



Roanoke Valley Corvette Club

2020 version

Caravan Guide



RVCC CARAVANING GUIDE

- 1. Introduction**
 - 2. Emergency Contact Information**
 - 3. Car Preparation**
 - 4. Pre-Caravan Brief**
 - 5. On The Road**
 - 6. Rubber Band Effect**
 - 7. Vehicle Positions**
 - 8. Two Way Radios**
 - 9. Cell Phones**
 - 10. Stops**
 - 11. Suggestions**
 - 12. Summary**
- Notes**



1. Introduction



Caravanning is a major part of the Roanoke Valley Corvette Club (RVCC) and one reason why most of us belong to the club. RVCC has a number of experienced caravaners and others that are fairly new to it. By design, car club caravans are events that afford a group of members the opportunity to enjoy camaraderie with fellow members, the pleasure of driving their Corvettes, and doing so by going to different locations everyone can enjoy. A caravan is NOT always easy nor are caravans predictable. Members electing to go on a caravan should have an understanding things will not happen according to plan. Murphy's Law is always in play: cars will break; we'll get lost; Departments of Transportation will pop-up and detour our route; the price of an attraction will have changed; breakfast won't be hot; some drivers want to go fast others slow; and you won't win the 50/50 or Poker Run every trip. It's all part of the caravanning experience and why this pamphlet has been developed. It's designed to make sure we are all on the same page and to help eliminate some of the problems normally encountered on a typical caravan.

After you've read through the pamphlet please note that we, as a club, can always expand its areas via lessons learned. This pamphlet is intended to be a living document which will be improved through participant input. We all won't agree on every facet of each trip, but together we can improve future caravanning experiences by communicating. Finally, let's all remember each member has a voice in what we do and where we go as a club. The Special Events Chair, Events Committee, and those that help them are volunteers that seek event inputs at each club meeting. They take their time to put these events together, often at their own expense, so let's help them by having a good time, by being appreciative of their efforts, and by giving them ideas and constructive feedback.

2. Emergency Contact Information

If you have not filled out an Emergency Contact Card identifying your chosen emergency points of contacts, please do so prior to going. This information will be carried on each trip by caravan leaders so they can notify those you have designated should an emergency warrant doing so. See #9 below.

3. Car Preparation

Caravanning can mean we will be driving extended distances in our Corvettes. We all know things break but it is important that each of us do a bit of pre-trip inspection and maintenance to minimize break downs and leaving our Corvette at who knows where. Pre-trip checks by yourself or mechanic should cover a thorough inspection of your car before starting out. This will go a long way in reducing breakdown risks. Most car preparation is common sense inspecting. You will also want to give your car a quick visual inspection each day to ensure everything remains in the green: fluids are at the proper levels; tire pressures are in range; and the car is overall okay. It is important each of us fuel up prior to the caravan and at the end of each day so that our group starts out with full gas tanks.

4. Pre-Caravan Brief

Each caravan will have a Caravan Lead who is the point for the group. In some cases the caravan leads will pre-brief the event prior to the event day. Normal pre-caravan briefs will include but not limited to:



pre-staging, route, caravan speed, in-route stops, radios, final destination point, other caravan matters, and Caravan Lead instructions. If you aren't aware of some trip facets before going please ask. It's important we are all on the same page and know the trip and caravan details/instructions.

5. On The Road

Regardless of the number of cars in a caravan the following rules apply. Caravan safety is paramount. The Caravan Leader will designate a cruising speed that is best for the number of cars in the caravan and to keep the group within posted limits. Sections of the caravan will have cars with two way radios that will provide the Caravan Leader with group status within the caravan. If you are not comfortable with caravan speeds you can communicate that (if possible) or are free to drop out of the caravan and go at your preferred pace. Everyone will have route stops and final destination information and can meet the group at those locations if they pull out. Those in the caravan should understand they are responsible for their driving. Law enforcement won't give the group or individuals a pass because they are part of a Corvette caravan. Safe and lawful driving is the responsibility of each driver.

- **Highways** - Normally, on multiple lane highways the Caravan will generally "drive right and pass left". There will be exceptions, for example if the Caravan Leader needs to move into left lanes to stay on the route at an interchange or intersection or pass a line of slower moving, non-caravan, vehicles. As a group we should only use the left lane to pass slower vehicles. If you're in the left lane and another vehicle wants to pass, momentarily move right allowing them to do so. **Note there are no fouls for passing slower caravan members, this minimizes the caravanning aggravation factor. If you pass a caravan member do so safely.** Look ahead when driving; it helps predict upcoming turns, route changes, minimizes Rubber Banding, etc.

