

By Joe Price, service manager at C.S.R.A. Camperland, a ROUTE 66 RV Network dealership in Martinez, Ga.

Q&A

EXPERT ADVICE ON RV HEATING AND ELECTRICAL ISSUES

Q. I am looking for solar panels for my 25-foot fifth-wheel. I want to make sure that I get what I need — but I don't know anything about them. I camp most of the time in Michigan, but now that we are retired we will be going early and staying late in the season, so I need one that will keep my furnace running. I have two batteries and I hear that 225 watts would be enough. Everything I run is 12-volt.

Are all 225-watt solar panels the same? I see they range in price for the kits — is that the only difference? Will the cheaper ones do the same thing as the higher priced ones? Thanks for your help.

A. A 225-watt solar charger should be adequate to keep your batteries recharged, providing the batteries are in good condition and are properly maintained. The blower on the furnace is 12 volts and runs from power supplied by the batteries, and the 225-watt charger should be sufficient to recharge the batteries during daytime sunlight. As in most products, cheaper priced items are generally not as good as the more expensive items.

Q. Where we regularly camp we have a problem with light from external sources seeping into our motorhome through the ceiling vents, illuminating our bedroom. Is there any way — or any product — that will effectively block the light from coming in?



Several types of shades are available to block sunlight coming through roof vents.

A. There are several products on the market that will provide an inside cover for your roof vents. Choices include shades that simply cover the ceiling vent and reflective covers that reflect sun and heat in the summer and reduce heat loss in the winter.

Q. This may sound like a stupid question, but can I run my air conditioner on an inverter?

A. It is possible to run an air conditioner on an inverter, but it is impractical due to the large output inverter and the quantity of batteries that would be needed to provide the power to the inverter. A generator provides a much better power source for your air conditioner. ⚡

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