

What Do You Need to Know to Winter Camp in Red River

The temperatures are low and the days are short but that doesn't mean you can't enjoy RV camping in Red River in the wintertime. 4K River Ranch has fourteen RV spots and 5 apartments available, so you can enjoy the quiet crisp air and the landscape is peaceful. Still, the best part: no bugs.

Have a safe and relaxing winter trip to Red River with these tips to help you prepare your RV and enjoy an offseason adventure. Be sure and check on www.weather.com to find out what the forecast is as well.

Prep Your RV for Winter

Before heading out, the most important thing to do is make sure your rig will be up to the rigors of winter camping. Most current RVs are designed, built and insulated to take cold weather in stride. Even if you don't have the latest in RV technology you can still make your trailer or motorhome cozy.

Holding Tanks

Empty your black and gray water tanks before your trip. Add about a quart of special pink RV antifreeze (not the green kind used in cars) to each. This will protect the dump valves from freezing. Insulate the pipes draining into the tanks with foam pipe insulation, and consider adding electric pipe heaters since you'll be camping in below freezing temperatures for an extended time. Note: you'll need an electric hook-up for this.

You can also add holding tank heaters, which are available in 12V DC and 120V AC models.

Special tip: Wrap your sewer hose in insulation or heat tape. This will help prevent ice dams from forming inside. Some veteran snow campers use their sewer hose only to dump their tanks; then they clean the hose and store it in a heated compartment immediately. A frozen hose is likely to split when you disconnect it.

Don't empty your tanks until you're ready to leave. This will help prevent ice from forming.

Fresh Water Hose

If you have a fresh water hook-up, consider buying a heated water hose to prevent freeze-ups or bursting. These are controlled with a thermostat and AC power is required to operate. Keep all hoses and cables off the ground or out of the snow.

Better still: fill your fresh water tank, and then disconnect your hose from the campground faucet and let the water drain out.

Ceiling Vents

Most RVs have roof vents or skylights, ideal places for heat to leak out. Seal off these spots by installing RV vent cushions, which fit securely into most standard-size vents simply by pushing them up into position. If you're handy, you can also make custom-size vent cushions out of thick foam padding, available at home improvement or fabric stores.

Furnace

Test the furnace before you hit the road. Clean the furnace area using compressed air or a soft brush to remove all dust, debris and insects. If your RV has only a heat pump or heat fins, consider an additional heat source as these systems don't work well when the outside temperature drops below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

And be aware that interior heat and moisture from your breath and a catalytic heater can create condensation in your RV. An electric dehumidifier, if you're plugged in, or a container of moisture absorbent will remove dampness from the air and help prevent corrosion, mold and mildew.

Propane

If you use propane to heat your rig be sure to come with full tanks, it's likely to last only a few days in really cold weather. There is a propane refill station called Pendelton Oil & Gas Co., located at 2680 N. Hwy 522, Questa, NM., which is only a 20 minute drive from 4K River Ranch.

We also offer a propane bottle exchange or purchase for 20 gallon tanks here at 4K River Ranch.

Other Considerations

Slide Outs

Ice and snow can accumulate on slide out awnings, preventing the awnings from rolling up properly when it's time to go. Clean the snow, ice and frost off the awning.

In addition, ice and snow can accumulate on slide gaskets and prevent the slide from retracting. Spraying RV antifreeze on the gaskets may help. And retracting the slide the night before you leave can save a lot of grief on a cold winter morning.

Emergency Items

When winter RV camping, the best planning includes preparing for the worst. Always have the following with you:

- Tire chains
- Weather band radio
- Extra blankets
- Extra warm clothing
- Sleeping bags rated for zero degree temperatures
- 5 gallons of drinking water in heated storage space
- A "white gas" camping stove (does not require propane)
- Gasoline-powered generator
- Extra propane tanks
- Blow dryer to defrost pipes and tanks
- Emergency GPS system
- Extra food
- Solar charging panels are good for re-charging house batteries
- Cash for unexpected fees or emergencies

Check the Weather Before You Come

In some parts of the country, winter storms can appear suddenly and are unforgiving. Be safe by checking with the National Weather Service to see what the forecast is on your way here.

Finally

At first glance, winter RV camping can seem like a huge amount of work. But the good news is that many of the add-ons only need to be installed once. After that, they can be left in place.