

## Wheel Locks

For years, my favorite method of keeping my Airstream trailer from rolling while parked has been to use a wheel lock. I used this method first with a two-axle then later a threeaxle trailer. Wheel locks are made of aluminum or aluminum alloy and fit between two adjacent tires. A top and bottom wedge are connected by an adjustable shaft and a locking lever that snaps down, applying significant outward pressure to the adjacent tires thus making them very resistant to rolling. Having observed a distorted wheel lock and two skidding tires that resulted when a fellow Airstreamer attempted to drive off without removing the wheel lock, I had great faith in their absolute ability to hold the trailer under any circumstances. No more! HEAR THIS CAUTION! If you are camping on a front-to-rear non-level site, you should not count on a wheel lock to hold you!

An Airstream owner parked next to me at a campground applied a wheel lock. A day or so later, one of the tires was flat and the usually tight lock was just barely hanging on, providing absolutely no locking force! If the trailer had been on a non-level site, it would have rolled, tearing off the water hose and electrical connections and digging a long furrow with the hitch-jack shaft. If you think that sounds exciting, imagine being in the trailer and having the movement of your body start the process!

To ensure this will not happen, carry a pair of wooden wedge blocks, cut at a long, low angle. On a nonlevel site, put one under the downhill tire on each side of the axle and allow the rig to ride up on the pair. Put the tow vehicle in neutral and slowly take your foot off the brake, touching it several times until the rig settles and will not roll down the hill (up the wedges) anymore. At this point put the wheel lock on and unhitch the tow vehicle. If you subsequently have the misfortune of losing all air pressure in one of the locked down tires, your rig will be more secure.

Alternatively if you don't like messing with wood wedges, you could purchase a second wheel lock and place one on each side of the trailer. The chances of a tire deflating on each side of the trailer at the same time are probably identical to those of winning the lottery.