

March 2018



In this Issue:

- [Take Time To Appreciate The Journey In Your RV](#)
- [These States Are The Least RV-Friendly](#)
- [Recreational Vehicle Camping Tips and Ideas](#)
- [Complete Guide Of State Towing Speeds & Laws You May Not Know](#)
- [SPECIAL TOWING INFORMATION](#)
- [Selecting the right truck and horse trailer](#)
- [Boondocking](#)
- [Air Safe Hitches](#)

"Buy from us and save"

Why pay more when you can get a reduced price from the #1 online retailer of AirSafe hitches?

We sell more AirSafe Hitches than all others combined.

Check our sales and specials.

Order now and get ready for Spring and Summer.

Newsletter changed to be sent the first week of each month.

Take Time To Appreciate The Journey In Your RV

By Dave Helgeson - Adventures in RVing

When I tell people my wife and I are heading out on an extended RV trip, they will invariably ask, "Where are you going," expecting me to answer with a destination like Yellowstone, Las Vegas, or maybe the [Grand Canyon](#). My response is "that way" as I point a finger in the general direction we will be headed.

You see, RVing is more about the journey than the destination. Those who fly in either an airplane or "down the freeway" in a non-stop freeway driving marathon miss many interesting attractions along the way. Some of these attractions may be on the itinerary before leaving home, but many are "discovered" along the route.

Examples of discoveries along the way might be the [Upside Down House](#) found during a lunch stop in a city park in Lee Vining, California, or learning why there is a US missile from New Mexico's White Sands Missile Program in [Green River](#), Utah.

Other discoveries might be unexpected activities on your route like witnessing a [helicopter](#) pulling new high tension lines onto transmission towers during a windstorm in Nevada, or having to stop the RV in the middle of the highway while thousands of sheep are herded to their summer feeding grounds in the high country of the Colorado Rocky Mountains.

For my wife and I, an RV trip is scores of stops and explorations (planned and unplanned) taken on our way to "somewhere" that is the farthest point from home and then scores of more stops on the way back home. You might consider that "somewhere" is our destination, but is seldom the highlight of our journey.

How about you? Are you literally flying over or past things that you would enjoy seeing? If so, you need to get in an RV, pick a "somewhere" to head towards, take it slow, and enjoy the discoveries along the way.

Enjoying the journey, the best adventure in RVing!

These States Are the Least RV-Friendly

By Nikki Cleveland

On a recent [forum thread](#), iRV2 member [Jyrocharlie](#) asked: "Which is the most RV unfriendly state?" Tons of RVers chimed in, considering factors like gas prices, road laws, and whether or not state rest areas allow overnight stays.

Not counting Hawaii—which member [TonyDi](#) quipped, "They don't even have decent highways so you can get there"—these U.S. states were considered the least RV-friendly.

California

California is notorious for its high taxes, vehicle registration fees, gasoline and diesel prices. And as [MRUSA14](#) pointed out,

"I nominate California. [55 mph speed limit](#) on all roads when towing. RVs over 40 feet are banned from many roads in the state."

You can see what roads prohibit big rigs on [this map from California's website](#). Most interstates and state routes allow RVs up to 45 feet in length, some roads ban 40-foot motorhomes and buses.

Vehicle combinations (like towing a trailer) may be up to 65 feet in length. On most roads, vehicles that are towing are restricted to the right-hand lane only, except for passing.

New York

New York also has sky-high [gas prices](#) and fuel taxes. On top of that, the state has many parkway restrictions and low clearance bridges. iRV2 member [momdoc](#) added,

"My vote for most unfriendly state goes to New York. Many of the major routes do not allow RVs and many less traveled roads have low bridges and overpasses making it hard to get from Point A to point B at times."

According to [this guide](#) from [RV Trip Wizard](#) on state road laws, motorhomes and trailers are not permitted on the Taconic State Parkway (the longest parkway in New York). Trailers are not permitted on most parkways. LP gas is also prohibited in several New York tunnels.

What states would you consider to be the least RV-friendly? Let us know in the comments below or on this [iRV2 forum thread](#).

Recreational Vehicle Camping Tips and Ideas

We received a request for some RV camping tips from a friend of ours, and decided to include the information here for the benefit of anyone looking to avoid some camping pitfalls with their RV. We encourage you to drop us a line if you have a good tip so we can include it.

