

Enlightened RV Life

The Ultimate RV Glossary

125 Essential Terms Every RVer Should Know

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**AC (Alternating Current)**

Standard household electricity (120V) used for RV appliances.

**Amp (Amperage)**

A measure of electrical current. RV shore power is usually 30A or 50A.

**Anderson Plug**

A heavy-duty connector often used for solar or battery hookups.

**Awning**

A retractable covering that provides shade and shelter outside an RV.

**Back-In Site**

Campsite that requires reversing the RV into position.

**Basement Storage**

Under-floor storage compartments in motorhomes or fifth wheels.

**Black Tank**

Holding tank for toilet waste.

**Boondocking**

Camping without hookups; also called dry camping.

**Brake Controller**

Device that controls trailer brakes from the tow vehicle.

**Breakaway Switch**

Safety device that activates trailer brakes if disconnected.

**Bunkhouse**

RV floor plan with bunk beds, popular for families.

**Cabover**

Sleeping or storage area above the cab in a Class C motorhome.

**Campground**

Place with sites for RV camping, may offer hookups.

**Cargo Carrier**

Exterior rack for bikes, generators, or storage boxes.

**CCC (Cargo Carrying Capacity)**

Max weight of cargo, passengers, and supplies the RV can carry.

**Chassis**

The frame and running gear on which a motorhome is built.

**Chock**

Block placed against wheels to prevent rolling.

**Class A Motorhome**

Large, bus-style motorhome built on a heavy-duty chassis.

**Class B Motorhome**

Camper van, small and maneuverable.

**Class C Motorhome**

Mid-sized motorhome with a cab-over section.

**Coach**

Another term for a motorhome.

**Converter**

Changes AC to DC to charge batteries.

**Coupler**

Part of a trailer hitch that connects to the tow ball.

**DC (Direct Current)**

12V power from batteries, runs lights, pumps, fans.

**Deep Cycle Battery**

RV battery designed for slow, steady discharge and recharge.

**Diesel Pusher**

Class A motorhome with a rear diesel engine.

**Dinette**

Dining area with a table and seating, often convertible to a bed.

**Dinghy (Toad)**

Vehicle towed behind a motorhome.

**Dogbone Adapter**

Power adapter allowing connection between 30A and 50A plugs.

**Double Towing (Triple Tow)**

Towing two trailers behind one vehicle (legal in some states).

**Dry Camping**

Camping without hookups (same as boondocking).

**Dry Weight (UVW)**

Weight of the RV as manufactured, no cargo, water, or fuel.

**Dump Station**

Facility to empty black and gray tanks.

**EMS (Electrical Management System)**

Protects RV from power surges and unsafe voltage.

**EPO (Emergency Power Off)**

Feature that shuts down unsafe power automatically.

**Equalizer Hitch**

Weight distribution hitch that helps balance trailer and tow vehicle.

**Fifth Wheel**

Towable RV hitched in a pickup truck bed.

**Flat Towing**

Towing a vehicle with all four wheels on the ground.

**Fresh Water Tank**

Tank holding clean, drinkable water.

**Fridge (3-Way/2-Way)**

RV refrigerators that run on propane, AC, or DC.

**Full Hookups (FHU)**

Campsite with water, sewer, and electric connections.

**Furnace**

Propane-powered heater in an RV.

**Galley**

RV kitchen area.

**Generator**

Portable or built-in device producing electricity.

**Gray Tank**

Tank that stores water from sinks and showers.

**GVWR (Gross Vehicle Weight Rating)**

Maximum total safe weight of the RV loaded.

**Harvest Hosts**

Membership program allowing RVers to camp at wineries, farms, etc.

**Hitch**

Connection device for towing.

**Holding Tanks**

Fresh, gray, and black tanks.

**Hookups**

Utility connections at a campsite (water, sewer, electric).

**House Batteries**

12V batteries powering lights and appliances.

**Inverter**

Converts DC battery power into AC household power.

**Inverter/Charger**

Combo device that charges batteries and inverts power.

**Island Bed**

Freestanding bed accessible from both sides.

**Jackknife Sofa**

Couch that folds flat into a bed.

**Jacks**

Hydraulic or electric lifts for stabilizing and leveling.

