



RV Education 101 E-book Series

RV Campground Basics Sample



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Introduction

I have always said if you're going to buy an RV you need to use it; otherwise it is nothing more than a large and expensive lawn ornament. But where to go and what to do when you get there can be confusing until you have a few RV trips under your belt. There is a lot to learn about campgrounds and RV Parks, and the more you know, the better your camping experience will be.

Another thing that's confusing is, all of the different camping clubs available to the new RVer. Joining the wrong club can be a bad experience and an expensive mistake. You need to determine how you plan to use your RV, explore all of your options and join a club or clubs that is just right for you.

So, how do you find these campgrounds, parks and resorts? Should you make reservations before leaving on a trip? How do you register when you arrive? What kind of site should you request? Do you need a partial hook up or a full hook up? What does campground etiquette mean? How do you determine the right camping club for you? That is the purpose of this e-book, to answer all of these questions and much more.

Whether you enjoy camping at out of the way places that offer little in the way of amenities, or you enjoy plush RV resorts that offer hot tubs and private golf lessons there are campgrounds, RV parks and RV resorts that will meet your needs. And the nice thing is these campgrounds, RV parks and RV resorts are located everywhere imaginable. You can find them in small towns, major cities, along the interstate, near the beach, in the mountains and in the middle of nowhere. So read on and discover how to get the most enjoyment out of camping in your RV.

Check out the other RV Education 101 e-books and DVDs available at
www.rveducation101.com

About the Author



Mark J. Polk was introduced to RV's in the early 70's. His friend's father was the General Manager for an RV dealership and would take them camping all of the time. Before long he was working for the dealership washing RV's, and soon after that he was working as an apprentice RV technician.

Not long after graduating from high school he joined the Army and was a wheeled vehicle and power generation mechanic. Six years later he graduated from Warrant Officer School as an Automotive Maintenance Technician and was in charge of some very large fleet maintenance operations throughout his career. He retired from the Army in 1996 as a Chief Warrant Officer Three.

After retiring he got back in the industry he had a passion for. He started out selling RVs for a dealership in North Carolina and was soon promoted to the sales and F&I manager. Polk was concerned about the lack of education and safety awareness for the RV consumer and started his own company, RV Education 101, in 1999. They produce and sell educational videos & DVDs on how to use and maintain RV's. There are currently nine titles in their RV video series with plans to produce several more in the near future.

In addition to producing educational videos, Polk writes articles for RV trade publications, several RV consumer magazines and conducts seminars at RV shows. His book, *The RV Book* was published in January 2006. For more information about RV Education 101 and their educational video library go to www.rveducation101.com

Another must have e-book by Mark Polk is "*Checklists for RVers*" It contains over 30 checklists for RVers, covering all aspects of RVing. The *Checklists for RVers* e-book is available at www.rveducation101.com

Be sure and visit RV Education 101's sister site, www.rvuniversity.com too. You can participate in our "Just for Fun" RV Education 101 Degree Program. It's fun, and if you successfully complete the course criteria you receive a Free "Certificate of Completion" to proudly display in your RV. We even have a "U of RV" bumper sticker available. So, come enroll at the U of RV today and expand your RV Knowledge for tomorrow. Oh, I forgot to mention there is a final exam too!

RV Campground Basics
By Mark J. Polk

C ontributors

I would like to thank the following individuals for helping me edit and proofread “RV Campground Basics”

Peggi McDonald, author of *RV Living in the 21st Century* and webmaster of www.rvliving.net

Peggi is also the author of two informative e-books for RVers, *RV Travel to Canada* and *RV Packing Tips, RV Life Lessons & Easy Living Hints*.