- Use Checklists!!!!!! No matter how many times you move your RV, you can forget to do something! Roof vents and TV antennas are the biggest offenders for most folks, but basement storage bins being left unlocked can make you lose some good stuff!
- Learn about the many places you can go RV camping. Private RV parks are popular and easy to find, but there are many RV camping locations off the beaten path. Public lands are available in every state for camping, and a quick way to find your states public land management resources is by using the RV Camping Map.
- Check tire pressure before every trip!!!!!! I do, and still had a double dual blowout on I-10 last December. I figure that I caught a nail or something that caused one tire to go low pressure, and all that it took was time to heat up the other tire and take them both out!
- Speaking of on the road problems...if you can't change your own tires like we can't, or you do break down, roadside assistance is worth every penny! Our double blowout cost us \$385. That was the cost of 2 tires and tax. Service call, labor, mounting and balance was covered by the road service. We also picked up a nail in a front tire and just needed the spare put on...No additional charge!
- Staying in RV parks alot??? There are several discount camping clubs that might work for you and where you need to travel. Check them out carefully as no club is right for everyone. We don't stay in RV parks more than a night or two a month, so we don't belong to a discount program. Our Discount Camping Section has a list of several discount camping clubs.
- Weigh your rig!!! It is SOOOOOO easy to overload an RV!!!! You really need to weigh each corner of a motorhome separately so you can balance your load, and hitch weight ratios on trailers must be adhered to. Your life depends on it!
- Measure the height!!!! Don't guess!!! You WILL get into situations where a building canopy is too low for you to fit...also remember when parking at a curb that the top of the vehicle may be hanging over the curb due to slope of the street...this can be very embarrassing if you tag a light pole or tree too close to the street.
- Get a pair of small hand-held Family Radio Service(FRS) radios to communicate with each other during parking/backing of the RV, or get on the same page with hand signals. I suggest the FRS radio method as most reliable...and if you get separated in Walmart they work too!
- When staying in RV parks or campgrounds with hookups, don't leave the black tank "open". Only dump black when tank is 2/3 full or more otherwise you stand a good chance of having a clog. The same is true to some extent with the gray tank. Dump black first every time so the gray water can help clean out the dump hose.
- Are you towing a vehicle? If you tow with all 4 wheels down, you will not be able to back up more than a few feet at most!!!! This is always a problem at the worst possible place. For example, I dumped our motor home at Colorado's Chatfield Reservoir a couple years ago with the Jeep hooked up and couldn't make the U-turn I thought I could, and had to disconnect the Jeep before I could back up to complete the turn. I was lucky that there was only one person waiting to go by me as I unhooked the Jeep, then got the motor home out

of the street. This can happen even easier at fuel stations. Don't forget that some vehicles can't be towed 4 down!!!

- When you pull into an RV park and go to hook up water, I suggest turning on the water for a second or two before hooking up your hose. I would have had quite a bit of rust in my tank if I hadn't followed this advice. In addition I'd suggest a water sediment filter that goes between the water spigot and the motor home to help keep junk out of your tank.
- When we camp in the desert Southwest, often the water taste is poor. We've found that the Pur brand of charcoal water filtration system available just about everywhere like Walgreens, Walmart, Kmart etc works great to take the smell and bad taste from the water.
- Back to RV parks for a second...Power can vary widely from park to park. At the very least get a good surge protector for the RV, and there are several rather expensive power conditioners available that will protect against surges, and improve commercial power.
- Satellite TV... Our power inverter makes what is called "modified sine wave" AC power. This power works great for micro wave, TV, computer and everything else EXCEPT the satellite TV receiver. We now have a pure sine wave inverter (just a small unit of 150 watts) that turns 12 volts DC into clean AC that works for the satellite TV receiver. (We understand that new receivers will work on modified sine wave...check specifications carefully) Note – The digital TV conversion boxes that can be used on RVs as well as homes may require a sine wave inverter.
- Will you be boondocking (remote dispersed camping)? This is our standard mode of traveling whenever possible, and throughout the west, there is plenty of public land available for it. The issues here are how to conserve resources so you can stay out longer without having to find an RV dump and fill location. We carry a couple extra 7 gallon water containers and have a 12 volt electric pump to transfer the water from the containers to RV fresh tank. We can stay out with our rig for 14 days if we are VERY careful with water consumption. Here is a link to information about finding good spots to camp...Boondocking.
- You can save water by washing dishes in a dish pan instead of the sink. Wipe plates off first before washing to cut down on water needed. Take Navy showers...get wet, shut off water, wash yourself, rinse. Experiment with soaps and shampoos to find what you like AND rinses easily. You can save gray water space by washing your hands outside...use a plastic milk jug for water and poke a small hole in it and put a golf tee in. This will keep the water in the jug, pull the "tee" when you want water and it dribbles out instead of running down the sink!
- Use Scott single ply toilet tissue. We don't buy the expensive RV toilet paper...we think it's the same stuff at a fraction of the price.
- You will find a lot of people use RV holding tank chemicals, but we don't recommend them. The black tank smell comes from bacteria, but by not using chemicals, you promote another type of bacteria that eats the waste and kills the smell. Smells coming from the tank inside are a result of a plugged or disconnected vent pipe to the roof. Don't use antibacterial soaps unless you really want to...this will kill the good bacteria that eliminates the bad smells in the gray tank too.
- RV awnings are great...as long as they work and don't get ripped off in a freak wind. My example is our trip from Washington State to Denver last December. We hit very heavy side wind which just happened to catch the big awning turning it into a parachute. If I had straps (bungee cords) around the awning supports and roller, I wouldn't have needed a new awning.

