

Protect your toys from the wrath of winter

By Roger Phillips, McClatchy Newspapers

Winter weather is bound to be just around the corner, and many of your favorite toys will be sitting idle for months. You want to protect and repair your gear so it will be ready to go next spring.

Things with wheels and engines typically require the most attention because they can sustain serious and expensive damage during winter. We talked to experts and got some good advice on how to winterize your gear. Water is a major culprit for RV problems, and if you haven't drained and added RV antifreeze already, the damage could already be done.

"It only takes a teaspoon of water to break a water line," said Susan Hammill, service advisor for Dennis Dillon RV and Marine Center in Caldwell, Idaho.

But it may not be too late. The company does a while-you-wait winterizing service that takes about half an hour and starts at \$70, depending on what extra services you want. Whether you take it to a dealer or do it yourself, winterizing an RV's water/sewer system is critical to avoid costly water damage, but it's not the only thing you should take care of.

Batteries should be fully charged and removed from the RV, Hammill said. Motorhome owners should add a fuel stabilizer and start up the engine and generator once a month.

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