Anne Pierson, President of the Happy Camper Half Price Camping Club www.camphalfprice.com and owner of two Shiloh RV Resorts in Louisiana. Anne is also the host of a social network for RV camping at www.rvscrapbook.com

Listed below are short chapter excerpts from the instant download RV Campground Basics E-book. RV Campground Basics is also available on DVD. You can order either version of RV Campground Basics at www.rveducation101.com

RV Campground Basics Chapter Samples

Campground Terminology

Some terms you will need to Know

Before we get started I thought it would be a good idea if you take a minute and familiarize yourself with some campground and RV terminology you will encounter throughout this e-book.

30 Amp, 120-volt electrical system

Most RVs are designed with 30 Amp, 120 volt electrical systems, and some of the larger RVs with more appliances and two roof A/Cs use a 50 Amp, electrical system. What this basically means is, for everything to operate properly the manufacturer intends the RV to have a 30 or 50 Amp electrical service supplied to the RV.

ARVC, National Association of RV Parks & Campgrounds

ARVC is the only national association exclusively representing the interests of all commercial RV Parks and Campgrounds in the United States.

Membership includes RV parks and campgrounds, cabin and lodge resorts, membership campgrounds and resorts, industry suppliers and park developers. www.arvc.org

Boondocking

Boondocking means rough country, roughing it or out in the sticks, but for RVers it basically translates into free or dry camping. You find a place to camp in an RV, where fees may or may not be charged, and you camp without any utility hook-ups like water, electric, and sewer. It might be at a Flying J truck stop, a Wal-mart parking lot, a remote area in the wilderness or in the middle of a desert. You can still use all of the 12-volt appliances and accessories as long as the deep cycle battery(s) has a charge. You can also use the onboard water system with the 12-volt demand water pump. If you have solar panels and an inverter or an onboard generator you can use some or all of the 120-volt appliances and recharge the auxiliary battery(s). This is what makes an RV fully self-contained.

Campground Hook-Ups

When you hook-up or connect your RV to the campground electric, water and sewer utilities. Some campgrounds may only offer one or two of these utility connections.

There are two more pages of Campground Terminology. Get your RV Campground Basics instant download E-book or DVD at www.rveducation101.com

Chapter 1

Where to go Camping?

Locating that perfect place to go camping in your RV is much easier today than it was in years past. With the Internet you have instant access to public and private campgrounds, RV Parks and RV Resorts everywhere. It is even easy for people who don't have access to the Internet, because there are numerous publications available that list all of these wonderful places to go camping, with phone numbers.

The Recreation Vehicle Industry Association, RVIA states that there are approximately 8,500 RV parks and campgrounds located near national parks and forests, popular tourist attractions, along interstates and in cities and small towns.

RVIA also mentions that there are numerous options available for camping on public lands. At the nation's 390 National Parks there are over 440 campgrounds offering 29,000 campsites.

So, whether you enjoy boondocking, or camping with all the amenities there is someplace for you to go. For the most part, campgrounds can be divided into two categories – **public** and **private**.

Public Campgrounds

Public campgrounds are the campgrounds found in our national parks and national forests, state parks and state forests, army corps of engineer projects and bureau of land management areas. These campgrounds are run by a government agency and are quite affordable. Public camping is more of what I consider back to nature type camping whereas most private campgrounds offer more amenities like a camp store, recreation centers, laundry rooms, playgrounds, swimming pools, full hook-ups and more.

Public campgrounds will usually offer restrooms; a picnic table, fire pit and some will have shower facilities. You will see much more tent camping at public campgrounds than you will at private parks, and hook-ups like water and electricity may or may not be available for RVers. Many of these public campgrounds have size restrictions for RVs too. Be sure and check on any restrictions that may apply before attempting to stay at a public campground. If you enjoy getting back to nature and more primitive type camping there are many beautiful public campgrounds waiting for you to visit. Let's take a look at some of the public campgrounds available to us... [8 more pages](#)

Chapter 2

RV Camping Clubs & Campground Networks

An entire book could be written on camping clubs. Camping clubs are great and depending on how you plan to camp and use your RV there is a camping club that is just right for you, maybe even more than one. On the other hand if you select the wrong club, without doing some research it can be wasteful, not to mention expensive.

