

Motorhome Pre-Purchase Checklist

OUTSIDE CHECKS	NOTES
<input type="checkbox"/> The Owner: Does he/she own it? ①	
<input type="checkbox"/> Check the advert ②	
<input type="checkbox"/> General Condition ③	
<input type="checkbox"/> Keys, check all of them ④	
<input type="checkbox"/> Roof, you need to get up there. ⑤	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cab Joins, check seal. ⑥	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tyres ⑦	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tyres Age	
<input type="checkbox"/> Condition	
<input type="checkbox"/> Windows ⑧	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lockers ⑨	
<input type="checkbox"/> Engine Compartment ⑩	
<input type="checkbox"/> Oil Levels	
<input type="checkbox"/> Brake Fluid	
<input type="checkbox"/> Power Steering	
<input type="checkbox"/> Coolant	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gas Locker ⑪	
<input type="checkbox"/> Water Fill ⑫	
<input type="checkbox"/> Leisure Batteries ⑬	
<input type="checkbox"/> Awning s ⑭	
<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet Cassette ⑮	
<input type="checkbox"/> Steps ⑯	
<input type="checkbox"/> Doors ⑰	
<input type="checkbox"/> Underneath ⑱	
<input type="checkbox"/> Slides ⑲	
<input type="checkbox"/> Leveling or Steadies ⑳	
<input type="checkbox"/> Spare Wheel ㉑	
<input type="checkbox"/> Anything Bolted On ㉒	

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INSIDE CHECKS	NOTES
<input type="checkbox"/> Check The Mileage ②③	
<input type="checkbox"/> Look/Smell for Damp ②④	
<input type="checkbox"/> Soft or mushy floor walls? ②⑤	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cab Seats ②⑥	
<input type="checkbox"/> Curtains and Screens ②⑦	
<input type="checkbox"/> Luton and Bunk Beds ②⑧	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fire Equipment and Detectors ②⑨	
<input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioners ③⑩	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cupboards & Doors ③⑪	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fridge – Freezer ③⑫	
<input type="checkbox"/> Check Soft Furnishings ③⑬	
<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet & Washroom ③⑭	
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment System ③⑮	
<input type="checkbox"/> Main Control Panel ③⑯	
<input type="checkbox"/> Electrics, sockets, lights ③⑰	
<input type="checkbox"/> Water Heater ③⑱	
<input type="checkbox"/> Heater and Blown Air ③⑲	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hob & Oven ④①	
<input type="checkbox"/> Removable Carpets ④②	
<input type="checkbox"/> Alarm Test and Instructions ④③	
DOCUMENT CHECKS	OBSERVATIONS
<input type="checkbox"/> Inspect all Documents ④③	
<input type="checkbox"/> Registration Document	
<input type="checkbox"/> MOT	
<input type="checkbox"/> Road Tax	
<input type="checkbox"/> Service History	
<input type="checkbox"/> Appliance Handbooks	

Pre Purchase Checklist – Notes

Please read these notes before you use the checklists

1 The owner	Are you sure this is the owner? See the chapter on stolen vans. Is the owner helpful, is everything ready to show? Batteries charged? Documents ready? A proud careful owner will have all the service history and will enjoy showing you around. Sloppiness here might mean that the vehicle has not been well maintained!
2 Check The Spec or Advert	If you are given a spec sheet by the dealer, or you have an original advert then keep it, The vehicle must be as described. If you later find that it isn't. This original will help in any dispute.
3 General Condition	Look down the length of the motorhome, are there any bumps or bulges if so, this might indicate delamination. Look for chips and cracks. Check for signs of repairs, if they haven't been done properly there could be problems in the future. Walk away if anything looks serious.
4 Keys	You need all of them. Don't forget the spare alarm fob.
5 Roof	You need to see up here, be very careful if it is wet. If there is a ladder, check the mounting points look sound before you climb it. Check all the seals and gaskets on all the things fitted to the roof are sound and not cracked and dry, check vent covers for cracks. The rubber roofs found on many American motorhomes, whilst tough is fairly thin and can be punctured easily.
6 Cab to Body Join	If it's a coach built motorhome, examine the seals for signs of any movement and the seals are all intact.
7 Tyres	Is the tyre wear indicative of the vehicle age and condition? Is the tread on the tyres OK? Is the wear uniform across the tyre? How old are the tyres? Check the four digit number the 1 st and 2 nd digits are the week of manufacture, the 3 rd and 4 th are the year, so 5007 indicates the tyres were made in December 2007. Motorhome tyres should not be older than 5 years! Never accept a vehicle that has cracks in the sidewalls, negotiate a discount to replace them.
8 Windows	Check alignment and seals, check that any scratches are not too deep; surface scratches can be polished out but gouges can't. Check the rubber window seals; are they still pliable? If possible lift the seal and check the wall, if water has been getting in this will be evident. Check that they are sealed when closed. Check the hinge is well fixed to the body. On Van conversions especially pay particular attention to around the windows, as these will have been cut out as part of the conversion and some are susceptible to corrosion around the windows.