- Check for leaks, and if you find one, don't wait...fix it now!!!! Water is an RV's worst enemy. There are some great calks available for RV roofs and windows, and I'd suggest having a tube on hand for when you find a leak in the future.
- You can save propane by not running your water heater all the time, and turning the furnace off at night and snuggling or putting an extra blanket on the bed. You can run a battery down overnight with a lot of heat usage.
- RV batteries...you have at the very least 2 batteries in your Rig and maybe more. You have battery for starting the engine, and you have coach battery or batteries for lights inside, and if you have enough batteries and an inverter, you can watch TV, run the micro wave and pretty much live in the dirt like folks in town. If you have room, 2 6 volt golf cart batteries (deep cycle) will last longer than a single 12 volt battery. We are set up with 8 6 volt batteries. 2 are for engine starting, and the other 6 are our power source. We seldom use our generator as we have 4 big solar panels on the roof to charge the batteries. We also have a 2500 watt power inverter to convert 12 volts to 110. We can watch TV all night without a problem as well as operate the computer and satellite internet equipment.
- Carry a step ladder so you have a way to clean windows, wash the rig perhaps, and make repairs if necessary. It also is a must if you are strapping your awnings down.
- Consider joining an RV camping club. These clubs are available for just about every interest, vehicle type, and lifestyle. RV clubs are a great way to meet new RVers with similar interests, and these clubs have camping trips that will show you new places to go RV camping. You can find a list of every RV club we know of in our RV Clubs Section.
- Though we included this item in our checklists section, it bears repeating here... Always have extra fuses for those unexpected RV electrical malfunctions. Additionally, keep in mind not all fuses are of the same type, so be sure to have the type and rating of fuses your RV uses.
- Finding information about RVs and RVing can be frustrating. A web site with links to many RV related web sites is rvresources.com. The site is set up in categories to help you find what you are looking for quickly.

Air Safe Hitches

AirSafeHitches.com

We carry the largest selection of AIRSAFE™ Hitches, 5th Wheels, Goosenecks, and Receivers.

Check out all hitches and specials available:

- [Receiver Hitches](#)
- [5th Wheel Hitches](#)
- [Gooseneck Hitches](#)

"We Sell for Less - Buy from us and save"



Complete Guide of State Towing Speeds & Laws You May Not Know

By [Christina Nellemann](#)

If you are used to towing your trailer around the the U.S., you probably know that maximum towing speeds vary in each state and U.S territories. If you are a new RVer and want to go exploring beyond your own backyard, check out this list of each state's towing speed limits you will see on most highways and interstates.

In addition, we are including some camping and towing laws you might not be familiar with!

If you are used to towing your trailer around the the U.S., you probably know that maximum towing speeds vary in each state and U.S territories. If you are a new RVer and want to go exploring beyond your own backyard, check out this list of each state's towing speed limits you will see on most highways and interstates.

In addition, we are including some camping and towing laws you might not be familiar with!

The best way to get the most up-to-date information for each state is to contact the [Department of Transportation](#) or the [Highway Patrol](#) of each state you plan to drive through. Of course, no matter where you are towing your travel trailer keep your eyes on the road and always follow whatever limit is posted.

