



Full-Wall Slideouts: Innovation or Nightmare?

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Full-Wall Slides offer potential disasters.

Now that RV slideouts have probably reached a limit with a maximum of four in motor homes and five in trailers and fifth wheels, manufacturers and their design engineers have come up with a new way to meet consumer demand for extra space—the "full-wall" slide.

Rexhall started the new trend with the T-Rex floorplan in 2004. Experimenting with the RoseAir 3690 DS, Rexhall

added two 25-foot, 9-inch slides on both sides of the motor home. Their Aerbus and RexAir lines also now include T-Rex models. Fleetwood came on board in 2005 with a 23-foot "full-wall" slide on the driver's side of its 2-slide Pace Arrow, and, in 2006, added this feature to models of their Providence, Discovery, and Excursion diesels. Not to be outdone, Monaco Corporation is offering a 30+-foot driver's-side slide on 2-slide models of its 2007 Beaver Marquis, Holiday Rambler Navigator, Monaco Executive, and Monaco Dynasty, and has recently added a 24-foot full-wall slide model to the 2006 Safari Cheetah. Apparently, manufacturers are finding that this potentially hazardous innovation is a real enticement to consumers.

RVers love slideouts because they can transform an RV into a moderate-sized apartment. Manufacturers love slideouts because they sell RVs. RVCG, however, has maintained from the outset that slideouts in motor homes are a safety issue. To install a slideout room, a manufacturer has to leave a large gap in the sidewall. This means that every slideout is a compromise in the motor home's structural integrity. To some extent, structural design problems with slideouts have been worked out in trailers and fifth wheels. However, the structural integrity of a motor home with four gaps in its sidewalls—or gaps of 23 to 30 feet in length in the case of full-wall slides—remains in question. Although most manufacturers claim they thoroughly test their products before releasing them to the public, to our knowledge such testing does not involve crash worthiness.

What happens when you get into a serious collision with a multiple-slide motor home? From the limited number of accidents we have studied, the data is still inconclusive, but the overall picture for slideouts doesn't look good. We know that a motor home's walls are dramatically weakened and that passengers riding in the living area are at risk. How much at risk? Again, the data is inconclusive.

RVCG regularly requests information from its members regarding safety issues—especially RV accidents. If you know of, observe, or hear of an accident involving an RV, please write or email us the details—with pictures, if possible. You could be instrumental in helping us compile enough data to yield significant answers on the safety of slideouts, particularly in motor homes. Only then can pressure be brought upon the industry to improve RV safety standards.



The motor home involved in this collision had a solid wall.

Question: What would have happened if it had been built with a full-wall slideout?

