



Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association of Alberta

Buying a Used Recreational Vehicle

For many, a second-hand RV is a great way to provide economical vacations for the whole family and to get started in the RV lifestyle. However, buying a used unit means a little more work for the consumer than buying a new one. Take time to decide what you want and select a reputable dealer that will guarantee the unit to your comfort level. Be sure to be specific when it comes to any agreed upon warranty so you can maximize your peace of mind and enjoyment.

A few hours of work can save you many dollars on the cost of your investment

The Right RV

When you have chosen between a trailer, a pick-up camper or a motorhome, you must also decide on the interior layout which suits you best. Check out your friends' RVs, or rent a unit to make sure you know what you want.

The Right Condition

- Ø Experts agree that general overall cleanliness is a good indication of the previous owner's care for the vehicle.
- Ø Examine the frame underneath for bends, welds or a lot of rust and corrosion. Look for signs that the unit has been in an accident as it may have irreparable structural weaknesses.
- Ø Check the sewer-hose connection, and look for leaks or cracks in the tanks or the lines that lead to and from them.
- Ø Check the outside sheet metal for damage, stress cracks, and proper roof drainage.
- Ø Inside the vehicle, check the LP gas lines for cracks and leaks. Be sure to have a safety check done on the propane system before you take delivery of the unit. This should be performed by a licensed RV mechanic. Light all the burners on the gas range, the water heater, the oven and the furnace.
- Ø Turn on all the lights, and check the batteries and AC electrical system.
- Ø Flush the toilet, and check the water lines and any pressure system for the fresh water tank.
- Ø Look for signs of coolant leaking in the refrigerator and/or air conditioner.
- Ø Look for leaks and water damage on ceilings, window frames and doors. Work every window, cabinet drawer and door to make sure they operate smoothly.
- Ø Insist that the unit be prepared for use so that you can carry out your checks.
- Ø If you are serious about buying a vehicle, get it checked by a reliable RV mechanic. Always take it for a good test drive. Make sure the driver is comfortable and likes the feel of the vehicle.

The Right Condition

You should have some idea of what you want to pay before you start shopping. A look at other units, newspaper ads and new RV prices will give you a basic idea of costs. Some dealers may offer warranties that can be purchased as an extra but most used RV sales are sold "as is". Get estimates for needed repairs so you can budget accordingly.

No matter what you buy or how much you are willing to invest, take your time and be thorough. The purchase of any RV is an investment. A few well-spent hours before you buy will add to the enjoyment of your RV unit.