This list includes the maximum towing speeds for each state.

Alabama

Towing speed limit: 55 mph

Did you know?: RVers are required to keep their headlights on when towing in Alabama.

Alaska

Towing speed limit: 55 mph

Did you know?: RVers are required to carry flares or reflective signs, fire extinguishers and a gas detector in Alaska.

Arizona

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Triple towing is allowed with a fifth wheel.

Arkansas

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Overnight parking in rest areas is allowed unless posted otherwise.

California

Towing speed limit: 55 mph

Did you know?: Vehicles towing in California are restricted to the right hand lane.

Colorado

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Colorado allows you to tow two trailers at once.

Connecticut

Towing speed limit: 55 mph

Did you know?: RVs are not allowed in carpool lanes in Connecticut.

Delaware

Towing speed limit: 55 mph

Did you know?: Delaware requires two separate ways to apply both vehicle and trailer brakes.

District of Columbia

Towing speed limit: 55 mph

Did you know?: The maximum RV width is 8 feet.

Florida

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Florida does not allow double or triple towing.

Georgia

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Overnight parking in rest areas is not allowed in Georgia.

Hawaii

Towing speed limit: 55 mph

Did you know?: The maximum trailer length in Hawaii is 48 feet.

Idaho

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Passengers are allowed to ride inside truck campers.

Illinois

Towing speed limit: 55 mph

Did you know?: Trailers are not allowed on boulevards in and around Chicago.

Indiana

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: The maximum motorhome length in Indiana is 45 feet.

Iowa

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Passengers are allowed to ride in fifth wheels, travel trailers and pickup campers.

Kansas

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Kansas allows trailers and RVs up to 14 feet in height.

Kentucky

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Kentucky law does not specifically require brakes on any passenger car trailers, regardless of weight.

Louisiana

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Passengers are permitted to ride in pickup campers only.

Maine

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Maine only allows one boat or travel trailer to be towed.

Maryland

Towing speed limit: 55 mph

Did you know?: Maryland does not allow liquid propane gas in some I-95 tunnels.

Massachusetts

Towing speed limit: 55 mph

Did you know?: Trailers are not permitted on many parkways in the Boston area.

Michigan

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: In Michigan, trailer tires must have a minimum tread of 2/32 inches.

Minnesota

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Minnesota allows triple towing, but only a fifth wheel and watercraft/ATV/motorcycle/snowmobile combo.

Mississippi

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Passengers are not allowed to ride in any fifth wheel, travel trailer or pickup camper.

Missouri

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Missouri only requires a brake system on 5th wheel trailers.

Montana

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: All RVs are required to carry flares or reflective signs.

Nebraska

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: All RVs are required to have flares or reflective signs.

Nevada

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: In Nevada drivers and passengers cannot have an open alcoholic beverage container inside the tow vehicle, however open containers are allowed in the living area of a motorhome or travel trailer.

New Hampshire

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Overnight parking in New Hampshire rest areas is not allowed.

New Jersey

Towing speed limit: 55 mph

Did you know?: Open propane cylinders are not allowed while traveling on New Jersey open highways.

New Mexico

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Overnight parking in rest areas is allowed, but no more than 24 hours in any three-day period in the same area.

New York

Towing speed limit: 55 mph

Did you know?: Liquid propane is prohibited in all New York tunnels.

North Carolina

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: North Carolina requires an independent brake system for travel trailers of 1,000 lbs. or more.

North Dakota

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Every trailer doing at a speed of 25 mph must have safety chains attached to the tow vehicle.

Ohio

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Brakes are required if the trailer has an empty weight of over 2,000 lbs.

Oklahoma

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Oklahoma state law requires that a maximum travel trailer length be under 40 feet.

Oregon

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Oregon prohibits self-service dispensing at retail fuel stations.

Pennsylvania

Towing speed limit: 55 mph

Did you know?: Any trailer being towed in the state of Pennsylvania must be equipped with a fully functioning brake system.

Rhode Island

Towing speed limit: 55 mph

Did you know?: Rhode Island does allow overnight parking in state rest areas.

South Carolina

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: In South Carolina the total length limit of combined tow vehicle and travel trailer is 60 feet.

South Dakota

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: All towed vehicles, motor trucks or trailers over 8,000 lbs. must stop at weigh stations.

