

When we purchased our motor home in a couple of years ago my plan was to build an overhead shelter to protect it in between trips and when it was being stored for extended periods of time. It's been over two years now and for a number of reasons I still don't have the shelter constructed.

During my routine inspections of the roof and the exterior of the RV I began to notice signs of wear caused by the constant exposure to the elements. Ozone in the air and Ultraviolet, (UV) rays from the sun were beginning to take its toll, which was evident by the early signs of fading paint. The ozone in the air also causes products like rubber and vinyl to dry out, crack, and start to deteriorate. The UV rays from the sun make this happen quicker. Another result from leaving the RV exposed to the elements was the constant need to wash it. I wash our motor home when we return home, after every trip. I don't know about you, but I for one can do without having to wash it in between trips too.

I am a big advocate on keeping your tires covered when you're not using the RV. It is not uncommon to see RV tires with low mileage and plenty of tread that are ruined by the damaging effects of ozone and UV rays. Ozone in the air and UV rays from the sun shorten the life of your tires. Ozone in the air causes tires to dry rot and deteriorate. UV rays from the sun make it happen quicker. This is especially true of the tires sidewall. You should inspect your tires periodically for checking or cracks in the sidewalls. If you notice any damage have the tires inspected by a professional.

There are basically two ways to protect your tires from these elements. Keep the tires covered, with covers that will block out the sunlight when not in use, or for long-term storage remove the tires and store them in a cool dry place away from the sunlight, grease, oil, and fuel. I also recommend that you place something like a piece of wood between the ground and the tires. Be sure that whatever you use is larger than the footprint of the tire. No portion of the tire should hang over the edge of the tire block. This can cause internal damage to the tire. Inexpensive tire covers can protect your expensive RV tires from being ruined by the sun.

It finally hit me that the same thing that happens to the RV tires can happen to the entire RV. The roof, paint, rubber and vinyl is all being damaged by the sun, not to mention what the wind and rain can do to the exterior of the RV.

Your RV is too big of an investment to let Mother Nature wreak havoc on it when it is in short or long term storage. The most logical and cost effective way to protect your investment is to use an RV cover when you're not using your RV. Features to look for in an RV cover include that the material is breathable, it protects against the sun's UV rays and it is water resistant. You should also consider how difficult it is to put on and take off, the warranty period and the cost. An RV cover has to be able to breathe. If the material used to make the cover cannot breathe properly it can lead to several problems. Moisture can get trapped inside the cover, mold and mildew is more likely to form, and heat has no way to escape.

Keeping your RV and RV tires covered with a quality cover is by far the most cost effective solution there is for protecting your investment.

Happy Camping,

Mark J. Polk

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