

# Common RV Terms

**AC ELECTRICITY:** Alternating Current. Standard household electricity referred to as 120VAC in this manual.

**AMP:** Short for ampere, the electric current unit of measure. RV sites with electric hookup will specify the maximum amps supported, which generally come in units of 20, 30, or 50 amps. The RV power connector must match the various plugs of the site amp rating.

**ANODE ROD:** Part of some water heaters that attract impurities in the water that cause corrosion. These impurities attack the anode rod instead of the metal tank itself. The anode rod should be inspected yearly and changed when it is reduced to about 1/4 of its original size.

**AWNING:** A roof-like structure made of canvas or other artificial materials which extends from the RV body to provide shade.

**BLACK TANK:** The holding tank into which the toilet directly drains. Some models might be designed to have other water sources drain into a black tank.

**BLACK WATER:** The term associated with sewage contained within the black tank.

**BOON DOCKING:** Also known as dry camping. Camping without electrical and water hookups.

**BREAKAWAY SWITCH:** An electrical switch on travel trailers designed to engage the breaks in case the trailer breaks away from the tow vehicle. The switch is connected by a cable to the tow vehicle. Breakaway is detected when the switch cable is pulled out during vehicle separation.

**BRAKE CONTROLLER:** A customer-supplied device located in the tow vehicle that activates the travel trailer or fifth wheel brakes.

**BTU:** The measurement of the amount of heat required to raise the temperature of one (1) pound of water, one (1) degree F. Commonly used in the ratings of an air conditioner or furnace.

**CCC (Cargo Carrying Capacity):** Is the amount of weight available for fresh potable water, cargo, passengers, additional optional equipment and accessories. CCC is equal to GVWR minus UVW.

**CITY WATER:** Refers to exterior water source (spigot) found at the campground that is accessed with a garden hose.

**CONDENSATION:** The result of warm humid air coming in contact with cold glass creating moisture or "sweat".

**CONVERTER:** Electrical device that, when connected to shore power, changes the voltage from 120VAC to 12VDC and will also recharge the on-board battery.

**COLD INFLATION PRESSURE:** The pressure in the tire before you drive.

**CURB WEIGHT:** The actual weight of a vehicle or trailer, including all standard equipment, full fuel tanks, full fresh water tanks, full propane bottles, and all other equipment fluids, but before taking on any persons or personal cargo.

**CURBSIDE:** Term used to refer to the side of your coach, which faces the curb or shoulder when

parked. Also called DOOR SIDE (the main entrance door).

**DC ELECTRICITY:** Direct Current. Also termed Battery Power. Used to run all 12 volt powered systems or lighting. Referred to 12VDC in this manual.

**DINETTE:** Booth-like dining area. Table usually drops to convert unit into a bed at night.

**DRAIN TRAP:** This is the curve that is in all drains. Water is trapped in the curve and creates a barrier so tank odors cannot escape through the drain.

**DRY CAMPING:** Refers to camping using only the resources within your RV and without amenities such as city water hook-ups, electrical hook-ups, etc., often provided at commercial campsites.

**DRY WEIGHT:** The actual weight of a vehicle or trailer containing standard equipment without fuel, fluids, cargo, passengers, or optional equipment.

**DSI IGNITION:** This term, short for Direct Spark Ignition, refers to the method of igniting the main burner on a propane fired appliance. The burner is lit with an electric spark and the flame is monitored by an electronic circuit board. This ignition system is used in refrigerators, furnaces and water heaters.

**DUALY:** A truck having two wheels on each side of the rear axle for a total of four wheels.

**DUCTED AC:** Air conditioning distributed through a ducting system.

**DUCTED HEAT:** Warm air distributed through a ducting system.

**DUMP STATION:** Term used for locations to drain the waste holding tanks (gray and black tanks). In most states, it is illegal to dump your tanks anywhere except at dump stations.

**DUMP VALVE:** Another name for the T-Handle used to drain the black and gray tanks.

**EGRESS WINDOW:** Term for the emergency exit windows within recreational vehicles. Usually identified by a red handle or lever.

**FRESH WATER TANK:** Tank for holding fresh water for drinking, cooking, and bathing. This water is not supplied by a City Water connection.

**FULL HOOK-UP SITE:** A campsite that offers full amenities: city water, sewer, and electrical hook-ups.

**FULL TIMERS OR FULL TIMING:** The term used for people who live in their RV the vast majority of their time.

**GALLEY TANK:** A gray water holding tank used specifically for the kitchen waste water.

**GENERATOR:** An engine powered device fueled by gasoline or diesel fuel, and sometimes propane, for generating 120VAC power.

**GENSET:** Abbreviation for generator set.

**GRAY TANK:** The waste holding tank into which water from the kitchen and bath sinks, shower and tub drains.

**GRAY WATER:** Water drained into the gray holding tank(s).

**GAWR (Gross Axle Weight Rating)** - The maximum permissible weight, including cargo, fluids, optional equipment and accessories that can be safely supported by each axle.

**GCWR (Gross Combined Weight Rating)** - Is the maximum permissible loaded weight of your motorhome and any towed trailer or towed vehicle. Actual GCWR of this vehicle may be limited by the sum of the GVWR and the installed hitch receiver maximum capacity rating; see hitch rating label for detail.

**GVWR (Gross Vehicle Weight Rating)** - Is the maximum permissible weight of the RV when fully loaded. It includes all weights, inclusive of all fluids, occupants, cargo, optional equipment and accessories. For safety and product performance do NOT exceed the GVWR.