Tennessee

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: The maximum trailer width in Tennessee is 8 feet.

Texas

Towing speed limit: 60 mph during the day; 55 mph at night

Did you know?: Overnight parking in rest areas has a 24 hour limit.

Utah

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Utah allows RVs and trailers up to 14 feet tall.

Vermont

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: All trailers traveling through Vermont are required to carry a useable fire extinguisher.

Virginia

Towing speed limit: 55 mph

Did you know?: Virginia only allows two propane gas tanks of 20 lbs. each per travel trailer.

Washington

Towing speed limit: 60 mph

Did you know?: Overnight parking is permitted in Washington state rest areas, but cannot exceed eight hours.

West Virginia

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Triple towing is not allowed in West Virginia.

Wisconsin

Towing speed limit: 65 mph

Did you know?: Triple towing is allowed with a special permit.

Wyoming

Towing speed limit: 60 mph

Did you know?: When towing in Wyoming, you must be able to stop in 40 feet while driving at 20 mph.

SPECIAL TOWING INFORMATION

- Passenger are actually allowed to ride inside trailers, fifth wheels and truck campers in Arizona and Indiana.
- In Alaska and Montana, RVers are required to carry flares in their travel trailer.
- North Carolina requires travel trailers of 1,000 lbs. or more to have an independent brake system.
- Virginia only allows travel trailers to carry two propane cylinders.

Selecting the right truck and horse trailer

Michael Hillman

Like most amateur riders, I've often toyed with the idea of having a second horse. I can't begin to count the number of times I came off of a less than honorable dressage or cross-country ride, wishing I could do it all over. After much cajoling (including a forced vacation to Hawaii), I was finally able to convince my highly skeptical wife that I'd never make it to the Olympics on one horse, and reluctantly, she acquiesced to my obtaining a second horse. What I failed to mention, however, was the fact that our trailer was too narrow to ship two horses comfortably and that our 13-year-old truck was incapable of pulling my dream trailer.

Upon discovering these facts, my wife suggested that I sell my Preliminary horse and use the proceeds to pay for the new truck and trailer. Scratching my head in awe of her non-rider logic, I tactfully tried to convey to her that if I followed her advice, I would once again be riding one horse, making a new truck and trailer unnecessary. In the end however, she correctly recognized the futility of persuading an event rider to change course, and reluctantly agreed to my plan. The hunt for the perfect truck and trailer was on.

Selecting the best truck and trailer takes a fair amount of time and effort, but if you do it right, its worth while. Now if you have money to burn and don't mind spending it, go buy a big truck with a diesel engine and gooseneck; you'll have plenty of power and room to spare. However, if you're eventing on a budget like I am, the day to day operating cost of a rig is almost as critical an issue as its initial cost. You don't get ribbons for having a nice rig, you get them for your performance with your horse. Thus, any money you can save and put towards lessons, or a new horse, will move you one step closer to that ever-elusive blue ribbon.

Based upon how much money you have to spend, you may want to consider buying used equipment. There are a lot of good used trucks and trailers out there, and as noted in Sophie du Pont's article in the January/February issue of US Event Horse, with a little paint you can have an eye catching rig for a fraction of the cost of a new one. If you're new to the sport, this route is probably preferable, especially if one day you may wake up and come to your senses. If, however, you're like most Adult Amateurs and are irreconcilably hooked on this sport, as you gain experience, you'll get a better idea on what you ultimately want in a truck and trailer, and someday down the road, select your perfect rig.

Whether you go new or used, selecting a truck and trailer is an iterative process. The first thing you need to decide is whether you want a gooseneck or a bumper-pull. This choice, more than anything else, determines your towing vehicle. If you go with a gooseneck, you have no choice but to go with a truck. However, with a bumper pull, any vehicle capable of towing will do. If you only have one horse, and intend to keep it that way (which means you still have some semblance of sanity), by all means go with a bumper-pull trailer. Fourteen years ago this advice was given to me by a friend and for fourteen years my bumper-pull rig has been both extremely economical and functional. Goosenecks on the other hand, while more expensive, do handle better and provide much needed storage space.

Once you select the style of your trailer, you have many options as to the materials it's constructed with and its internal design. If you're really on a budget, go with steel construction; it's cheap and reliable. Manufactures of steel trailers have come a long way in their fight against rust, and while you may have to repaint it six or seven years down the road, the cost of the paint job won't come close to what you'll save over the cost of an aluminum trailer. On the other hand, if you have a little more money and don't want the chance of even a little rust, go with an aluminum trailer. Many manufacturers also make trailers with a steel frame and aluminum skin, which is a good middle ground.