If you plan to use your RV occasionally on the weekends, staying close to home, it would not make sense to join a camping club with locations all over the U.S. and Canada. But, if you plan to go fulltiming in your RV and visit every state in the U.S. the club with locations everywhere could save you a lot of money over the long haul. That's the purpose of this chapter, to sort through all of this information, let you know what your options are and help direct you to a camping club or camping network that is just right for you.

Once again in an attempt to be fair and impartial I am listing some popular clubs and networks that I am aware of in each of these categories and I apologize if I leave a club or organization out. You can do a search on the Internet for these various types of camping clubs to get more information.

There are two more pages on RV Camping Clubs & Campground Networks. Get your RV Campground Basics instant download E-book or DVD at www.rveducation101.com

Chapter 3

Trip Planning

Getting There Safely

Forty thousand people in the United States die each year on the road! Getting there can be half the fun, as the saying goes, if you take a few precautions to make your trip safe.

The first step is to plan the trip you are taking. Travel guides, magazines, state tourism boards and Internet sites offer valuable information to help you

plan your trip. Route your trip on a map or from an Internet trip planning site. Always keep an atlas or maps in the RV or tow vehicle. Driving a motor home or pulling a trailer can be stressful, especially if you don't know the route you will be traveling. Using a GPS system can make traveling much less stressful, but I always print the driving directions from www.mapquest.com or www.freetrip.com too.

Complete a pre-trip checklist before you head out on the road. Simple checks like checking your tires, lights, hitch work and other items all contribute to a safer trip. You should make these checks everyday before traveling.

Note: Our “*Checklist for RVers*” e-book includes a pre-trip checklist along with over 30 other convenient checklists for RVers. Available at www.rveducation101.com

There are 7 more pages on Trip Planning & Getting there Safely

Chapter 4

Campgrounds 101

Campground Ratings

I mentioned earlier that there are over **14,000** places to go camping in your RV. We have a pretty good idea of what we can expect at the public camp sites in our national parks and national forests, state parks and state forests, army corps of engineer projects and bureau of land management areas, but what about all of the private campgrounds out there?

We have actually pulled into some campgrounds when we were traveling and made a quick U turn and left. It was easy to see at a glance that these campgrounds were not someplace you would want to spend the night, not to mention several days. Even if you research the campgrounds website or some campground directories before leaving on a trip there is no guarantee that it will be a safe, clean quality campground. So what can we do to know in advance that the campground you are planning to stay at offers a clean, safe environment for you and your family?

There are several large, reputable organizations like AAA, Wheelers RV Resort & Campground Guide, Woodall's and Trailer Life who rate

campgrounds on an annual basis. These campground ratings are based on important considerations like the campgrounds facilities and services, cleanliness, visual appeal, user experience and more. The rating systems may be slightly different, using stars or a numbered rating system, but the bottom line is where the campground stands when it comes to meeting industry standards.

Other organizations like KOA do a good job making sure all the campgrounds in their network are up to industry standards in these same categories. I have never been disappointed staying at a KOA.

So, when you're searching through campground directories and websites for that perfect place to stay, check the ratings before you make any plans. These campground rating systems can sure make you feel better about choosing a clean, safe campground to stay at. Here is a brief overview on some of the campground rating systems.

There are 10 more pages on Campgrounds 101. To get you RV Campground Basics E-book or DVD go to www.rveducation101.com

Chapter 5

Campground Set Up

Site Survey

When you arrive at your campsite the first thing you need to do is what I refer to as a site survey. You need to locate the electric, water and sewer hook ups and make sure the electrical service is compatible with the electrical system on your RV.

