

## 2017 GreenEdge Supply Tip Archive

### May 1, 2017: Keeping Cool in the Warmer Months

Michelle Tascione

With spring comes an unpredictable climate, which means determining when to turn on your AC can be difficult. In order to keep temperatures comfortable and to keep your budget intact this time of year, utilize ceiling fans and window or freestanding fans as much as possible.

By taking advantage of energy efficient ceiling fans you can set your A/C at a higher temperature, thereby saving energy and saving you money. A ceiling fan won't directly cool the air by itself, but it helps to circulate the cool air better. By moving air around, it will lower your body temperature, but it will not cool the room itself. So if you are not in the room, be sure to turn the fan off so you are not wasting any energy. Freestanding fans act the same way.

If you want to use a window fan to take advantage of the cooler night time air, place the fan in the window once the sun goes down. Be sure to remove it and close your windows before the sun rises though, or you may be blowing warm air into your house. Also, use energy efficient curtains and blinds to deflect as much heat from the sun as you can.

Have a question for us? Refer to the [Request A Quote](#) page and let us help you!

### April 24, 2017: Now You See It – Now You Don't

Robert J. Kobet, LEED Faculty (ret)

One of the keys to a successful tiny house is solving design challenges creatively. This often requires manufacturers and do it yourselves to think outside the box, or better yet, reconsider the box and what is in it.

A good example of this is the unconventional approaches to providing sleeping accommodations shown below. Each design is traditionally known as a Murphy bed. The bed, which normally occupies floor space in a fixed manner, is instead deployed when in use and stowed when not needed. In *Illustration A* the bed is combined with a sofa. The bed is positioned using the sofa as a base and a surrogate headboard.



*Illustration A – Bed and sofa combination*

In *Illustration B* the cabinet contains bunk beds. As in *Illustration A*, the floor area must be clear for the bunk beds to be deployed. In a tiny house this typically means the furniture that occupies the space in front of the fold down beds is easily and conveniently movable. In a tiny house either unit can be used as the primary sleeping accommodation or as a second bed.



*Illustration B – Fold down bunk beds*

Murphy beds are an alternative to the more common sleeping loft in tiny houses. They may take up a generous portion of the main living space, but they eliminate the need for steep ladders or steps, thus providing a solution for those who cannot climb. Once deployed they provide comfortable sleeping in a space that allows for easy access without the restricted headroom in most lofts.

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#### April 10, 2017: Squeezing Out Storage Space

Robert J. Kobet, LEED Faculty (ret)

Providing adequate storage in a tiny house is always challenging. It is often a matter of capitalizing on residual space anywhere unused volume can be found, and matching the opportunity to what needs stored.

According to Bob Vila, host of *This Old House* and all around home design expert, even the slimmest of places can be transformed into useful storage. At only four inches wide the storage adjacent to the refrigerator shown below can be used to hold spices, oils, some packaged foods like sugar and pancake mix. It could even be configured to hold cereal boxes, and rolled oat containers – anything thinner than the available shelf width.



*Maximizing Storage by Using Residual Space*

The shelving shown is assembled using nominal 1"x4" wood for the perimeter frame and shelves, and 1/4" dowel rod. The assembly rolls on small furniture casters assisted by a simple handle. Bracing the shelving to frame

connections with metal tees and screwing and gluing the parts together stiffens the unit. The wood can be finished as desired. Felt can be applied to keep the unit from scuffing the baseboard, which in turn keeps the unit away from the wall.

Storage in this location needs to be as open as possible so as not to impede the proper operation of the refrigerator. Any questions about this concern should be directed to the manufacturer.

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### March 27, 2017: Getting Ready to Get Small?

Robert J. Kobet, LEED Faculty (ret)

In the eighties, Steve Martin, one of my favorite comedians, did a hilarious routine that started with the suggestion, “*Let’s get small.*” But *getting small*, like *living small*, may be easier said than done.

