TRAILERSTEAD

RV Setup Pack

A practical, printable system for calmer arrivals, safer setups and cleaner departures.

PRINT IT. KEEP IT IN THE TRAILER. USE IT EVERY TRIP.

Arrival checklist | Hookup workflow | Off-grid workflow | Departure checklist | Safety check | Campsite notes

Designed for real campsite use

This pack is intentionally conservative. It helps you remember the sequence and the checks; it does not replace your trailer, appliance, hitch, campground or manufacturer instructions.

CANADIAN RV OWNERSHIP, MADE SIMPLER

START HERE

How to use this pack

The goal is not to create more chores. The goal is to make your setup sequence repeatable enough that you stop relying on memory when you are tired, rushed or arriving after dark.

The simple rule

Chock and secure first. Level next. Stabilize after levelling. Connect utilities only after the trailer is safely positioned. Before departure, reverse the logic: disconnect, stow, verify, then move.

Keep this in the trailer

- [ ] Print the arrival/departure pages back-to-back.
- [ ] Keep a pen or grease pencil with the pack.
- [ ] Write down any trailer-specific quirks as you learn them.
- [ ] Review the emergency/safety page at the start of the season.

Use Trailerstead for decisions

- [ ] Use this pack for sequence and memory.
- [ ] Use your owner's manuals for model-specific procedures.
- [ ] Use Trailerstead when deciding what gear is actually worth buying.
- [ ] Do not let a checklist override a visible safety problem.

Trailer profile

Trailer / RV:	_____	Electrical service:	15A / 30A / 50A / other
Tow vehicle:	_____	Fresh water capacity:	_____
Tire cold PSI:	_____	Emergency contact:	_____

ARRIVAL

Campsite arrival - 10 minute sequence

Do not unhitch until the trailer is secured against movement.

If the site is steep, soft, unusually uneven or otherwise feels unsafe, stop and reassess before proceeding.

- [ ] **Pause before backing in.** Walk the site. Look up for branches; down for posts, fire rings and utilities; behind for obstacles; and across for slope.
- [ ] **Choose the final trailer position.** Consider slide/awning clearance, door swing, utility reach and where water could pool if it rains.
- [ ] **Back into position.** Use a spotter when available. Stop immediately if communication is lost.
- [ ] **Chock the wheels before unhitching.** Chocks go in while the tow vehicle still controls the trailer.
- [ ] **Level side-to-side.** Use blocks under the low-side wheel(s) as appropriate for your equipment and trailer.
- [ ] **Unhitch only after the trailer is secured.** Follow your hitch manufacturer procedure.
- [ ] **Level front-to-back.** Use the tongue jack or approved levelling system.
- [ ] **Stabilize.** Stabilizer jacks reduce movement; they are not a substitute for safe levelling unless your system is specifically designed for levelling.
- [ ] **Connect utilities.** Power, water and sewer come after positioning and stabilization.
- [ ] **Do a final walk-around.** Confirm chocks, jacks, cords/hoses, awning area, stairs and any open compartments are safe.

Arrival notes

SERVICED SITES

Hookup workflow

Use only the connections that apply to your site. If you are unsure about campground equipment or your trailer connection, stop and verify before connecting.

Electrical

- [ ] Confirm pedestal breaker is OFF before plugging in.
- [ ] Inspect plug, receptacle and cord for obvious damage or heat marks.
- [ ] Use an electrical management system / surge protector matched to your service when available.
- [ ] Connect cord fully, then energize the pedestal.
- [ ] If the EMS reports a fault, do not bypass it just to get power.

Water

- [ ] Use a hose intended for potable/drinking water.
- [ ] Use a pressure regulator when connected to campground pressure unless your system instructions say otherwise.
- [ ] Check hose washers and fittings before pressurizing.
- [ ] Open water slowly and inspect inside/outside for leaks.
- [ ] Keep potable-water gear separate from sewer gear.

Sewer / holding tanks

- [ ] Wear disposable gloves and keep sewer equipment isolated from drinking-water equipment.
- [ ] Secure the sewer connection before opening a valve.
- [ ] For typical RV holding-tank use, avoid leaving the black-tank valve continuously open unless your system/campground instructions specifically require it.
- [ ] Before departure, follow your trailer procedure for dumping, rinsing where permitted, closing valves and capping the outlet.
- [ ] Wash hands and sanitize anything that may have contacted wastewater.

Power problem?

Repeated breaker trips, burning smells, visibly damaged cords/receptacles or electrical fault indications are stop-and-investigate conditions - not reasons to keep resetting the breaker.

BOONDOCKING

No-hookup / off-grid setup

Off-grid camping changes what matters first. You are managing finite battery energy, finite water and waste capacity instead of campsite hookups.

First 15 minutes

- [ ] Secure, level and stabilize exactly as you would on a serviced site.
- [ ] Confirm battery state of charge before turning on high-draw loads.
- [ ] Check fresh-water quantity and wastewater capacity.
- [ ] Choose solar placement before shade patterns change.
- [ ] Decide which loads are essential tonight versus optional.

Energy discipline

- [ ] Separate battery storage from charging and from AC inverter capacity - they solve different problems.
- [ ] Know which appliances use propane, 12V DC or 120V AC.
- [ ] Avoid assuming a solar panel can directly run arbitrary AC loads.
- [ ] Ventilate generators and follow all distance/placement rules in the generator and campground instructions.
- [ ] Recheck battery state before bed if furnace or other overnight 12V loads matter.