**HEAT STRIP:** A heat strip is an electric heating element located in the air conditioning system with the warm air distributed by the air conditioner fan and ducting system.

**HITCH:** The fastening unit that joins a movable vehicle to the vehicle that pulls it.

**HITCH WEIGHT:** Amount of a trailer's weight that rests on the tow vehicle's hitch. Also known as "Tongue Weight".

**HOLDING TANKS:** There are three different holding tanks on most RVs; fresh water tank, gray water tank and black water tank. The fresh water tank holds fresh water that can be stored for later use. The gray water tank holds the waste water from the sinks and showers. The black water tank holds the waste from the toilet.

**HOOK-UPS:** The ability of connecting to a campground's facilities. The major types of hookups are electrical, water and sewer. If all three of these hookups are available, it is termed full hook-up.

**HOUSE BATTERY:** One or more batteries in a RV for operating the 12VDC lights, appliances, and systems. The term house battery is commonly used in motorhomes because they contain one or more other (chassis) batteries for the operation of the engine.

**INVERTER:** An inverter is a device that changes 12VDC battery power to 120VAC power. It is used when "boon docking" (camping without hookups) to power certain 120VAC only devices like a microwave oven. The amount of available power depends on the storage capacity of the batteries and the wattage rating of the inverter.

**LEVELING:** Positioning the RV in camp so it will be level, using ramps and blocks placed under the wheels. Sometimes accomplished using Automatic Leveling equipment.

**LEVELING JACK:** A jack lowered from the underside of trailers and motorhomes for the purpose of leveling the vehicle. A leveling jack is designed to bear a significant portion of the RV's weight.

**LOAD RATING:** The maximum load that a tire is rated to carry for a given inflation pressure.

**LOW POINT/LOW POINT DRAIN:** The lowest point in the plumbing. Drains are placed here so that water will drain out of the camper when flushing or winterizing the water system. These drains must be closed when using the fresh water supply system.

**LP GAS:** Liquefied Petroleum Gas (propane) used to fuel appliances in the RV, such as the stove, oven, water heater and refrigerator. Propane tanks are usually rated as pounds or gallons.

**MAXIMUM LOAD RATING:** The load rating for a tire at the maximum permissible inflation pressure for that tire.

**MAXIMUM PERMISSIBLE INFLATION PRESSURE:** The maximum cold inflation pressure to which a tire may be inflated.

**PILOT:** A small standby flame that is used to light the main burner of a propane fired appliance when the thermostat calls for heat. Pilots can be used in furnaces, water heaters, refrigerators, ovens and stove tops.

**PIN WEIGHT:** The vertical trailer load supported by the king pin of a fifth wheel hitch. Also called hitch weight. Also known as King Pin Weight.

**PORPOISING:** A term used to define the up and down motion in an RV while traveling.

**PRIMITIVE CAMPSITE:** Campsite that offers limited connections. May have city water or electrical available, but not both.

**PULL-THROUGH SITE:** Campsite that you can pull your recreational vehicle through, eliminating the need to back in.

**RADIAL PLY TIRE:** A pneumatic tire in which the ply cords that extend to the beads are laid at substantially 90 degrees to the center line of the tread.

**RECOMMENDED TIRE INFLATION PRESSURE:** This is the inflation pressure provided by the vehicle manufacturer on the Tire Information label and on the Certification/VIN tag.

**REFER:** Slang for "refrigerator".

**ROADSIDE:** Refers to the side of the RV that faces the road when parked. Also commonly referred to as "OFF DOOR SIDE".

**RVDA:** Recreational Vehicle Dealer's Association

**RVIA:** Recreational Vehicle Industry Association.

**SANITIZATION:** Refers to the camper's fresh water system that has been sanitized with chlorine bleach before use or after storage.

**SELF CONTAINED:** An RV which needs no external electrical, drain or water hook-up. Thus, it can park overnight anywhere. Self-contained units can also hook up to facilities when at campgrounds.

**SEVEN WAY POWER CORD:** Wiring harness which connects the trailer to the tow vehicle during transport. The seven way power cord supplies the trailer with 12VDC power for charging the batteries and operating 12 volt equipment. It also operates the trailer brakes and signal lights.

**SHORE LINE:** The electrical cord that connects 120VAC from an exterior power source to the RV. Also called "Shore Cord" or "Power Cord".

**SHORE POWER:** An external power source like those found in many campsites and RV parks. Shore power is an AC (alternating current) power source, while the batteries in your RV's battery bank run on DC (direct current) power.

**SPEED RATING:** The speed rating denotes the maximum speed at which a tire is designed to be

operated.

**SURGE PROTECTOR:** Device (customer supplied) that is installed at the power supply location designed to prevent “surges” or “spikes” in electrical current that may damage the RV’s electrical/ electronic components.

**SWAY:** Fishtailing action of the trailer caused by external forces that set the trailer's mass into a lateral (side-to-side) motion.

**TONGUE WEIGHT:** Amount of a trailer's weight that rests on the tow vehicle’s hitch. Also known as "Hitch Weight".

**UNDERBELLY:** Area of the RV under the floor inside the chassis main rails which is enclosed and protected by a weatherproof material.

**UVW (Unloaded Vehicle Weight)** - Is the weight of the RV as manufactured at the factory. It includes all weight at the RV’s axles, including full fuel, all fluids and LP Gas. The UVW does not include cargo, fresh potable water or dealer installed accessories.

**WATER PRESSURE REGULATOR:** Device (customer supplied) installed on the water hose attached to city water to limit the water pressure entering the RV.