Next, you want to check the site for any overhead obstacles like low hanging tree branches that might interfere with parking or setting up the RV. When you position the unit on the site, make sure there is enough clearance for any slide-outs and that there is room to put the patio awning out. Before disconnecting a towable unit from the tow vehicle you will want to level the RV side to side and double check all clearances and access to utility hook ups.

Note: To assist you with setting the RV up, I am including my campground set up checklists from my *Checklists for RVers* e-book available at www.rveducation101.com

Campground Set Up for Travel Trailers & Motorhomes

It would be impossible to cover everything involved with this checklist because of the vast differences between RVs. However most RVs do have many things in common and that is what we will concentrate on. The purpose of this checklist is to provide a basic system of what to do when you arrive at your site. Use the items that apply to your RV and feel free to tailor the list to your needs.

There are 5 more pages on Campground Set-Up

Chapter 6

Campground Etiquette & Rules

Just about every campground you go to will have a list of rules that they request visitors to follow, just like the rules you probably have for your household. Another list of rules that isn't necessarily written anywhere is what is referred to as campground etiquette. These are the rules that RVers learn over time and practice out of respect for other campers, the campground owners and the environment. When you arrive at the campground you should always observe the following campground etiquette.

Be a Good Neighbor

This is a big one and it encompasses many areas surrounding your stay at the campground. When a campground gets busy it means more people, more RV's, more children, and more pets, which usually equates to less personal space for everybody.

One of the reasons we enjoy getting away in our RV is to get a little peace and quiet. Now it's understandable for children, who are excited to be camping, to make some noise but there is a time and place for everything. Not everybody likes getting up early or staying up late, so you need to be considerate of the people around you.

Don't allow your children to make a great deal of noise early in the morning and late at night. And it's not always children who are making all the noise. Sometimes it's the guy who for some reason thinks he has to start his diesel motorhome every morning and let it sit there and idle for no real reason. Sometimes it's at a state park and the camper next to you runs his generator all hours of the night. Other times it's your loud neighbors who have campfire parties until two in the morning.

Quiet Hours

Campgrounds have quiet hours and you and the other people with you need to observe these quiet hours. During quiet hours you shouldn't hear generators running or parties next door. If you arrive at the campground early in the morning or late in the evening, try to limit the amount of noise and light while getting parked and set up.

[There are 2 more pages on Campground Etiquette](#)

Chapter 7

RV Dump Stations

Saving the RV Dump Stations

There is a real concern about what the future holds for RV dump stations that RVers can use. RV dump stations everywhere are closing down operation because of several reasons. Some, but not all of these reasons are the costs and headaches involved to keep them operating and properly maintained, the wrong types of chemicals used by RVers and because of neglect and poor housekeeping by people who use these dump stations.

RV holding tanks are used to hold, or store waste water until a sewer system is available to empty the tanks. Because little water is used, in comparison to a domestic waste water system, RV holding tank wastewater is far more concentrated. Adding to the problem are the chemicals required to assist in breaking down the waste and controlling odors. This requires more treatment than a regular house type waste system and it complicates the disposal of RV holding tank waste. In many cases it is much easier to just close the dump station.

Note: Visit www.sanidumps.com for a free listings of dump stations available in several countries, including USA and Canada.

The problem that the average RVer is confronted with is how to control holding tank odors. Formaldehyde based chemicals do a better job of controlling odors. The problem with this is the organic strength from the mixture in an RV holding tank can be fifteen to twenty times stronger than a typical wastewater system. This leads to more complications for dump station owners. This problem is compounded when the RVer gets some odors from the holding tank and dumps even more chemicals in the holding tank in an attempt to control the odors. It is recommended that RVers use environmentally friendly enzyme/bacteria based chemicals because they consist of natural organic chemicals. However they do have a lower organic

strength, which is better for the dump station but they don't control odors as well as formaldehyde compounds.

There are 3 more pages on RV dump stations

Thank you for taking a minute to look at our RV Campground Basics sample. To get your instant download E-book or DVD please go to www.rveducation101.com