The psychology of space and our relationship to the built environment is complex. We are creatures of habit, and form our behavior in response to countless experiences and stimuli. Most of us prefer stability to chaos, and familiarity to the unknown. Whether we are comfortable or feel secure is often a matter of how we cope with our surroundings and what we are used to having in our lives.

So, for many transitioning from conventional living accommodations to a tiny house can take some getting used to. From purging one’s possessions to living in a smaller physical space where most everything needs to provide for more than one function or need, things can be disconcerting. In order to successfully transition to a tiny house we recommend:

- Visit a tiny house and talk with people who have lived in them.
- Do your homework. There are lots of Internet links that deal with tiny house living.
- Be objective about your likes and dislikes. Be sure the tiny house you choose is the right one for you.
- Get the maximum personal and financial benefit from any transition gesture – donate clothes to charity, gift a family in need, etc. Feel good about what you do.
- If possible, transition gradually. Do not “shock your system” unnecessarily.

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### March 13, 2017: Need a Skirt?

Robert J. Kobet, LEED Faculty (ret)

In previous tips we have discussed the importance of weatherizing a tiny house. Adding a skirt to a tiny house can be a part of that strategy while providing additional benefits. Skirting has energy efficiency benefits because it reduces wind chill of the floor plane in the winter and creates a tempered, buffering airspace under the tiny house. The result will be a warmer floor and less infiltration through floor penetrations, reducing unwanted drafts. Skirting can also contribute to reducing the exposure of water supplies and drain lines that may be subject to freezing.

Skirting can be installed to protect the tiny house in winter, then partially or completely removed during warmer months. This allows for access to anything stored under the tiny house, from garden tools to bicycles and canoes. Properly configured with limited access, it can also create sheltered space for pets, even when let outside for short periods. Conversely, unwanted pets can be kept away.



*84 Tiny Living, Degsy Tiny House with skirting*

Many mobile home and tiny house owners install skirting to give the dwelling a more permanent look. There are many types and styles available. Most are relatively inexpensive and can be installed by the homeowner with simple tools. Caution should always be used, and particular care should be taken, when drilling into or attaching anything to a tiny house. In all cases, skirting materials should be waterproof, and installed with fasteners that will not rust. Never install any skirting material that is noncombustible.

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#### February 27, 2017: Ready to Roll? Tip Two

Robert J. Kobet, LEED Faculty (ret)

One of the most desirable aspects of tiny houses is their mobility. But whether a tiny house is moved once or several times, some basic safety concerns must be adhered to. Our friends at NAPA [www.NAPAAutoCare.com](http://www.NAPAAutoCare.com) have a number of great suggestions that apply to towing a tiny house. For instance,

#### **Always use the safety chains.**

All trailers have safety chains. This is a critical last line of defense should the trailer come unattached from the tow vehicle. Always connect your safety chains to either the loops on the receiver hitch or to the chassis of the tow vehicle. Tiny house owners should consult the manufacturer of the tow vehicle to insure the entire hitch assembly and safety chain installation and connections are correct.

If the chains are too long they may drag on the ground, increasing the possibility of a hazardous snag. Shorten the chain to an acceptable length by shortening the chain itself, or advancing the links in the receiver hitch so the chains only have enough length to allow a full, unimpaired turn without dragging.

The size and gauge of the chain links should be in accordance with industry recommendations for the size of the hitch and anticipated load. Safety chains that are damaged or show excessive wear should be changed out for new ones.

Lastly, safety chains should be unencumbered and not used for any other purpose. Never use safety chains to secure objects to the tiny house.

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#### February 13, 2017: Ready to Roll? Tip One

Robert J. Kobet, LEED Faculty (ret)

One of the most desirable aspects of tiny houses is their mobility. But whether a tiny house is moved once or several times, some basic safety concerns must be adhered to. Our friends at NAPA [www.NAPAAutoCare.com](http://www.NAPAAutoCare.com) have a number of great suggestions that apply to towing a tiny house. For instance,

#### **Use proper loading techniques.**

If you are loading a tiny house with materials, furniture, or other household goods, proper balance is critical for a safe trip. You don't want the heaviest items all the way at the front or all the way at the back of the tiny house trailer. Most trailers are designed to support the weight of the item(s) over the center of the trailer. Loading a trailer too heavy at the front results in too much tongue weight, unloading the front tires, and making the tow vehicle hard to control. Overloading the rear of the tiny house has the opposite effect, unloading the rear tires, which again makes the tow vehicle hard to control.

