechanisms on vans so they close easier

An alternative to lanolin spray is WD40, which will also do the same jobs.

Tear Aid – type A (fabric) and B (vinyl) – is great to add to your first aid kit if you have an awning and/or a pop top campervan. It's ideal to use on rips and holes in roof canvas skirts, awnings, tents and annexes. Tear aid works very well and will last for a while, and because it's clear is a nice way to repair rips and tears. For a basic instruction video click [HERE](#).



As a quick and cheap alternative you could use duct tape, but keep in mind it might leave adhesive residue on the material when taken off and should only be used for a very temporary repair as it's not UV stabilised.

How much will a first RV aid kit cost you?

This will vary and depend on the quality of tools you buy. You also might or might not have a plastic box such as a old tackle box you can re-use to hold everything. In any case an outlay of \$100 to \$250 should see you well set up, depending on just what you decide to include. However, compared to the hassle and inconvenience a minor breakdown or problem can cause when you're travelling and a long way from help, whatever you spend will be a good investment. Safe travels! 🇺🇸



Ask The Techspert!

If you have any maintenance questions or problems email us at techtalk@imotorhome.com.au and we'll see what we can sort out. Please include photos as well as a description of any problems and we'll share them and the answers with all our readers.