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GOOD TO KNOW – November 2011

Winter caravan holidays

Tips for winter holidaymakers

If you are thinking of going away after the really cold weather sets in, there are some basics you need to think about before you set off. Here are a few tips to help you on your way:

Don't start off too early in the morning if there has been an overnight frost or snow. If you wait a few hours you will find that many of the roads have been cleared and gritted.

Choose a route that avoids steep gradients.

Only drive short distances between stops and if the weather does take a turn for the worse, just pull off the road for a while and wait until road conditions improve.

Generally speaking, never brake suddenly, or take risks overtaking or stop on a slope.

Once you arrive at your destination – hopefully in daylight – you need to put up the winter awning to act as a snowproof windbreak and trap any warm air. Make sure all cables are out of the way so they won't be damaged by snow clearing vehicles.

° Avoid a build-up of condensation in your caravan: hang damp clothes out under the awning or in the "wet room" and leave to dry out.

° Put the water heater on when you arrive and leave it on to avoid damage from frost.

° Make sure you have enough gas so that you can keep the heating on permanently.

° Never cover up or block off air vents as this could be fatal.

° Keep the heating flue free of snow but it's better to fit a chimney extension.

° Do not leave 230 volt electricity cables lying on the ground where they risk freezing solid. Also, put wooden boards under wheels and legs so that they do not suffer frost damage.

° Always keep a shovel and broom in your car rather than in your caravan where they won't be readily accessible if your caravan gets snowed in!

° Make sure your awning has a floor covering even if it is only made up of simple Euro pallets and remember that they should be anchored when you are absent.

° A big build-up of snow could dent the roof of your caravan, so if you have no overhead roof protection, it should be propped up from inside.



FIGG INFO

- ° Never scrape ice off your caravan roof because you risk damaging it. Also a layer of ice provides extra insulation.
- ° Make sure you have the right sort of gas. You would usually need propane gas (with 5% butane) which can be used in Arctic conditions.
- ° Put wooden planks or boards underneath when you prop up your caravan so that the brace-operated legs do not freeze.
- ° Thin electrical heating coils plugged into a 230 volt installation can be put in the waste water tank.

Winter tyre regulations of selected holiday destinations

Austria: Winter tyres are obligatory in the Alpine republic from 1 November until 1 April if roads are icy, snow-covered or slushy. Signs with snow chains indicate stretches of road where chains are compulsory.

Switzerland: You can be fined at any time of the year if you are found driving on tyres unsuited to weather and road conditions. Signs indicate when snow chains are compulsory.

Italy: Winter tyres may be required on some roads. Usually winter tyres are compulsory in the Aosta valley between 15 October and 15 April.

France: Road signs will indicate when winter tyres are required on roads in mountain regions.

Czech Republic: Winter tyres are required on some sections of roads between 1 November and 30 April.

Slovakia: Winter tyres are required in wintry driving conditions.

Slovenia: Winter tyres are generally obligatory between 15 November and 15 March.

Source: Camping, Cars & Caravans

Technical

In Germany, the cross-section of an outside power cable for a caravan or motorcaravan must be 3 x 2.5 mm. and some campsites carry out checks for safety reasons. These cables can be bought from camping accessory stores.

Source: SCCV



FIGG INFO

Registrations in Europe are up slightly

The European market for leisure vehicles ended the 2010/2011 season up by a slender 1.1% (154,800 new registrations). This figure included a very encouraging 6.7% increase in motorcaravan registrations although the market for caravans was down by 3.5%. On the whole though the European caravanning market is doing quite well now accounting for 52.5% of all new registrations.

The very positive upward trend in new motorcaravan registrations is due to the following countries: Switzerland (+ 34.2%), Norway (+ 29.7%) and Sweden (+ 24.9%). However new registrations plunged in Portugal (down 35.1%).

As far as caravans are concerned there were downward trends in Spain (down 24.8%), Portugal (down 21%) and Denmark (down 19.9%). But Switzerland (+10.5%) and Germany (+8.2%) on the other hand did far better.

Source: ECF

Holidays in Europe

According to the latest statistics published by the European Commission last May (Flash Eurobarometer N° 328), 56% of EU citizens took a holiday in 2010. Only people who spent four consecutive nights away from home were included in the survey. This means that 44% of EU citizens did not get away in 2010, 41% of whom gave financial problems as their reason.

It is interesting to note that 36% of those EU citizens who went on holiday were seeking rest and recuperation.

Sensible precautions to take when travelling with your caravan or motorcaravan

- ° Do not tempt potential offenders by leaving valuables visible or accessible in your vehicle.
- ° When paying a bill make sure no-one sees how much cash you have on you.
- ° Wherever possible always stay at a campsite. There is far less likelihood of a break-in there than on a lay-by on a main road or in a motorway parking area where criminals have a guaranteed speedy escape route.



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In Memoriam

At the end of October 2011, we heard from our Slovak member club, Slovenska Federacia Campingu a Caravangu, that Dr. Dalimir Kubala had died at the age of 88 following a short illness.

Dr. Kubala was President of the Club Slovenskych Turistov for many years and was a well known figure in camping circles.

Many F.I.C.C. members knew Dr. Kubala well since he was a frequent participant at international F.I.C.C. rallies and attended many General Assemblies. We remember him with affection.

We offer our sincere condolences to his family and his club.