In addition, it is always better for stability to keep the heaviest items low and well secured. The idea is to eliminate any shifting of the load that could cause unexpected hazards or damage to any contents during transport. In all cases it is better to have additional vehicles towed separately or driven to the new location.

Before hauling anything it is always prudent to research the route and be sure there are no adverse road conditions, weight limitations or other obstacles to a safe trip.

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#### January 23, 2017: Moving a Tiny House

Robert J. Kobet

<http://bit.ly/2iwigroH>

The ability to move a tiny house is one of the many reasons people invest in them. Mobility is a key asset, but it comes with its own cautions and requirements. Tiny home owners must be familiar with all of the ordinances in force along the anticipated route, and be equipped to handle the load. For starters,

- *Your tiny house must have a current registration tag, working brake lights and turn signals.* This applies to both factory built and DIY owner built tiny houses.
- *It typically must not exceed 8'6" wide and 13'6" high and meet all other Department of Transportation requirements.* These should be verified for each state the trip will take you through.

- *You will likely need at least a ¾ ton vehicle to comfortably tow a tiny house, but a larger vehicle may be required based on the actual size and the weight of contents.* Vehicles with dual rear wheels offer increased stability and stopping power. The hitches must be compatible and able to bear the tongue weight safely.
- *When renting a commercial vehicle, be sure to verify if they permit towing a tiny house.*
- *In all cases, have the proper insurance.*
- *Some states have bridges which are lower than 13'-6" and may not be capable of carrying a tiny house and its towing vehicle.* This is particularly true of back country roads. It's very important to research your route to avoid these potential hazards.

84 Lumber and GreenEdge Supply share your interest in tiny houses. We have in house expertise to answer any of your tiny house moving questions. Feel free to visit us online at [www.84tinyliving.com](http://www.84tinyliving.com) or [www.greenedgesupply.com](http://www.greenedgesupply.com), stop into one of our retail stores or visit our tiny house models in Eighty-Four, PA. We look forward to seeing you!

### January 9, 2017: Preparing Your Tiny House to Move

Robert J. Kobet

Mobility is one of the best attributes of a tiny house. But, like any mobile structure there are things to consider before a move is made. Among them are:

- All of the trailer components – frame, brake lights and brake light connections, turn signals, hitch, and hitch restraints should be inspected and in good working order.
- Pack or repack heavier items and locate them on the floor
- Pack all breakables carefully and secure them as necessary to avoid shifting
- Items left in cupboards should be consolidated so cupboards are as full as possible. Pack voids with packing material and be sure cupboard doors and drawers have secure latches.
- Empty the refrigerator / freezer contents into coolers on the floor. Carry enough ice to make the next location where ice can be purchased, and
- Tape all appliance doors shut
- Secure all flexible water, waste and electrical connections so they do not drag or snag in transit
- Consider exterior plywood covers for doors and windows. Properly mounted they can stiffen these assemblies, and provide protection and additional security while moving.
- Verify whether the vehicle being used for the move has sufficient power, stability, and braking capability. If you are renting a truck, ensure the rental company allows towing tiny houses and obtain the proper insurance.
- If renting a truck, consider a panel van that can hold your contents and other yard things – grills, bicycles, doghouses, etc., - more securely.

84 Lumber and GreenEdge Supply share your interest in tiny houses, and we want you to arrive where you are going safely every time. Feel free to visit us online at [www.84tinylivng.com](http://www.84tinylivng.com) or [www.greenedgedupply.com](http://www.greenedgedupply.com) or in and let us help you with all of your moving needs. We look forward to seeing you!