**Kingpin**

Hitch connection point on a fifth wheel.

**KWH (Kilowatt Hour)**

Unit of electrical usage.

**Landing Gear**

Front jacks on a fifth wheel for raising/lowering.

**Leveling Blocks**

Stackable pads to level RV on uneven ground.

**Leveling Jacks**

Hydraulic/electric supports for leveling RV.

**LP Gas (Liquefied Petroleum / Propane)**

Fuel for stoves, furnaces, water heaters, etc.

**MacERator Pump**

Pump that grinds waste for easier dumping.

**Moisture Intrusion**

Water leaks into RV walls/roof.

**Moochdocking**

Camping at friends' or family's property, often with hookups.

**Motorhome**

Self-propelled RV (Class A, B, or C).

**MSRP**

Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price.

**National Park Pass**

Annual pass giving entry to U.S. parks (often used by RVers).

**Nose Cap**

Aerodynamic front cap on a fifth wheel or trailer.

**OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer)**

Factory-made parts or components.

**Overhang**

Rear portion of RV that extends behind wheels.

**PDI (Pre-Delivery Inspection)**

Dealer inspection before you take delivery of an RV.

**Porch Light**

Exterior light near entry door.

**Pop-Up Camper**

Lightweight trailer with fold-out tent sides.

**PPI (Pre-Purchase Inspection)**

Independent inspection before buying an RV.

**Propane Quick Connect**

Port for attaching grills or appliances to RV propane system.

**Pull-Through Site**

Campsite you can drive straight in and out of without backing.

**Pure Sine Wave Inverter**

Produces clean AC power, safe for sensitive electronics.

### **Quick Disconnect**

Connector that allows fast propane or water hose changes.

### **Rear Kitchen**

Floorplan with the kitchen in the rear of the RV.

### **Residential Fridge**

Full-size refrigerator, runs on AC power.

### **Roof Vent**

Vent fan on the roof for air circulation.

### **RVIA Seal**

Certification that RV meets industry standards.

### **Self-Contained**

RV equipped with its own water, power, and waste systems.

### **Shore Power**

Electricity from campground pedestal.

### **Slide-Out**

Section that extends to increase interior space.

### **Stabilizer Jacks**

Jacks that reduce movement but don't level.

### **Sticks and Bricks**

Slang for a permanent house.

### **Surge Protector**

Device that guards RV against electrical spikes.

### **Suspension**

Springs and shocks that support RV on the road.

### **Tankless Water Heater**

On-demand hot water system.

### **Thermostat**

Device that controls RV heating/cooling.

### **Three-Way Refrigerator**

Runs on AC, DC, or propane.

**Toad**

Vehicle towed behind a motorhome.

**Tongue Jack**

Jack at the front of a travel trailer.

**Tongue Weight**

Downward pressure a trailer exerts on the hitch.

**Torque (Lug Nut Torque)**

Required tightness of lug nuts on RV wheels.

**Tow Dolly**

Two-wheeled device for towing cars.

**Tow Rating**

Max weight a tow vehicle can pull.

**Toy Hauler**

RV with garage space for ATVs, motorcycles, or gear.

**Travel Trailer**

Towable RV hitched to a standard ball mount.

**Triple Tow**

Towing two trailers at once (legal only in some states).

**UVW (Unloaded Vehicle Weight)**

RV weight as built, no cargo or fluids.

**Underbelly**

Enclosed underside of an RV, sometimes insulated.

**Vent Fan**

Ceiling-mounted fan for air circulation.

**Voltage**

Measurement of electrical force.

**Voltage Regulator**

Device that stabilizes incoming power.

**Watt**

Unit of electrical power.

**Weight Distribution Hitch**



Hitch that spreads trailer tongue weight across axles.

**Wet Bath**

Small bathroom where shower and toilet share the same space.

**Wheelbase**

Distance between front and rear axles.

**Winterization**

Process of preparing an RV for freezing temps.

**Workamping**

Trading work (like at campgrounds) for a campsite or pay.

**Yeti Package**

Manufacturer option with cold-weather protection for plumbing.

**Zero-Gravity Steps**

Lightweight RV steps that lift easily with minimal effort.