

It's easy to let your guard down sometimes and to forget that not everybody you encounter is as honest and law abiding as you might be. This is an excerpt from my [Checklists for RVers E-book](#) to help keep your guard up and travel safe in your RV.

For one minute, try to think the way a criminal would think. If you were at a rest stop looking for your next target or victim, what would you look for? Let's pretend for a moment that you were going to target a vehicle. Which would be more appealing, a car whose owner stopped for a quick bathroom break or an expensive looking Class A motor home, whose owners are out walking their dogs? I don't have the mind of a criminal but this is an easy choice. That expensive looking RV probably has expensive contents inside like, jewelry, cameras, and a laptop computer.

Okay, we have come to the conclusion that we, the RVers, are the prime target for the criminal mind, so what can we do to protect ourselves? That's what this RV security checklist is for. To give you some ideas on how to protect yourself and your personal belongings when you're traveling in your RV.

- ✓ Don't stay overnight at a rest stop. Rest stops attract criminals. If you stop at a rest stop it should only be for a short break and then back on the road. Lock the RV and take turns using the facilities, always leaving someone in or close to the RV. Always be on the look out for anything or anyone that looks suspicious. Keep your cell phone handy in case you need it and don't open the door for anybody, unless you know who it is.
- ✓ Rest stops aren't the only place you need to be concerned about. Every time you stop to refuel there are certain precautions you need to take. It's easy to be vulnerable to a thief at a gas station or a truck stop. I have a bad habit of leaving my wallet on the console of our Class C motor home. The door isn't locked and your spouse is taking advantage of the time to walk the dogs. This is how quick it can happen. Get in the habit of locking the doors whenever you or someone else is not physically in the RV.
- ✓ Most robberies occur at night and most travel related robberies occur at rest stops, gas stations, convenience stores and ATM machines. Try to schedule most of your stops during daylight hours, and whenever you stop be aware of your surroundings. If something doesn't look right leave.
- ✓ Wal-Mart or other parking lots where you might stop to get a few hours of sleep can present security problems too. You should always park in a well lit area and the entry door of the RV should be facing where most of the activity is. A thief prefers to work where it is dark and where it is least likely to draw any attention. Close your curtains or blinds so it's not possible for someone to look inside. Don't open the door for anybody unless you know who it is. If it's a security guard ask for identification before you open the door.

- ✓ As much as we would like to believe that campgrounds are 100% safe and secure don't let your guard down. You don't need to be paranoid, just use some common sense. Don't leave expensive equipment lying around unsecured. Vehicle tow bars, hitches, bicycles and other items need to be under lock and key.
- ✓ Keep any valuables inside the RV secured and out of sight. It's a good idea to purchase a small fire proof safe to store valuables and important paperwork in. The safe might protect your valuables from the hazards of a fire but it will still need to be stored in a secure, out of the way place, inside the RV.
- ✓ Always lock the RV when you're not physically at the campsite. Do not store valuable equipment in outside storage compartments. Believe it or not, a vast majority of RV's use the same exact key as yours for outside storage compartments. If you store valuables, like golf clubs, fishing gear or tools in the outside compartments you may want to have the locks changed.
- ✓ Before you leave on a trip make sure your Emergency Roadside Service Plan is current. In the unfortunate event that you breakdown on the road try to pull off in as safe a place as possible and call for help immediately. Stay with the RV until help arrives.
- ✓ It's unfortunate that we live in a day and age where we need to take these added measures to protect ourselves. I don't want you to feel like everybody you meet during your travels is a thief or has bad intentions. Just use common sense and be aware of what is going on around you.

Plan your trip, travel safe and enjoy your RV experiences. Remember, getting there is half the fun!

Happy Camping

Mark J. Polk

Mark Polk is the owner of RV Education 101. RV Education 101 is a North Carolina based company that produces professional training videos, DVDs and e-books on how to use and maintain your RV. www.rveducation101.com