

## 1<sup>st</sup> Timers 101



We'd like to welcome you to your very first Escapade! Congratulations on your decision to take your RVing experience to the next level.

You're in for an incredibly fun-filled week. With so many activities packed into just five days, it's easy to get overwhelmed, and possibly miss something you really want to attend. We'd like you to arrive well informed of what to expect so you'll get the most out of your Escapade. This is the reason the **1<sup>st</sup> Timers 101** was created. This series of information will address topics with first time attendees in mind.

**What is a 1<sup>st</sup> Timer?** A 1<sup>st</sup> Timer is someone attending Escapade for the first time. Not all 1<sup>st</sup> Timers are new Escapees. Each year there are attendees who have been Escapee RV Club members for many years, finally making their way to an Escapade, while others are new SKPs. Either way, we're happy you're here!

**How do I know where to go for parking?** About a month before Escapade you'll receive your parking permit and your entry ticket via email. Your parking permit will need to be printed before you arrive and displayed in the lower, left corner of your windshield. Have your entry ticket readily available (printed or electronically) when you arrive. These will help our parking crew know where to set you up for the week. As you get close to the event location, there will be a lot of directional signs leading you to Escapade. As you drive into the fairgrounds, you'll be greeted by our Parking Team. These folks will be excited to see you and their enthusiasm shows! Their bright orange attire makes them easy for you to identify.

**What to expect when you arrive:** As mentioned above, your parking permit should already be displayed on your windshield, and your entry ticket should be readily available to show to the Parking Team. The entry ticket lets the Parking Team know what days you're registered for. If you are arriving before your scheduled arrival date, or need to make changes to your reservations, you'll be directed to our Customer Service Team, who will take care of you before you're parked. Most likely you'll be arriving along with many other attendees, and the area gets very congested. Having your documents ready helps keep the line flowing smoothly.

A Parking Team member will direct you to your parking site and help get you safely parked. A removeable non-residue sticker, with your departure date will be placed on your rig, where it can be seen from the road. Each day, every RV is counted by the fairgrounds & Escapade security personnel. Please help us by leaving the round sticker on your RV during Escapade.

Once parked, please place your Parking Permit in the windshield of your tow/towed vehicle for re-entry to the fairgrounds throughout the event.

Once you've been parked, make your way to Registration. You'll exchange your ticket for a Welcome Bag and identification badge. You're expected to wear your identification badge at all times, as this is your official credential throughout Escapade and allows you access into all events, including coming and going from the fairgrounds. All buildings and gates will be monitored.

**Holding and Fresh Water Tanks:** Plan to arrive with empty holding tanks and a full freshwater tank. If you've chosen to park in the Dry Camping/Boondocking section, this may seem obvious. For those parking in the full hook-up or electric/water sections you may wonder why this is important. In a rally situation, when hundreds of rigs are parked together, it can be quite taxing on the fairground's electric, water and sewer systems. There may be situations when many people may be using water at the same time. It's possible the pressure could be compromised. In those cases, having your water tank filled and being able to use from your own tank is very helpful. Arrive with your holding tanks empty for the same reason. Be considerate by taking some stress off the fairground's sewer system. If you're hooked into 30 amp service please only use ONE air conditioner.

**1<sup>st</sup> Timer Icon:** When you receive your name badge at Escapade, you'll notice there's a "1<sup>st</sup>" icon printed on it, which distinguishes you as being there for your first time. Escapees enjoy sharing information with other Escapees, and especially 1<sup>st</sup> Timers. Folks will take notice and be excited to welcome you.

**Get involved – Volunteer!** Did you know that Escapade is primarily run by an incredible team of volunteers? Near the Registration tables, you'll find the Volunteer/Information booth. There you'll find lists of volunteer opportunities and sign-up sheets. A few of the positions available are golf cart transportation, popcorn booth, hospitality clean-up, greeters, etc. Most of these jobs require just three hours of your time. Volunteering is a great way to get involved, and it's fun too! If you enjoy volunteering and like what you see, you'll have a chance to sign up to potentially be on staff for the next Escapade.

