

TVs in RVs: An Ongoing Safety Issue

Television is here to stay. It greets us in the morning and ushers us to bed at night. For many families, the TV is their most reliable babysitter. For some, it's their best friend and personal advisor. Because no modern home is considered complete without a TV, virtually all RVs have one or more as a standard feature.

The TV in any stationary home, while it may stir up social controversy, is hardly a safety issue. But, in an RV, the size and location of the TV — especially in motor homes — is critical for the safety of the driver and passengers. What many RVers apparently forget when they are caught up in the emotional rush of choosing their perfect home on wheels is that it is on wheels and that they'll be speeding down the highway with it at 60 mph or more. Think about what would happen to your TV if you took your home for a joy ride on the main highway out of town. If you had to brake suddenly, it could go crashing into you or a family member with disastrous results. It's obvious that you'd have to find a way to secure the TV out of your way — and out of the way of anyone traveling with you. And this is precisely the case with TVs in RVs.

RV Consumer Group has always been adamant that TVs — large ones in particular — do not belong in a motor home cockpit (illustration 1). We've seen too many accidents in which overhead TVs have come down and shattered, causing injury, or have fallen on the driver or passenger with fatal results.



The TV is frequently centered over the cockpit in class A's. (Illustration 1)

Often, the problem is that the TV is loose or inadequately fastened in the first place. Recently, class C motor homes from one manufacturer were recalled because it was found that the mounting hardware used to fasten the TV to the cabinet was insufficient to secure it properly. (illustration 2). In this case, the manufacturer acknowledged that in some circumstances the TV could come loose, fall out of the cabinet, and



TVs in this class C were recalled because they were found to be loose in the cabinet. (illustration 2)

injure an occupant. They went so far as to install new cabinets in the affected vehicles, showing that they were aware of the possible danger to life and limb. If this is a potential problem in class C's, which generally have the TV positioned outside the cockpit, the problem is greatly magnified in class A's that have a large TV mounted overhead in the cockpit. A loose TV in this area is tantamount to a death threat. (illustration 3)



When one of our staff members gave this class A the once-over, he found the large overhead TV was loose. (illustration 3)

The worst possible position for the TV, and one that we've run across too often in class A's, is over the driver's head. The potential danger of this placement goes without saying (illustration 4). If the TV must be in the cockpit, then it is better off at dashboard level (illustration 5), as long as it's not too large and is integrated into the dashboard rather than simply mounted on a platform or pedestal as some manufacturers do.



The most dangerous location for the TV is over the driver's head. This placement makes no sense — period. (illustration 4)

Although you will sometimes find the TV well placed in an entertainment center, off-center in the house, on a living area shelf, or recessed into a wall, it must still be solidly secured to be safe (illustration 5).



A TV that's fastened into the dashboard and is not too large — like this one — may be acceptable in the cockpit. (illustration 5)



(illustration 6)

We've occasionally seen the TV simply sitting on a shelf, attached only by Velcro strips — we consider it not only a design flaw, but simply irresponsible (illustration 6). A TV situated like this one should be fastened to the shelf with screws.

Some manufacturers use special locks to hold the TV in place when it's on a table or shelf. Ideally, wall-mounted TVs should be secured with web strapping or a strong "safety belt" like the one shown in illustration 7. An unfastened or poorly-fastened TV anywhere in an RV constitutes a safety hazard.



This example, in a slide-in camper, shows the way we'd like to see TVs mounted in motor homes. (illustration 7)

Flat-screen TVs are now being introduced in high-end motor homes and trailers. While these devices are certainly lighter and more compact than the ones we grew up with, they can still cause damage if they fall out of a cabinet or off a shelf. And they're expensive to replace if they do, since they're usually offered as an option by those manufacturers that feature them.

We rant and rave about TVs in RVs because year after year we see manufacturers continuing to place larger and larger TVs overhead in the cockpits of motor homes, thereby increasing the safety risk. Because manufacturers must respond to the demands of the marketplace, awareness of the problem and complaints on the part of RVers could be the catalyst for overdue improvements in RV safety. Until then, we'll continue to rant and rave. ■

Sasha Sterling, RVCG Staff

For a more detailed look at the "whys and why nots" of TVs in the various RV types, please refer to the CD-ROM, [RV Walkabout](#) .



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