- **Etiquette** - You must allow other cars to pass across the caravan as they merge into or out of other lanes. Caravanning is a process where cars follow each other close enough that often non-caravan vehicles cannot pass through or across the caravan. Not allowing others to maneuver is not only discourteous it is illegal. Caravaners should follow all vehicles at a safe distance and remember we are representing a community of Corvette owners. The Rubber Band effect will be discussed in a following paragraph; however, space distances should be maintained between vehicles at all times but especially when in front or behind less nimble cars or trucks. Remember, caravanning is not a speed event and it's not about showing the public how fast your Vette is or how great your pipes sound. Importantly, let's cut 18 wheelers a break. Don't cut them off and give them room to maneuver. If our caravan line goes by a semi and then changes lane, be sure you're clear of passed vehicles before making the lane change. Be cognizant of large and slow moving trucks merging at weigh scale areas and on ramps.

- **Back Roads** - Driving on secondary roads is inherently different than driving on highways. As we all know, there are different elements and conditions to consider on these roads. The challenges when meeting the "unexpected" are impacted by speed, visibility, spacing distance, traffic, road conditions, weather, hazards, and et al. Some drivers are more comfortable on winding and twisting roads than others so it's especially important to remember caravanning isn't a speed event, and we aren't on a road course. Being alert, being patient, and driving in a safe manner should be amplified. One driver's comfort level is not another driver's and the group should adjust accordingly, so communicate and set a pace for the entire group. One final comment, we may get lost on these types of roads, bear with it, it's part of the experience.

6. Rubber Band Effect

There is an inherent danger when travelling in a caravan, it's called the Rubber Band Effect. A line of cars running close to each other have a tendency to change car-to-car distance lengths when the leader, or



anyone, makes a speed change. This action is called “rubber banding” and it is the result of cumulative reaction times.

As the caravan speeds up, the distance between cars at the front increases. The following car speeds up to close the gap and likely then slows up as the car in front is approached. As this effect ripples back through the caravan line the rate of change of speed actually increases. It is not unusual for a 10 mph speed change at the front of the line to result in a 40 to 50 mph burst at the back of the pack – along with corresponding slamming on of brakes when the car in front is caught.

The reverse is also true and uniformly more dangerous. The lead car slows. The next car takes a split second to react and then has to slow more. As this ripples back through the caravan line it progressively gets worse and may cause cars to lock up their brakes to avoid rear end collisions.

Experienced caravaners are aware of the rubber band phenomena and our Caravan Leaders will make speed changes slowly. If the caravan is running close together, **drivers in the middle and rear of the line need to be very aware of rubber banding and be constantly extra vigilant.** We will use two way radios to minimize RBE as much as possible but paying attention is paramount!

It is equally important not to tail gate no matter the size of the caravan. Leave more than a normal comfortable amount of space between you and the car in front of you. Also, be alert for speed changes and compensate without over accelerating. If the caravan is speeding up, accelerate smoothly and early before a large gap is created. If the caravan is slowing up, brake early and as gently as possible. The longer you delay and the harder you brake the less time the person behind you has to react. Remember that your actions are amplified as they ripple back through the caravan.

While our Caravan Leader will make changes slowly, remember that you may have a couple of cars or an 18-wheeler diving through the caravan line to make a late approach to an exit right in front of you. It can and will happen at any point in the line. Hopefully two way radio operators will signal the lead and we can all adjust safely.

Because “rubber banding” is a part of normal caravan movement, be alert and allow extra room when “civilians” are mixed into the caravan line because they probably do not have a clue about the rubber banding effect. Again, be extra alert when the vehicle in front of you or behind you is not a Corvette. As mentioned previously it’s important to look ahead regardless of your following distance at any given time. **Most caravan accidents are a result of rear-end collisions caused by following too closely combined with “rubber banding”.** Avoid distracted driving. Be aware of your environment and anticipate!

Lead Speeds – All Leads need to remember the effects of their speed merging on to any road effects the group. Rapid accelerations, for example 30 mph to 65 – 70 mph onto a highway, leaves the tail cars in a “can’t catch-up” position. Merging slower than the posted speed limit can be done safely and helps the group keep up.