Aluminum trailers and fiberglass trailers are much in vogue today, and like most innovations, involve trade-offs, beginning with their higher cost. Aluminum are clearly lighter than all steel trailers and improve your rig's fuel efficiency, but are not, contrary to popular belief, maintenance free. Fiberglass trailers, for all intents and purposes, are maintenance free, however they are heavier than steel trailers, decreasing your rig's fuel efficiency. Based on the sheer number of them at events, if you have the money, they are definitely a good option to consider.

Slant load trailers are also in vogue, but the cost versus benefit jury is still out. You can figure paying anywhere from two to five thousand dollars more for a slant load trailer than a regular rear load trailer. In addition, because of their configuration, slant load trailers are longer than rear load trailers, which significantly increases their weight and translates into poor gas mileage. Most 'on the lot' slant load trailers are sized for quarter horses, and are too narrow for big thoroughbreds or warm bloods. A local neighbor of mine who owns a three-horse slant load can only 'squeeze' two thoroughbreds in her new rig. While this shortcoming can easily be rectified by purchasing the 'wider option', a wider trailer will significantly increase the weight of the trailer and, once again, costs more.

In my case, after years of squeezing in front of my horse to get dressed, watching my equipment get rained on, and yes, drooling over the gooseneck parked next to me, I opted to buy a two horse, rear load gooseneck with a dressing room. A steel gooseneck was ruled out of the question due to weight concerns, the all aluminum was ruled out due to cost. In the end, I settled on a Kingston. Its frame is made of steel, which significantly reduces the cost, while its skin is aluminum, which reduces overall weight. In the end, the trailer I've ordered weighs slightly over 3400 lbs., 300 lbs. heavier than an aluminum, but about \$4,000 dollars cheaper.

Throughout my search for a trailer, I kept in constant contact with truck dealerships. My selection of a trailer was based to a large degree on how much weight my new truck would pull. The other significant consideration in my selection of a truck was the gas mileage it would get hauling a given weight. Every dealer I contacted tried to convince me that I need a big V-8 with an automatic. However, in talking to owners of trucks with this configuration all expressed dismay over the fact that while they could pass just about anything, rarely could they pass a gas station. After several fruitless forays into dealerships, I finally got my hands on some truck technical manuals and worked my way through the maze of power train options.

Trucks come in both heavy duty and light duty configurations, with the light duty obviously cheaper and more economical. In general, your selection of a truck should be based first and foremost upon the amount of weight you intend to pull on a regular basis. If your trailer is a bumper pull and you'll only be pulling one horse, a light duty truck such as a Ford F-150, or Dodge/Chevy 1500, with a six cylinder engine and a manual transmission will provide sufficient pulling power while simultaneously providing you the highest gas mileage. If you'll be pulling two horses more than about 20% of the time, consider going with a V-8. If your bumper-pull has a dressing room, go with a big V-8 and an automatic, since the light duty clutches can't handle towing loads over 3500 lbs.

If you've selected a gooseneck, you have no option but to go with a heavier duty truck like the Ford F-250/350 or the Dodge/Chevy 2500/3500. Heavy-duty trucks offer a wider range of power train options. As to engines, depending upon the weight of your trailer, you can go with medium (e.g., Ford's 351) or big (Ford's 460) V-8. While bigger engines give more power, they eat a lot more gas. So while with a big V-8 you'll never feel under powered, you might not be able to afford to drive it. However, if you go with the medium V-8's, you'll get adequate gas mileage, but might sometimes feel like your truck's get up and go has got up and left. Diesels of course provide

the most power and greatest gas mileage, however, they cost about \$4,000 more, and if you only drive the truck 10,000 miles yearly, it will take you eight years to earn back the difference on what you will save on gas.

Fortunately there is a middle ground. The last part of the power train, and the probably the least looked at by purchasers, is the rear differential. Most stock Ford trucks for example come with what is called a 3.55 rear end, which means the engine will turn over 3.55 times for every revolution of the wheel. For only one or two hundred dollars more, you can order a truck with higher gear ratio, such as Ford's 4.10. Now while the 4.10 rear end will require the engine to run faster for a given speed, it will provide a bigger 'sense' of power. Adding a manual transmission to the equation, like I did, enhances your ability to always have the power to climb any hill.