Tonight's resource plan

Resource	Starting point	What matters tonight
Battery	_____	_____
Fresh water	_____	_____
Grey tank	_____	_____
Black tank	_____	_____
Propane / fuel	_____	_____

Before buying more off-grid gear

Identify the actual constraint first: storage capacity, charging speed, solar harvest, inverter capability, generator use, water or waste. Buying the wrong category is an expensive way to solve the wrong problem.

BEFORE RELAXING

First-night and safety check

- [ ] Smoke alarm, carbon-monoxide alarm and propane/LP alarm appear present and operational according to their test procedure.
- [ ] Fire extinguisher is accessible, charged/within service condition, and everyone knows where it is.
- [ ] Exit paths are clear and emergency exits are not blocked by gear.
- [ ] Propane appliances show no obvious abnormal smell, soot or unsafe operation. If you smell propane, shut down and follow emergency guidance for your system.
- [ ] All exterior steps, handrails and mats are stable enough for nighttime use.
- [ ] Pets/children cannot access hot surfaces, sharp edges, hitch components or campground traffic.
- [ ] Weather hazards are understood: wind, lightning, heat, cold, flood-prone site, tree hazards and any campground alerts.
- [ ] Before bed, confirm furnace/heat source and ventilation are being used exactly as designed - never improvise indoor combustion heating.

Carbon monoxide is invisible and dangerous

Never run a generator, engine, charcoal appliance or other combustion source in an enclosed or poorly ventilated space. Follow the equipment manufacturer and campground placement guidance.

Anything to fix tomorrow?

PACK UP WITHOUT FORGETTING THE EXPENSIVE STUFF

Departure checklist

- [ ] **Inside secure.** Cabinets/latches closed, loose items stowed, fridge contents secured, vents/windows handled for travel, water pump/appliances set appropriately.
- [ ] **Slides / pop-outs / bunk ends / roof systems secured.** Follow the trailer-specific procedure and visually verify full travel position.
- [ ] **Awning fully retracted and locked for travel.**
- [ ] **Utilities disconnected and stowed.** Power cord, potable water gear and sewer gear each packed in their proper place.
- [ ] **Waste outlet capped and valves closed.**
- [ ] **Stabilizers fully retracted.**
- [ ] **Hitch connected and verified.** Coupler/kingpin connection, latch, safety chains, breakaway cable, wiring plug and weight-distribution/sway equipment as applicable.
- [ ] **Raise/retract tongue jack and any levelling equipment as required.**
- [ ] **Remove wheel chocks last.** Only after the tow vehicle is fully connected and controlling the trailer.
- [ ] **Lights and brake signals checked.** Confirm running, brake and turn signals before leaving.
- [ ] **Final 360-degree walk-around.** Look under, above and around the trailer. Check doors, steps, antenna, vents, cords, hoses, tools and campsite trash.
- [ ] **Pull forward a short distance and stop.** If safe to do so, make one final visual check of the site and trailer before entering traffic.

Things we almost forgot this time

LEARN FROM EVERY TRIP

Campsite + trip notes

The fastest way to stop overbuying RV gear is to record the problems you actually experience. After a few trips, patterns become obvious.

Trip / campground	_____
Site type	Full hookup / electric / water / dry / other: _____
Weather	_____
Best thing about setup	_____
Most annoying setup task	_____
Gear that earned its space	_____
Gear we never used	_____
Something to repair	_____
Something we might buy	_____

The three things to improve before the next trip

BUY LESS, BUY BETTER

Gear decision worksheet

Do not start with the product.

Start with the problem. If you cannot describe the recurring problem in one sentence, you probably do not need to shop yet.

1. The recurring problem	_____ _____
2. When does it happen?	_____
3. Safety issue or convenience?	Safety / reliability / comfort / convenience / cosmetic
4. What have we already tried?	_____
5. Fit constraints	Size: _____ Weight: _____ Power: _____ Other: _____
6. What must be verified?	Trailer model / electrical service / tire size / hitch / connector / other
7. Cheapest adequate solution	_____
8. Premium feature actually worth paying for	_____
9. Decision	BUY NOW / WAIT / SKIP

Trailerstead principle: fit and usefulness come before commission.

TEAR OUT / LAMINATE

One-page quick reference

ARRIVAL: Walk site -> position -> chock -> level side-to-side -> unhitch -> level front-to-back -> stabilize -> connect utilities -> final walk-around.

DEPARTURE: Secure inside -> retract slides/awnings -> disconnect utilities -> retract stabilizers -> hitch completely -> retract jack -> remove chocks last -> lights/brakes -> 360 walk-around.

Electrical faults or repeated breaker trips Propane smell Unexplained tire damage/pressure loss Trailer instability or hitch concern Soft/unstable ground under support points Anything you cannot safely identify	Indoor combustion heating Electrical adapters/wiring beyond their ratings Lifting with stabilizers not designed for lifting Towing with unresolved sway/instability Bypassing a protective device because it trips Mixing potable-water and sewer equipment

Before every tow

Hitch connection, safety chains, breakaway cable, electrical plug, lights, tires, jacks, doors/steps and anything mounted outside deserve a visual check every time.

My non-negotiables before moving:

Trailerstead - Your home beyond home.