Same applies when making turns from one road onto another, when stopping for Stop Signs, Lights, and Yield Signs. Leads need to be patient slow down and remember the Rubber Band effect.

“REMEMBER, when you lead a caravan your Corvette is “Approximately 18 FEET LONG”. **Multiply that distance X the number of cars in the caravan, plus safe spacing between cars, that is the “LENGTH OF THE ENTIRE CARAVAN.”** Considering the acceleration and de-acceleration of each car is not the same, the total length of a caravan can be significant.



7. Vehicle Positions

Although there are no assigned vehicle positions when we caravan, the Lead may request a Middle Lead and a Tail End Lead to assist in keeping the group together and advising the Lead of caravan status. This includes but is not limited to advising the Lead when parts of the caravan get separated, rubber band effect is impacting safety, and other details concerning the group.

Jumping Leads – When a Mid-Lead is assigned they are there for a reason, Mid means middle of the Pack in a larger group. Unless there's a reason for cars to go around the Mid Lead or shuffle to a position behind them, please be mindful not to shuffle the Mid-Lead out of his/her position in the middle of the line.

Vehicles Other Than Corvettes – Corvettes are low and are hard for Leads to see those Vettes behind them, especially in traffic and on highways. Even moderate sized vehicles block the Lead's rear view. As such, vehicles that "are not" Corvettes are asked to stage at the tail behind the last Corvette in the caravan. Staging non-Corvettes to the rear of the line eliminates blind spots and allows Lead, Mid-Lead, and Tail Leads to monitor the entire caravan and most importantly contributes to safety.

Other Clubs – When another Corvette Club travels with our club their Lead will position behind our last Corvette (our Tail Lead). All non Corvettes, regardless of club association, will stage behind "the other club's last" Corvette.

8. Two Way Radios

The club will use two way radios on caravan trips. All members are encouraged to bring and use their two way radios. The Caravan Lead will assign caravan position monitors to let him/her know the status of their assigned section of the line. Members who have information they'd like to pass to the caravan are free to do so. Please use radio discipline and be sure to press, wait a second, and then talk to prevent partial messages from being sent; this will minimize duplicate message traffic. As with cell phones, hand-held device laws apply and members are encouraged to use hands free devices or let their navigator work the radio. Normally **Channel 7 Sub 1** is used for caravans; however, the Caravan Lead will brief what channel to use. Please note, avoiding unnecessary radio chatter will help minimize caravan aggravation. Periodic radio checks will be performed to make sure we are all still linked.

9. Cell Phones

Everyone should have a wallet size club member telephone list card. If you don't have one please inquire about getting one. These are helpful in keeping in touch with fellow caravaners, letting someone know you have a problem, if you're pulling off, and many other reasons. All drivers should be aware of hands free device laws and compliance. Of course **there should be no reason a driver is texting when driving**, let your navigator handle that.

10. Stops and Separating From the Group

Scheduled stops and their locations will be announced during pre-caravan briefs. If anyone in the caravan needs to make an unscheduled stop let someone in the group know so we don't think something happened. Same applies if you get separated from the group. Take advantage of Cell Phones or TW



Radios and communicate your intentions. During the pre-caravan brief if you feel stop distances are too great please let the event coordinator or lead know your concerns.

11. Suggestions

As mentioned, if you have a suggestion on how to make the caravanning experience better or have ideas on places to go let our President, VP, or Special Events Chair know. It's our club; let's make it the best it can be.

12. Summary

We hope you find the information in this pamphlet helpful. It's short and to the point so you can carry it in your "room challenged" Corvette if you'd like. However, its main purpose is to get us all on the same page on caravanning methodologies so our trips are safe, enjoyable, and we can minimize some of the problems involved with any caravan.

The Events Chair, Events Committee, and others put together fun packed events schedules each year. Caravanning will be a major part of our club get togethers affording us an excellent time to have fun driving our Corvettes and going to great locations. In closing please remember, caravanning is about having *Fun, but "Not" Mandatory Fun*. Be courteous, obey the laws, remember Road Etiquette, Rubber Banding, and caravanning procedures. Finally we are cruising, not racing. There's no reason to tailgate, text & drive, or be unsafe.

Please see the below area for recording notes.

V/R

Ray Brassley

Notes