

## Winter Bug Out By Joseph Parish

Let us now continue our train of thought on using campers as bug out retreats or possible BOV extensions. As with any emergency scenario it is impossible for us to select the perfect circumstances and time when a crisis will occur. Generally these situations will be beyond our control. It could happen in the summer or during a time when ole man winter is kicking up a storm.

As many who has been following this series of articles may know that my family and I are currently in a mobile status and are living in a camper. Our ultimate goal is to save enough money to obtain our own land. Unfortunately, we have taken on this task during the cool winter months. As such I have been researching and devising a few hints for those who may bug out in the wintertime.

For those people who may be considering duplicating what we are doing I would not recommend using pop-ups at all. You should use hard sided motor homes or trailers only. In fact the larger travel trailer that you can get would be your best bet. Our unit has 2 bedrooms, kitchen, living room area and dining section. It has a pop-out unit that expands the useable space greatly.

I have discovered several ways in which one can effectively prepare their camper for winter living. The first thing that you should do is be very generous with the caulking. Go around your camper and apply a bead of caulking to seal any of the unused outside secondary doors while placing a 1/2" foam 'stick-on' strip to the frames of the associated access doors. These simple actions will quickly cut down on any undesirable drafts.

You can eliminate a considerable amount of cold air from entering around your windows by merely covering them with a type of heat-shrink plastic wrap. Don't forget to seal the outside frame with caulking as well.

Heavy curtains not only add a warm feeling to the camper decor but helps to keep in the heat during those cold evenings. If it warms up in the daytime you can open them in order to allow fresh sunlight to enter the camper.

Usually outside air is generally dryer than that air found inside therefore during times when you are cooking or taking a shower you may wish to crank open a vent slightly or open a window a bit to allow the moist air inside to be released outside.

There is an item available from your local camping supply store known as "No Damp" crystals. These items help remove moisture from the air and should be distributed around the camper.

Keep in mind that most camper furnaces fans require at least a 15 Amp power service, therefore you will need the proper electrical supply to safely use this equipment. Another important point that should be brought out is that your propane stove tends to remove the oxygen from the campers surrounding air so never consider using it as a means of heating up your camper. My unit has both a carbon monoxide and propane monitors installed in addition to smoke detectors. If your camper does not have these valuable safety devices it is highly recommended that you purchase and install them.

If your holding tanks are not insulated or contained within the sealed floor space then additional precautions are recommended. You can carry container water for drinking and make use of public washrooms but that it a large pain to say the least. An alternative would be to add a porta-potty for convenience. However, I prefer to use my usual camper black and gray water holding tanks. It is suggested by the authorities that these holding tanks have RV antifreeze added to them in order to prevent freezing up. Add some skirting around the camper to keep the floors warm and protect your tanks from freezing. You may wish to consider the blue color insulation sheets used on homes for this task.

You should be able to winter out successfully in your camper if you follow the above suggestions. Place a 24"x8" foot board under each of the campers tires and the jack stand as well. I have found that when I lower my leveling jacks it is best to check for slack on a weekly basis. This keeps from have the movement feeling inside the camper.

Electrical heat tape should be attached to all water hose lines followed by the installation of foam pipe wrappers held securely by "good-ole" duct tape. Place these heater at any water holding lines you may have. If your lines come into an unheated closet a 40W bulb installed in a trouble light can prevent freezing.

If nothing else you will have a reliable home in the even of a major disaster or out of necessity to leave the city.

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