9 Lockers	Open and close every locker door, check the alignment and ensure all the gaskets are well fitted and working. Lift the seals where you can and check for water access. Check any lights in locker work; ensure that the door can be locked. There should be an electrical cable in one of the lockers ensure that you have one.
10 Engine Area	Check levels; Oil, Coolant, Power Steering, Transmission, washer bottle. Look for signs of leaks; Check the condition of hoses and wiring. If it is a Fiat, ask for evidence of cambelt (Timing belt) replacement if the vehicle is over 4 years old, it will need doing and is expensive. Start it up are there any unhealthy sounding noises? Check the oil. If it is low it shows the previous owner has not cared for the engine, and it's probably a bad buy.
11 Gas Locker	Check the gas locker. Look at the condition of the gas hoses, id the pipe approved? Carefully check for cracks and good connections, turn gas off.
12 Water Fill	Does the water filler cap lock? Lock it. Check the outside shower/tap points. Most motorhomes apart from some small panel van conversions or car derivatives will have both a fresh water tank and a grey water tank. This may be mounted under the floor outside exposed to the elements, in a floor cavity or could just as easily be under a seat. Water is heavy! Check the mounting frames that secure the tank are secure. The filler cap will almost always be outside, ensure you have a key, but don't panic if you cannot lock it. These locks are notorious for not working.
13 Leisure Batteries	Where are they, what condition are they in? What are the combined Amps? How old are they? Check the control panel and see what it reports about their condition. Put all the lights on; check again in a few minutes; still OK?
14 Awnings	Open the awning fully, does it open easily? Check for damage, ensure the support arms and not broken, ensure you have all the tools and sides if you are buying a privacy room.
15 Toilet Cassette	Check that it is present, check no one has left you a present in it! This should be clean and empty. They are expensive so they do get nicked. If the toilet is used without the cassette in place then you have a nasty clean up job to do! Expect to pay well over £80 to replace one that you subsequently find is missing.
16 Steps	Check the operation of the step. Electric steps should retract when you start the engine, do they?

17 Doors	Just like windows, check that not only that they close properly but pay particular attention to the seals to see that they are not letting water get into the walls of the motorhome. Check the locks, check you have at least 2 keys per lock.
18 Underneath	You must take a look, check for signs of damage or repair, oil or other fluid leaks, exhaust mounts, straps, rubber mountings etc. Ask about anything you are unsure of.
19 Slides	If you are buying a motorhome with slides, check that they are sealed properly when close. Before checking that they are operational. They should move in and out smoothly with no rocking. Ask about the manual over-ride, ask to see the winding rod for manual override.
20 Levelling or Steadies	If present Check condition, check that they work as expected. If it's an RV with hydraulic jacks. Check that warnings work should you try to drive with the jacks down.
21 Spare Wheel	Check that the wheel is the right one and has the right number of studs etc. Check the condition of the spare and the serviceability of the retention system that hold the spare safe. Authors Note: I carried a spare wheel on an RV for two years, when I needed it I found would not fit. Right size tyre, wrong wheel!
22 Anything bolted on	Look carefully at any item that is attached, this includes ladders, racks, top boxes etc. Screw heads that show signs of discolouration might be an indication of rust. Remove any suspect screws and take a look at them. A screw that is completely rusty or is wet indicates that there may well be water damage. Missing screws may have fallen out of rotten timber frames full of dry or wet rot. Good screws will have been applied with a sealant and water will not be able to penetrate.
23 Check Mileage	Make a note of this and ensure that it tallies with the sales literature and sales documentation. Track the mileage through MOT and service receipts.
24 Damp	Do not buy a damp motorhome, it will literally rot away. Use your nose, does it smell of damp? Smell inside cupboards, wardrobes and under the sink. Study the roof lining and look for visible stains and water marks. Pay particular attention around the roof vent openings and where walls meet ceiling and where walls meet walls. Look for rust showing on any nails or screws or staples. Look inside the overhead cabinets and check the ceiling. Mildew stains may show up as black spots on ceilings and wallboards, but behind the scenes, where the water has entered there may well be dry-rot problems. Check the area where the wall panel meets the floor for water marks, also look carefully in all the corners, these will often be in cupboards, but look carefully as corners are very susceptible to leaking. Look in the area underneath each window. Water ingress can also cause delamination, once water is getting in, it may travel to a different part of the motorhome and do its damage there. The cost of putting right rotting walls, floors or ceilings is horrendous, so it pays to have a professional check it over for damp.

