Park Model RVs (aka Recreational Park Trailers): Definition and Use

What a Park Model RV is:

A park model RV (PMRV) is a unique trailer-type RV that is designed to provide temporary accommodation for recreation, camping or seasonal use. PMRVs (also sometimes referred to as recreational park trailers) are built on a single chassis, mounted on wheels and have a gross trailer area not exceeding 400 square feet in the set-up mode. They are certified by their manufacturers as complying with the ANSI A119.5 standard for recreational park trailers.

PMRVs are most often used in recreational vehicle campgrounds. They may be owned by the campground and rented to guests or they may be brought in and used exclusively by their owners on a site rented or leased from the campground. They can also be placed by their owners on private property. These units are designed and built to be used for recreational/camping purposes only. They are not meant to be affixed to the property in any way, they do not improve property values in any way, and they are neither designed nor intended by their manufacturers to be used as permanent residences. Park model RVs are titled as motor vehicles by the various states just like other RV types.

What makes PMRVs unique is that they are up to 12 feet in width and 36 feet long with a peaked and shingled or metal roof. Some offer gabled windows, and siding choices of cedar, aluminum, vinyl, masonite or even split logs for a rustic look, while others are made of full solid logs. They are often designed with built-in porches, decks and/or storage areas. Many look like tiny summer cottages. Others look more like traditional but slightly longer RV travel trailers.

Most park model RV owners (67%) locate their unit within several hours of drive time from their primary residences and use them for weekend camping get-aways. Some owners may place their PMRV in a warm climate location and use them as a seasonal/temporary get-away to escape the cold gray winter weather, while others place their PMRVs in cooler climate locations to escape the summer heat and humidity back home.

In the off-season, these units are typically winterized (i.e. have antifreeze in the water lines; and are unusable because water and sewage facilities are not operational). These units are left in “onsite storage” when not being used.

The Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA) operates a safety standards and inspection program that requires member manufacturers of all recreation vehicles, including park model RVs, to affix a RVIA standards program seal to every unit they build in their factories. This seal indicates the manufacturer’s certification that the unit complies with the requirements of the applicable standards. A park model RV can always be identified by the blue and gold RVIA ANSI A119.5 certification seal (or its predecessor green RPTIA seal) affixed to the right of main door of the unit.
**What a Park Model RV is Not:**

Although the distinctive appearance of park model RVs may sometimes lead people to think they look like small manufactured homes, appearances can be deceiving. PMRVs are actually titled and registered just like any other RV. Due to their design, small size and use as recreation, vacation and seasonal units, PMRVs are explicitly excluded from being considered or used as a manufactured home under the codes and regulations of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) specifically because they are a type of recreation vehicle (Title 24 § 3282.8(g)).

Park model RVs are built in accordance with the national safety standards set forth under a nationally recognized standard, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A119.5 Standard, not the HUD requirements that manufactured homes are mandated to comply with. The key distinction is that manufactured homes are single-family dwellings that are designed and built for permanent residency under standards set by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Park models RVs, as noted, are designed and built to be used by families as a recreational, camping, or seasonal accommodation. PMRVs are not intended for, nor should they be used for, anything other than recreational camping or seasonal use. They are not permanent residences and should never be used as such.

Like RV motor homes, travel trailers and fifth-wheel trailers, park model RVs are built to ensure safety but are not required to meet the building codes or installation codes that stick-built or manufactured homes are required to meet. They are designed to remain on their axles and wheels, ready for movement and are not connected to the ground by footers, foundations, or columns (some local units of government do require them to be anchored to the ground due to excessive local winds, but even then they can easily be detached in minutes with only hand tools).

PMRVs are not housing. There is no practical difference in the use of PMRVs than travel trailers or fifth-wheel trailers. They are not ‘improvements’ to campgrounds any more than a travel trailer placed and used in a campground is. They are simply one choice among many in the RV camping environment.

For more information about park model RVs, contact Matt Wald, RVIA Executive Director of Park Model RVs at (703) 620-6003 x. 313 or mwald@rvia.org.
**RV Types, Terms & Prices**

**Recreation Vehicle (RV)** - A motorized or towable vehicle that combines transportation and temporary living quarters for travel, recreation and camping. RVs do not include mobile homes, off-road vehicles, snowmobiles and conversion vehicles. RVs are sold by recreation vehicle dealers.

### Towable RVs

*Designed to be towed by family car, van or pickup truck. Can be unhitched and left at the campsite while you explore in your auto.*

**TRAVEL TRAILERS**

**Conventional Travel Trailer**
- Wide range of floor plans and sizes
- Affordable homelike amenities
- Sleep up to 10
- Typically $8,000 to $95,000 new

**Fifth-Wheel Travel Trailers**
- Spacious two-level floor plans
- Towed with a pickup truck
- Sleep up to six
- Typically $18,000 to $160,000 new

**Travel Trailers with Expandable Ends**
- Ends pull out for roomy sleeping
- Lightweight Towing
- Sleep up to eight
- Typically $10,000 to $30,000 new

**FOLDING CAMPING TRAILERS**
- Fold for lightweight towing
- Fresh-air experience with RV comfort
- Sleep up to eight
- Typically $5,000 to $22,000 new

**TRUCK CAMPERS**
- Mount on pickup bed or chassis
- Go wherever your truck can go
- Sleep up to six
- Typically $6,000 to $55,000 new

### Motorized RVs

*Living quarters are accessible from the driver’s area in one convenient unit.*

**MOTORHOMES**

**Type A Motorhome**
- Generally roomiest of all RVs
- Luxurious amenities
- Sleep up to six
- Typically $60,000 to $500,000 new

**Type B Motorhomes**
- Commonly called van campers
- Drive like the family van
- Sleep up to four
- Typically $60,000 to $130,000 new

**Type C Motorhomes**
- Similar amenities to Type A
- Optional sleeping space over the cab
- Sleep up to eight
- Typically $43,000 to $200,000 new

**SPORT UTILITY RVs**
- Available motorized and towable (as travel trailers or fifth-wheels).
- Built-in garage for hauling cycles, ATVs, and other sports equipment
- Sleep up to eight
- Typically $10,300 to $170,000 new

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**PARK MODEL RVs**
- Movable resort unit designed exclusively for part-time recreational use
- Sleep up to ten
- Typically $20,000 to $80,000

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**RECREATION VEHICLE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION**
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