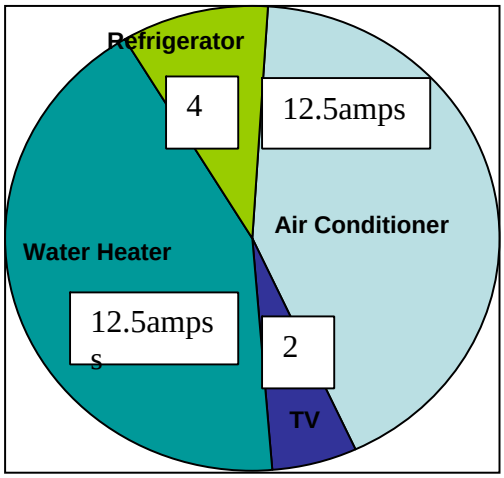
Economizing 30 Amp Power Usage

Bill Payne recently sent me this article about using your 30 amp. service effectively and the choices you have when using your appliances, etc. in your RV. This is a topic I thought you might find useful and one that comes up quite often. Sometimes you do have to make choices when RV'ing.

The 30 Amp Electric Pie

Most of us always ask for 30-amp service when we pull into a RV Park for a stay. But how many have really thought about what 30-amp service means when running things in the rig. If we think of our 30-amp connection as a pie let's take a look at how we use it on a typical overnight stay.

After check-in and set up you find that it is a little to hot for comfort so you turn the air conditioner on. You just took a 12.5 amp piece from the pie. You turn the TV on and there goes another 2-amp piece. You are thinking about dinner and the dirty dishes so you turn the water heater on and just ate another 12.5 amps from the pie. You have consumed 27 amps and have not even thought about the refrigerator, which is using another 4 amps. Wait 27 and 4 is 31 amps.



You are right at the max and have not even plugged in the coffee pot or fry pan. This assumes of course that the park power is operating correctly. Being smart about power consumption can save you from blowing a breaker and having to trek out and reset it. Knowing the AMPS of all the electrical appliances in your rig can help you manage electrical use. The following is a list of typical electrical appliances used and the average amps they require:

Air Conditioner 15,000 BTU (may draw up to 19amps on start-up)	12.5 amps	Toaster	10.0 amps
Converter (with nothing in use)	1.5 amps	Hair Dryer	10.0 amps
Electric Water Heater (6 gals)	12.5 amps	TV	2.0 amps
Electric radiant heater- 1500 watts	12.5 amps	Vacuum (small)	2.0 amps
Electric Refrigerator	4.0 amps	Electric Fry Pan	10 amps
Microwave Oven	12.5 amps	Iron	10 amps
Electric Coffee Pot	9.0 amps	Food Processor	6.0 amps
Crock Pot	1.5 amps	Heating Pad	1.5 amps

Most electrical products show how many watts or amps it takes to operate either on the product itself or in the instructions. If it shows watts, divide the watts by 120 (volts) and that gives you the amps, to get watts, multiply the amps by 120 (volts).

It is worth your time to take an inventory on the amps each electrical item you have uses so that you can manage your total usage at one time and not have the inconvenience of a blown breaker.

This information also applies if you are using a generator as a power source. Generators have breakers with different amp. ratings so you have limitations on what items can be operated at any one time.