25	Walls and Floors	<p>Inside the motorhome, press the walls and ceiling firmly with your thumb to check for any signs of softness which indicates possible water damage. In particular, do this low down in the corners under the seats and base units because this is often where water ingress first appears, and is then overlooked by the owner (they get used to the damp smell) until it has taken a firm hold, by which time it's probably too late.</p> <p>The most common area for sagging or delaminated floors is the entry area. If the floor is soft right where the first foot falls it may well be rot. Rot can spread alarmingly quickly so it will need to be checked out. The floor should be dead level, lay a straight edge on it and you will quickly see any hollow areas which might be indicative of damp or delamination. Some older floors do warp a little but you must ensure this is not as a result of damp, they should still feel solid.</p>
26	Cab Seats	Check the condition of the seat belts and the anchors. Give the chairs a good tug, push and pull to check they are firmly in place. If they swivel it should be a smooth and easy operation, check the seat back operation also.
27	Curtains and Fly Screens	These are easily broken if care is not used, they can be expensive to replace so ensure that all blinds, especially fly screens work as they should.
28	Bunk Beds, overhead Cabs	Check that the means of access, which is normally a ladder is the original and that it is secure in use. Above ground bunks for children should have some protection against falling out of bed.
29	Fire Precautions	Check that there is an extinguisher fitted, the pressure is O and it is in date. Check for a fire blanket near the stove. Check the gas and smoke detectors are fitted and working
30	Air Conditioners	Run the unit for at least 15 minutes and see that it does get cold and cool the motorhome.
31	Cupboards and doors	Open and close every single door. Check that it opens smoothly, closes and locks. Damp can warp doors and make them swell so they will not close. Catches can break and open in transit, ensure all doors close and firmly lock
32	Fridge	Turn the fridge on; it will take 15 minutes to start getting cold. It needs to be checked on both gas and mains. When you go on a test drive ensure that it works on 12volts too (Most European motorhomes work on 12v, many US RV use gas whilst moving.) With the fridge turned right up the colour of the flame should be mostly blue.

33	Soft Furnishings	If any of the soft furnishings, such as cushions and seats etc are missing, don't buy the motorhome. Even if a dealer promises to replace them, he will probably be in the hands of the manufacturer and they could take months to supply, if they can supply at all. This would require you to commission new stuff which can add many hundreds to your purchase price.
34	Toilet, shower washroom	Check for leaks. A leaky shower might go un-noticed for a long time and can cause a lot of structural damage so check carefully. Some washrooms are "wet-rooms" with no obvious shower tray as the whole floor is waterproof. Carefully check the condition of the sealant around the toilet and the shower tray. Mats might be fitted in the shower tray, lift it so that you can check for cracks in the tray. Don't just assume that the tray is okay that mat might be there for a reason! You could be lumbered with a big bill if the shower tray for your motorhome is not made any more and you need to source a custom replacement.
35	TV Systems	TV, Satellite and radio should all be demonstrated as working.
36	Main Control Panel	Modern computerised panels impart a lot of information, however some may malfunction and when they do they can shut down most functions, especially the electricity. Ensure it is working and that the information that it is reporting, such as battery and water levels are correct.
37	Electric Sockets and Lights	Check that all sockets are working. You could use a lamp, but a simple solution is to use a reverse polarity tester; You will need one of these anyway, they only cost a couple of pounds. They look like a simple plug with lights on the back. When on hook up you use this to check that the polarity is correct. You will not be worried about polarity at this stage, but if the plug lights up then the socket is working. Check that bulbs are all there, and if they were LED's make sure they have not been swapped for much cheaper regular bulbs. You should get all Electricity systems checked by a professional.
38	Water Heater	Check that it works on both gas and electricity. The water should heat quite quickly. Run it on Electric, after it warms run the taps till they run cold then repeat but on gas. Check the burner. The flames should be mostly blue and all burning at an even height. You should get all gas appliances checked by a professional.

39 Heater and Blown Air

Check that the gas heaters work and that all the fans work if the heater employs blown air. It should be pumping warm air within a few minutes of starting. You should get all gas appliances checked by a professional. If you are buying an American motorhome the heater is known as the furnace. To test it, set the thermostat for at least 10° hotter than the ambient temperature and turn it on. You will hear the fans come on and they will probably be noisy but listen for the clicking of the igniter and the whoosh of the burner as it lights. After a few minutes check you are getting hot air coming out of all the vents.

40 Hob and Oven

Check that the Flame Failure Device (FFD) works on the stove. After checking that it lights and operates OK, leave it a few minutes to allow everything to cool and then try and light it but without holding the knob in. No gas should escape. In a confined motorhome it is very easy to inadvertently turn the stove on by brushing against the control, if the FFD works then no gas will escape. If you are buy an RV you will be horrified to find that most cookers do not have an FFD, so be very careful. You should get all gas appliances checked by a professional.

Check that all the surfaces adjacent to the hob have adequate protection, motorhomes burn very easily.

41 Carpets

Because they are removable they are often taken out, ensure they are in place, they can be expensive to replace.

42 Alarm

Set it, test it. Get written instructions on how to use it

43 Documents

Check the motorhome's registration document carefully. Check mileage on old MOTs; does everything ring true? Checkout the taxation class. Service History? Road Tax? Is the weight within your licence limits? Remember your limits change at age 70. If its a used motorhome is there evidence of cam belt renewal. If it's a private sale, check the address on the log book is where the vehicle is. Go through all the handbooks, most items like heaters, cookers and fridges etc should have a separate handbook.