In my book, manual transmissions are the only way to go. Manual transmissions in heavy-duty trucks can pull as much or more than automatics and are much more reliable. Based upon the number of people I know who have had to replaced automatic transmissions, having a manual was a given for me. A manual transmission gives you better control of your rig's speed, especially when you're going up hills, which can translate into increased gas mileage. Manual transmissions are also cheaper and can reduce the cost of a new truck by about as much as \$800 off the regular base price. Now be prepared; the salesmen will try to tell you automatics haul better, which is a bunch of garbage. If you think about it, how many tractor-trailers have automatics? One million long haul drivers can't all be wrong!

Whether you go with a 4-wheel drive or 2-wheel is up to personal preference, and of course your pocketbook. Four wheel drive will add up to about \$4,000 to the sticker price, while simultaneously reducing your gas mileage and increasing your maintenance costs. Since almost all event organizers are thoughtful enough to have tractors ready to pull you out of the mire, a four wheel drive isn't really necessary. If most of your driving is on the highway, go with a 2-wheel drive; you will significantly increase your gas mileage. However, consider purchasing a 'limited slip-lock' rear end. Limited slip-lock causes both rear wheels to drive, as opposed to only one wheel, thus helping to prevent spinning. This option only costs about \$200, but it will immensely improve your truck's handling ability, especially in bad weather.

After months of searching, I selected a 1997 Heavy Duty Ford F-250, with a 351 V-8, 5 speed manual transmission, and a 4.10 limited slip-lock rear end. To keep the cost down to the bare minimum, I passed on most of the options offered for the truck. In selecting the options I did take, I weighed their price in the 'number of lessons' I would have to give up. For example, a sliding rear window cost the same as 4 lessons while the cost of air conditioning was equal to 30 lessons. The way I figured it, I need the 30 lessons more than I need air conditioning. The cost of an extended cab was equal to 100 lessons, etc. Remember, anything you save in the cost and operation of your truck is money available for lessons. The more lessons you take, the more you'll increase your fun and safety, not to mention your chances of winning!

Lastly, if in the next few years you may even remotely consider buying a new truck, apply for either a GM or Ford Visa card. The rebates are rather nice, and in my case, the price for the F-250 I just ordered was reduced by \$2500 after I made my best deal. With free money, you can't go wrong.

While I've tried to go into as much detail as I could, the rig you buy will depend upon your unique circumstances. The key to being successful however is to take an iterative approach to your search. Look at the cost, weight, and size of your trailer, then look at what will tow it, then go back and look at trailers again. Eventually you'll focus in on a rig you like. Just remember, always err on the side of power and size, for there is nothing worse than ending up with a rig that you dislike. My new truck and trailer should be delivered in mid-May; I'll let you know how I make out!

Boondocking

Boondocking – What It Is

www.rv-camping.org defines boondocking as remote location “dispersed camping”, and the term “dispersed camping” is defined as “camping outside developed campgrounds”.

There is no official definition of the term boondocking, however, overnight RV parking places such as WalMart or truck stops, NASCAR races, federal and state campground, and any time RV hookups are not available (dry

camping) have been referred to as boondocking. Boondocking isn't for everyone.

Dispersed RV camping in remote areas requires research, exploration, and a sense of adventure to find those great campsites RV magazines like to show on their covers.

Boondocking – How To Do It

RV camping off the beaten path takes planning and forethought which is beyond the scope of this article. There are many informative RV boondocking websites and articles written and freely available on the internet, and they offer a wide range of specific information you will want to learn about. The information presented below is intended to help you learn how to find great RV boondocking locations.

Boondocking Locations – Where You Can Camp

As a general rule, boondocking is allowed anywhere on federal public lands within a specified distance of any established road, except where otherwise restricted. That's not to say that you can cut down trees or build a new access way into your RV campsite. The idea is to utilize previously used campsites, or areas that will not be damaged by your vehicle. New US Forest Service route and dispersed camping rules have come out and each forest may have different requirements so you need to check locally. Keep in mind camping closer than 300 ft. of a water source is usually restricted. The USFS offers free travel management maps called MVUM (Motor Vehicle Use Map) that show exactly where dispersed camping is restricted and which roads are open for travel.