**General Assembly:** You'll see this mentioned quite a bit throughout the programming. General Assembly refers to the building where opening ceremony, evening entertainment, and closing ceremony are held. Seminars expecting larger attendance are also held there. The location of General Assembly will be clearly marked on your map.

**Hospitality:** Hospitality is the "hub" of Escapade. Registration will be located there when you first arrive. It's where you'll find our Coffee & Donut team each morning, and where you'll find the Wi-fi Café. It's a place to relax for conversation between seminars, etc. Some socials take place in Hospitality. The location will be clearly marked on your map.

**Stay updated on Escapade information:** As we get nearer the start of Escapade, be watching your inbox for Escapade Extras. These are official newsletters with updates and important information regarding 'all things Escapade'. Once Escapade begins, you'll keep receiving them daily, with notifications, reminders, updated information, and additions to Escapade programming. The Escapade Extras are also printed and will be available in Hospitality each day for your convenience.

In addition to Escapade Extras, we created an Escapade mobile event app exclusively for attendees. The app contains the most up-to-date schedule of seminars and other Escapade events, as well as important alerts, reminders, and more. Information on downloading the app will be included in your Escapade Extras emails.

We also have our Escapade Facebook group for those who are social media savvy. Attendees gather here in advance of the event to get to know each other, get to know our vendors and speakers, and share the excitement of Escapade! Once the event kicks off, the group is also a great place to organize impromptu gatherings, ask last-minute questions, and share information about lost and found items. Information on joining the Facebook group will be shared with you via Escapade Extras.

In other words, it is important to check your email for those Escapade Extras!

And, for those who prefer tangible maps and program guides, we have you covered, too! Upon your arrival at Escapade, you'll receive a program book, which contains all the important information about Escapade, including a facility map, daily activities, the seminar schedule and detailed descriptions of each.

**Seminars & Discussion Panels:** With more than 60 seminars and discussion panels being presented throughout Escapade you'll have a lot of information to absorb. All seminars last exactly an hour and begin and end on time. Seminar rooms are climate controlled. It's important to wear comfortable clothing and consider bringing a bottle of water along. Some presenters will provide hand-outs and some won't. It's a good idea to have a pen and pad along for keeping notes. Since it'll be impossible to attend every seminar, partners sometimes choose to "get more bang for their buck" by going separate directions and attending different ones and then discuss what they learned later.

**What is The ROW?** Once you arrive and start browsing through your program book you'll see mentions of The ROW. In the early years of Escapade, The ROW was exactly as it sounds: representatives of Chapters, BoFs and Escapee RV parks all parked together in a row with tables lined up in front of their rigs. Attendees came out to visit and learn all about these groups. Fast forward to today, where The ROW has a dedicated space inside a building. Representatives still set up their information in rows and attendees can now comfortably visit

and learn all about the various groups within the Escapees RV Club. You'll want to make a point of visiting The ROW and get to know more ways to connect with Escapees across the country and throughout the year.

**FYI...**

**Chapters** represent groups of Escapees from various geographical areas.

**BoFs** (Birds of a Feather) are groups within the Escapees RV Club, representing special interests for like-minded SKPs. A few examples are Geo-cachers BoF, Photography BoF, Boomers, HAM Radio BoF, and one of our newest, Nomadic Families BoF, etc. Chapters and BoFs are open to all Escapees.

**SKPs** is a nickname for Escapees.

**Socials**: Organized socials and happy hours are a very popular tradition at Escapade. Socials take place in seminar rooms, beginning at 4:30 each afternoon. The social schedule is extensive and includes socials hosted by various BoFs, Chapters and other groups. Published socials are open to all attendees. Look for a listing in the Escapade Extras, as well as on the mobile event app. You're welcome to attend whatever social you have an interest in. These socials are a fun way to unwind from your long day, meet new friends and have some fun. They're also informal so come as you are.

