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RV Planning Worksheet

Use the the worksheet below if you need help in determining the type of RV that will be perfect for you.

This worksheet will help you determine how, when and where you want to use an RV. This information may help you minimize costly mistakes

1. Will you be towing something with the RV? Yes No

an to tow a boat, a car, a snowmobile, a dune buggy, etc., towing a travel trailer or fifth-wheel won't be practical

2. Number of people using the RV? _____

Regular basis: Adults Children

Occasionally: Adults Children

If your children are very young, the answer to the "children" side of the question should be straightforward. If you have teens, however, the question arises regarding how often or, more importantly, how long will they be interested in RV trips? Try to be realistic and not allow "how you would like things to be" overcome your knowledge of "how things are." If you have any doubts, put older kids under "occasionally."

3. Types of use planned?

- Weekend camping
- Vacation trips (two weeks or less)
- Tailgate parties (sports events, etc.)
- Day trips (beach, picnics, etc.)
- Extended travel (more than 2000 miles or two weeks)
- Extended use, without travel
- Use as second car

Question 3 gets to the heart of the matter. Your answers here will dictate in large part the type and size of RV that will be appropriate for you. In most instances, several or even all of these categories may be checked off. If so, establish your priorities. What will be the RV's primary use? It may help you to number the selections above, putting the most important one first.

4. Types of camping planned?

- Remote (no facilities)
- Primitive (minimal facilities)
- RV parks (full facilities)

This question requires a bit of self-analysis as to just what kind of camping you really like and realistically will do. Clearly, remote camping is not for everyone. Would you be willing to simply drive down a little side road, find a wide spot and pull over for the night? More importantly, would you and/or your family be comfortable with that type of camping? Primitive campsites, such as those in national forests, are some of the prettiest available, but they generally have size restrictions and few or no hookups.

5. What are your hobbies, interests, sports?

- A. _____ C. _____
B. _____ D. _____

As you list these, consider the amount of storage space each one might require.

6. What accommodations will you make to store your RV?

- In yard On street (local regulations) Storage yard

(monthly rent: \$_____)

Sometimes this question is overlooked. If you haven't had any experience in this area with a previous RV, you might have to do a bit of investigation into parking regulations where you live, dimensions of space available for parking, and/or the cost of storage.

7. If you decide to purchase an RV, what is an affordable price range? \$_____

What monthly payment can you afford? \$_____

Not all of us can simply draw out of a savings account the entire price of an RV and pay for it right up front. In fact, some of us don't even know the price range we can afford, but we do know how large a monthly payment we can handle. To help you determine your requirements, ask about "Financing Your Fun" While the interest and term listed are real payment amounts, they are presented only for planning purposes to establish a relationship between monthly payments and total RV cost.

Personal Needs

When evaluating size requirements for your RV, consider privacy of the occupants as a major factor. Time spent in the unit is another important item. For very short periods of time, most of us can tolerate too little space. But as time periods extend, the amount of space required by each person increases -- both in the area of comfort and privacy, and also when it comes to storage.

Short-term use, such as day trips or tailgate parties, doesn't call for a great amount of space, but it does mean a minimum amount of setup will be a real advantage. Extended travel has very nearly identical requirements as short-term use, but with economy of operation and driving ease added. As the time of use increases, the number of people who will use the unit on a regular basis starts to be a more important factor. Also, the style of camping you are interested in will have a bearing on size. If you're interested in backroads and out-of-the-way campsites, a large-size RV can be a hindrance.

If you have checked extended periods of use on your worksheet (Question 3), this will affect size as much as any other single factor. If this includes periods of time beyond a couple of months at a stretch, for all intents and purposes it is the same as full-time living. In general, this kind of use will call for the largest RV you can afford. If your RV must also serve as a second car, that will affect the type and size you select. In this case, a large-size RV definitely will be a detriment in urban traffic. (Any of the trailers will allow the tow vehicle to be used as a "second car".)

As you start to narrow down the RV categories, be sure to check our glossary of RV terms. You will need to address such details as floorplan and storage space (inside and outside) requirements, and the degree of self-containment. Full self-containment simply means being able to park without any outside facilities or hookups. This would include full bath facilities; adequate freshwater supply, along with black- and gray-water holding tanks (black for the toilet, and gray for the wash basin, sink and shower); propane tanks to power the refrigerator; stove and furnace; plus 12-volt battery power for the lights, exhaust fan(s) and furnace blower. A generator is usually considered part of a complete self-containment package. While total self-containment is not absolutely necessary, it is certainly nice to have.

As you define your various requirements and consider your financial situation, the type and the size of RV that will meet your needs will become more clear. Then it's simply a matter of selecting the style and brand you like best -- and start smart shopping to put yourself on the road for years of enjoyment in your new lifestyle!

Call us if you need HELP!
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