A few US National Parks allow overnight RV parking and boondocking, but generally camping is restricted to established campgrounds. USFS (United States Forest Service) and BLM (Bureau of Land Management) high popularity areas often have restricted access camping areas. For example, the area around Mammoth Lakes, CA is extremely popular with tourists, and many areas allow camping only in designated campgrounds. Information about camping restrictions are available at USFS Ranger District and BLM Resource Area offices.

Generally speaking, you can stay 14 continuous days for free, but subsequent camping days must be 25 miles away. This rule applies to most BLM and USFS administered lands, but there are exceptions. For example, the INYO National Forest of California allows 42 day stays at designated camping areas, while the Bridger-Teton National Forest in Wyoming has areas that it allows only 3 day stays near Grand Teton National Park. BLM LTVAs (Long Term Visitor Areas) allow stays of several months for a nominal fee.

We've only mentioned the USFS and BLM so far, but FWS (US Fish & Wildlife Service), USACE (Army Corps of Engineers), Bureau of Reclamation, State Parks, and State-owned lands offer boondocking opportunities. Arizona, for example, has a permit available for a nominal fee allowing boondocking on State lands.

There are also boondocking opportunities to be found on private lands. Ranches and farms may have a corner of the "back 40" they will allow you to stay for free or for a small fee. If you find a spot you would like to camp that is on private land, it never hurts to ask. We've had good success in farm country asking permission to camp at nice areas near a river with good access for overnight boondocking...we usually share the space with cows.

We know of no public land locations that allow an unlimited length of stays, and while BLM Long Term Visitor Areas (LTVA) permit multiple months stays, some Public Lands have a specific length of stay limit of as little as two days. It is your responsibility to learn and follow the rules. Rules are published on official government Internet websites and are available at public land managers offices.

How To Find The Best Boondocking Locations

So now that you know that you can set up camp just about anywhere in the forest, how do you go about finding a great RV camping/boondocking site? This is where the work starts, but the harder you work at it, the better the RV campsite you'll find. If you live near the public lands area you wish to camp in, your task is easier as you can explore more frequently and learn the area completely. For those of us that travel and want to find great boondocking sites, we've found that doing our homework before we get to a new area will always pay off with a great boondocking site.

RV type and size sometimes determines where you can boondock. Pop up and truck campers have a distinct advantage for getting to really remote RV camping sites. When you have a large 5th wheel or motorhome, boondocking seems more difficult, but with just a little practice, you will soon determine how to explore effectively to accommodate your rig.

The easiest way of finding RV boondocking sites in a new area requires that you:

- Have maps and navigational information.
- Contact Public Lands administrators for the area being visited.
- Locate a “base” campground.
- Exploration.

After determining a general location you wish to boondock, it’s time to examine some general information. [USFS – USDA Forest Service](#), the [BLM – Bureau of Land Management](#), and other State and US Government departments have Internet websites with recreation information. Getting official travel maps of a new area can help in finding a good RV camping site. Topographical maps are in our opinion the best way to determine where we want to camp. We prefer DeLorme Topo 6.0 maps for our personal exploration needs. MapTech is our choice for online topo mapping information. Examine the Topo map for areas that look interesting for your type of RV camping. It won’t take long to find areas that look interesting to you.

The areas you find with your Topo map can further be researched by contacting the local public lands administrators. Ask about dispersed camping in the area you are interested in. You may or may not get the answers you need. Some of the folks providing information may not be aware of some great RV camping sites. Get information about designated campgrounds and if reservations are required.

Armed with the campground information, locate one near where you think you want to boondock. This campground will be your “base” camp to explore for that perfect RV boondocking site. You will often find a great RV camping site on the way to the designated campground, which eliminates the need for exploration, but always plan on needing to find your own RV camping site.

Exploring can be fun, but it’s also frustrating from time to time. Our frustrations always come from finding great RV camping sites that don’t offer a clear view of the southern sky for our satellite Internet connection. Most folks won’t have that as an issue, and will easily find boondocking sites. The size of your RV is a major consideration when heading into remote areas, and be sure to consider potential weather changes and how they might effect road conditions where you want to camp.

Contact Us

East Coast Partners Grp
7 Indiana Ave
Long Beach, NY | 11561
Tel. 321-939-2132
Fax. 866-201-3391
www.airsafehitches.com

Unsubscribe

To unsubscribe click, lloyd@ecpginc.com
and enter your email address to be remove