

## SAFETY DETECTORS

I would like to remind everyone about the care, maintenance and replacement of the Smoke, Carbon Monoxide and LP Gas Detectors. All of these safety devices need to be replaced periodically because over time the sensors lose their detection ability.

Smoke detectors have a life span of ten years; some newer ones will have a replace by date on the detector. To maintain your smoke detector, vacuum and replace the battery annually. As part of getting your RV ready for a trip operate the test button, which insures that the electronics and battery are functioning. You should have one mounted on the ceiling or high on the wall in the kitchen area. For larger RV's you should consider adding an additional unit in the sleeping area. Also, check your emergency egress from the sleeping area to make sure it functions and you are familiar with its use. There are several different types of smoke detectors with a wide range of costs. Usually the least expensive UL approved unit is all that is necessary. Fancy digital readouts do nothing to enhance its function.

Carbon monoxide detectors have a life span of five to seven years. Carbon monoxide kills quickly by reducing the oxygen to the brain. The source of the carbon monoxide could be from a defective heat source (furnace), a generator or a nearby RV or truck. All RV's that include a factory-supplied generator have built in CO detectors. If you camp with other RV's that have generators, carry a portable generator, park overnight in a truck stop or might dry camp in the winter on a Caravan, you should definitely have a CO detector. It should be mounted in the bedroom area on the wall or ceiling. In the fall vacuum the unit and replace the battery to make sure you are ready for the heating season. Again, as part of your trip get-ready, test the electronics and battery.

LP (propane) gas detectors are the most ignored detector in your unit. It just sits there not making a sound and we assume everything is just fine. These detectors have a life span of five to seven years, after which they gradually lose their ability to detect gases. Some manufacturers are now building in a warning alarm to sound five years after the unit is powered on, in order to remind you to replace the detector. To maintain your LP detector use the test button once a month and vacuum annually. Propane detectors are relatively expensive (\$60 to \$75) compared to a smoke or CO detector. Also they are much harder to find and are not stocked by any of the major hardware dealers. You can purchase them at RV dealers or on-line.

Many of the older Airstreams did not come with an LP detector. This would be a wise addition. Just locate it close to the floor (LP gas is heavier than air) away from doors and windows. It should be wired directly to the battery so it stays on when you turn the power off in your unit. The positive wire going to the unit should be fused as close to the source of power as possible. Most of the detectors have a very low power draw from 46ma to 125ma, so it will not drain your battery.