

Surge Protector???

QUESTION: Greetings from lovely Rolla, MO. I am struggling with the need for a surge protector for my 2007 Air- stream Classic. The struggle is do I need to part with \$120 for one of these things or am I protected by my circuit breakers and fuses? If I need one do I get the permanent installation or the outside model. (I fear this would be an object of thievery.) I appreciate your expertise as always.

ANSWER: Your circuit breakers and fuses provide no surge protection, however, in over 50 years of camping with trailers and motorhomes I have never found the need for an elaborate RV surge protector. Actually in one Canadian camp- ground, a number of years ago, they had incorrectly wired one string of campsites and had 220 VAC on the outlets. Fortunately, we discovered it before anyone hooked up to the sites. Back then each caravan had an electrician who pre-checked each campsite for correctly wired outlets. A surge protector would not have helped in that situation. The caravan committee did away with this a number of years ago, because it was rarely needed.

What I would suggest is to use inexpensive (indoor) surge protectors on any sensitive or expensive equipment you want to carry. For example your computer, HDTV or Amateur Radio Set. Virtually all of the campgrounds today have excellent power, which means you should not need any more protection than you would do at home. So save your money. You can get a single or multiple outlet protector for each circuit that will have sensitive equipment attached.

Some remote campgrounds can be found that have poor unreliable shore power, which is usually a problem in the heat of summer. Only an Autotransformer or using your own generator can help in this situation.

A good quality surge protector will cost in the \$10-\$15 range. Don't waste your money on the under

\$5 units, which don't protect anything. Forget about a lightning strike as even the \$150 units cannot protect in this event.

One item you should buy is an electric outlet circuit tester (5 or 6 dollars), which tells you if the neutral wire is connected to the correct outlet terminal and that you have a proper ground. This is available from many hardware stores. You simply plug it in and check the lights. It works for 30 amps by using a 20 amp adaptor. With an aluminum skin this is particularly important for an Airstream, especially in the rain.