

My Top Things to Do to My RV

We have published this list before, but, there are a lot of Airstreamers out there who may not have seen this. I feel like we should publish this article every year due to the importance of these items for safe, maintenance (almost) free, trailering that we all desire. Here is my revised “top things to do to an Airstream”. The suggestions are in priority order. *For additional related information go to: wbcci.org; then maint. Info.; drag down to: (see note below paragraphs in italics)*

1. Install new LT tires if they will fit your trailer. I prefer the Michelin LTX 215/85R 16E MS tires (the Defender, a 50K mile tire). Airstream put these tires on the Eddie Bauer trailer. You will also have to go to 6” x 16” wheels (I recommend steel wheels finished to match the aluminum Airstream look) for these tires. The inflated outside diameter of these tires is 30.4”. You will have to match the bolt pattern of your trailer. Get zero offset wheels for your trailer. A quick measurement on your trailer will tell you if this is possible. If the 16’s won’t fit Goodyear has a 15” LT tire that might work. Everything is riding on your tires! *ASTHG 0316; 0416; 0517. Airstream Tech Help Group month and year in the PDF files.*
2. Replace your single stage power conditioner (if you have one) with a three or four stage power conditioner. A single stage power conditioner will shorten the battery life. A multiple-stage power conditioner will charge and maintain your battery without shortening the battery life. If possible, always keep your battery charged, even if you have to take it out of the trailer and home, still keep it charged. Use a Battery Tender (maintainer) charger if charging the battery out of the rig. *ASTHG 0909; 1016.*
3. Take a good look at your weight distribution hitch. Is it set up right and does it work for you. Many Airstreamers have discovered the Anderson hitch (see also Airstream Forum). It is light and does not use torsion bars which, if you have experienced it, can whack your shin if not handled right. Anti-sway is built-in to the hitch ball arrangement – no extra device is required. I have used this hitch up to 28’ trailer length. Longer trailers seem to fare well with the Blue-OX, Pro-pride, or Hensley. *Howard, safe towing.*
4. If your battery is tired and not performing like you’d like, consider upgrading to absorbent glass mat (AGM) batteries. It could be the last battery you’ll ever buy! You will not have to add water to your battery again! *ASTHG 0909, 1016.*
5. Convert to LED interior lights. These conversions used to be very costly to consider, but prices have gone down. The power draw of LEDs are impressively low! You can run all the lights in your trailer and draw less power than one overhead fixture with four incandescent bulbs.
6. Consider adding a surge protector. Surge protectors can either be permanently mounted in the trailer or plugged between the power pedestal and your trailer. Either way, RV parks are notorious for wildly fluctuating power, and a good surge protector will keep your trailer safe from power highs and lows.

7. Get a quality portable electric heater. It will run quieter than your propane heater and saves propane. You might look for a “milk house style” heater (www.Grainger.com or www.Zoro.com). If you need heat anytime, it is always good to have **two** possible sources for heat.
8. Look at your mattress(es) in view of comfort. One of the main deterrents to happy camping is not being able to get a good night’s sleep! This is fixable! Email us with your specific questions – we have been there and done that.
9. What is or has been bugging you about something in or on your trailer? What would you like to do about it? What are **your** ideas? Ask the *Blue Beret* tech help group and, if possible, send photos so we can look at your situation. We just might have some ideas how you could fix or change those items for the better.
10. Maintenance check-list items (see also traveling check list this year): (A) Check your trailer ground and make sure you have a good electrical ground between your frame, aluminum skin and AC/DC power systems. This is the most common electrical problem on trailers. (B) Replace your water filter cartridge if you trailer has one, and if it doesn’t, consider adding one to your fresh water system. (C) Inspect and re-seal roof vents. Consider a product available at your local hardware store called “vulcum”. Do not forget the vents for the waste water drains. These seals can deteriorate rapidly and cause leaks. (D) Check seals around windows and doors and condition with glycerin or silicone if they are dry and stiff. (E) Leak test propane lines and regulator. Check tank levels. (F) Check valve seals on the grey and black tanks. (G) Do you need new water filters for the trailer and sink. (H) Does your jack need lubrication? Does the in-line fuse need to be replaced with a self-resetting in-line 30A automotive fuse? You may also have to change out the fuse holder. Visually inspect, as well as check connections for leaks with soapy water. Do not forget connections inside your trailer at the furnace, refrigerator, stove, oven, water heater and gas lights. (I) Don’t forget security for your hitch and batteries. We recommend a Mega Hitch lock or eq. and a lock on the battery compartment.

The main lesson is to not take your Airstream for granted. Most of the time, things work as expected: the lights come on, windows open and close, and water flows; but sometimes there are little things that have been nagging at you. There are also the hidden and often overlooked systems that you rely on. For your safety and peace of mind while you travel enjoying the open spaces with your trailer, spend a little time now to make sure your adventures in the year to come are all favorable ones! See you, safely, down the road.