

AUTOTRANSFORMERS

I am always getting questions about whether these are needed for camping and worth the cost. What this device does is automatically increase the A/C voltage about 10% if it is below a level that could adversely affect some of your RV appliances. This increase is reduced if the voltage rises to a safe value. Lighting, water heater, power jacks, propane furnace, electric heaters are not usually damaged by low A/C voltage. Air Conditioners and microwaves, however, can be seriously damaged. This is particularly true for the air conditioning compressor. When the voltage is low then motors will require more current and run slow thus increasing heat buildup. If you are in a Campground with poor wiring then problem can occur if you don't monitor the A/C voltage. I have only run into this two or three times in my camping adventures and in that case, we turned off the air conditioner and limited our current draw. The autotransformer will boost your voltage and allow you to draw more current to safely run your appliances. However, it will further reduce the voltage of your neighbors. Many years ago, Campgrounds were built primarily for tent campers. Now they typically provide for 20, 30 and 50 amp rigs. In general, I think the cost benefit for an autotransformer is marginal.