**What to bring to a social**: At most of the socials, it's customary to bring what's called your "set-up". A "set-up" consists of the following; your own plates (paper is perfectly fine), utensils and napkins. You're also generally asked to bring a beverage of choice for yourself and a snack or appetizer that can be shared with the group. The appetizer may be anything you choose to provide and doesn't have to be fancy or complicated. It's a good idea to arrive at Escapade with your social and/or happy hour snacks thought out, so you won't be caught off guard and feel a need to rush off to the store for something.

Some socials provide food, so your beverage and "set-up" is all you'll need to bring. Occasionally there may be a social that provides everything. In that case, just bring yourself!

All information regarding socials will be clearly stated so there's no need to guess.

**Happy Hours**: Many times, informal happy hours spring up, with small groups of neighbors in the various parking areas. Don't be surprised if you're invited to participate. **RV Country** (our exclusive RV dealer for Escapade) hosts themed happy hours each day at 4:00. They provide everything. Their location will be clearly marked on your maps.

**1<sup>st</sup> Timers Social – Meet & Greet**: We'd like to officially invite you to the *1<sup>st</sup> Timers Social – Meet & Greet!* This fun event is hosted by some of our second timers who are anxious to see you get off to a great start to your week. It will take place at 5:00 PM Sunday, after opening ceremony. This social is intended to bring all 1<sup>st</sup> Timers together, giving you the opportunity to

socialize and get to know each other, while learning a few nuances that can make your Escapade experience even better. It's a fun, informal time just for you!

**The Escapade Market:** The Escapade Market is comprised of some of the friendliest exhibitors in the RV community! Many of them are Escapee members and RVers themselves, and truly enjoy being there. They offer a wide array of competitively priced products and services for you to purchase. The Escapade Market hours are Sunday, 9:00am – 2:30pm and Monday – Wednesday, 9:00am – 4:00pm. Feel free to visit the market as many times as you'd like. You're sure to find something you need or want to add to your "wish-list".

**Donuts for CARE:** Every morning during Escapade our Coffee and Donut team will be up bright and early, serving free coffee and selling donuts with a smile (for a small cash fee). Wednesday morning we'll be having a donut auction for CARE. In case you aren't familiar with CARE, it stands for Continuing Assistance for Retired Escapees. You can learn about CARE at their Tuesday seminar. Buy a donut and your generous donation will support CARE! You'll find information regarding Donuts for CARE in your program book.

**What should I wear?** Escapade is a casual event. Plan to wear comfortable clothing and shoes suitable for walking longer distances.

**Escapade event shirts and hats:** Will be available to pre-purchase and pick up once you arrive at the event. Although it isn't a requirement that you purchase one, it certainly adds to the fun if you're wearing the event's official gear. A few shirts and hats will be available for purchase at the Escapees Club Booth once you arrive, however they always sell out very quickly. It's best to order online and know yours is waiting for you upon your arrival, rather than risk your size not being available.

Each day during Escapade, there's a posted "shirt color of the day". Although you won't have Escapade shirts for all those days, wearing the official color is one more way to join in the comradery. You'll see our "Old Timers" showing off shirts from many previous Escapades.

### ***Here's what you can expect at Escapade***

**A busy week:** Escapade has something to keep you busy from morning until night. Come stocked with food for preparing some quick meals. Concessions are available; keep in mind however, lines can sometimes be long in between seminars. There may be times you find it faster to have something on-hand in your rig that you can grab and go.

**Comaraderie:** Escapees are generally very inclusive. SKPs love to welcome new attendees. A lot of friendships are formed at Escapades, many last lifetimes.

**Enjoy yourself!** Come prepared to experience all the wonderful opportunities available, share time with your peers and learn everything you can about the RV lifestyle. Most importantly, come prepared to have fun! When Escapade ends, we hope you'll say, "Wow, what a week!" and leave with an overload of information, many new friends, and the understanding that you're not alone on your journey.

***We're looking forward to seeing you at Escapade!***