

Inspection Level

While some inspectors offer a more basic inspection at a cheaper price point, others don't offer this because it may put them in a position where they spot a potential issue but have not been paid for the amount of time it would take them to investigate it, and they would rather be able to confidently tell you everything they know about the RV.

Level 1 inspections cover essential systems and basic functionality, suitable for newer RVs or budget-conscious buyers willing to accept risk.

Level 2 inspections provide a comprehensive evaluation of all systems, appliances, and the structure, as well as potential problems, and are recommended for most pre-purchase situations, especially for used RVs.

Type of RV

A small, basic Class C camper is going to be faster and cheaper to inspect than a large Class A motor home with multiple slide outs and amenities. Likewise, trailer inspections usually cost less than motorhomes because there are no mechanisms involving driving the vehicle, like an engine, to inspect.

RV's Age and Condition

The RV's age and wear and tear will also affect the cost of an inspection. An RV that has barely been used and is still in mint condition should be quick to inspect. An older RV may require more time to assess whether wear has affected its safety and overall quality.

Location of the Inspection

Finally, the price of your RV inspection may depend on where in the country it is conducted. In big cities, where the cost of living is generally higher, RV inspections can be more expensive.

Types of RV Inspections

Pre-Purchase Inspection

A pre-purchase inspection is the most expensive choice for an RV inspection. This is because you'll want to go over the entire RV to be sure you know what you're getting, and that nothing is broken or missing. You can choose to inspect only the mechanics of your RV or have a full interior and exterior inspection.

An RV inspector should check the following:

The condition of the exterior body, including the underbody – are there scratches in the paint? Dents? Rust?

The condition of the tires and wheels

Any accident or flood damage

Any cracks in glass or other window problems

Drive components like 4-wheel and all-wheel systems.

Steering, suspension, braking systems, and exhaust.

Engine and transmission inspection.

Fluid levels and whether there are any fluid leaks.

The doors and roof

Interior inspection of the furnishings, cabinets, and facilities

Generator and appliance test

Test of lights, A/C, and electrical systems

Check of interior upholstery, mats, seat belts, other decorative finishes

If possible, have your inspector take your motor home for a road test, and request that they take pictures during the inspection. This will help if you want to go over any details later and will be especially helpful if you are trying to decide between motorhomes.

Can I do my own Pre-Purchase RV Inspection?

You cannot do your own mandatory safety inspections, but you can do your own pre-purchase RV inspection if you want. There are pros and cons to a DIY inspection.

Pros:

You will save money. Doing it yourself means you will not be paying an inspector hundreds of dollars.

You can trust yourself. Doing the inspection yourself means you do not have to trust anyone else to be honest with you.

Cons:

You missed an opportunity for negotiation. If the inspector does uncover significant issues, you may be able to negotiate the sale price or ask the seller to pay for these repairs. If you overlook these issues while doing your own inspection, you will be out of pocket for any unexpected repairs.

You will not have the experience or knowledge of a trained RV inspector who has seen hundreds of RVs. They will know the problems that commonly plague RVs, and they will be looking for certain things.

You may not have the opportunity or tools necessary to evaluate every system. Will the seller allow you to evaluate the water system for leaks, run the water pump, or take apart the furnace and air conditioner to inspect their condition, for example? Professional inspectors have specialized tools like moisture meters, infrared thermometers, and multimeters.

You are liable for any mistakes. You may have recourse against an inspector who does a bad job, but you will not have any if you do the inspection.

You lack objectivity. When you fall in love with an RV, you may unconsciously overlook or minimize problems that a neutral third party would flag at once.

Unless you have professional RV repair experience, proper diagnostic tools, and the ability to remain completely objective, hire a certified NRVIA inspector for pre-purchase evaluations. The \$500-\$1,000 inspection fee is a small price compared to the \$5,000-\$20,000+ you could spend fixing major undiscovered problems like roof leaks, frame damage, or electrical issues.

Key Takeaways

RV inspection cost ranges from \$150 to \$1,200, depending on type, size, and inspection level.

A thorough pre-purchase inspection can reveal hidden issues, helping buyers negotiate better deals.

Travel trailer inspections cost less than motorhome inspections due to fewer systems involved.

Factors influencing inspection costs include time, inspection level, RV type, age, condition, and location.

Hire certified inspectors for thorough evaluations; DIY inspections might overlook critical problems.

FAQs About RV Inspection Costs

How much does an RV inspection cost?

In 2026, most professional pre-purchase RV inspections range from about \$400 to 1,500, depending on RV type, size, inspection level, and location. A basic mechanical-only inspection for a small motorhome typically starts around \$350–\$600 dollars, while a comprehensive Level 2 pre-purchase inspection for a large Class A motorhome or diesel pusher often falls in the \$700–1,500+ range. Travel trailer inspections usually cost about 350–600 dollars because there is no engine or transmission to evaluate. Level 1 inspections (a basic systems and safety check) commonly run \$450–\$900, and Level 2 inspections, which include a complete evaluation of all major systems plus a detailed photo-rich report, are typically \$700–1,500 for most RVs.

Additional factors affecting price include the RV's age and condition (older RVs take longer to inspect), number of slide outs and amenities (more systems to check), geographic location (major cities cost more), and whether the inspector needs to travel significant distances to reach the RV. The inspection fee is a worthwhile investment that often saves buyers thousands by uncovering problems before purchase.

Is an RV inspection worth the cost?

Yes, an RV inspection is absolutely worth the cost and should be considered essential before buying any used RV. A \$500-\$1,000 inspection fee can save you \$5,000-\$20,000+ by uncovering major problems like roof leaks, frame damage, electrical issues, appliance failures, or flood damage before you buy.

The inspection report also gives you significant negotiating leverage. You can request the seller reduce the price to account for needed repairs, ask them to fix problems before closing, or walk away from a problematic RV entirely. Experienced NRVA-certified inspectors know the common problems that plague specific RV makes and models, have specialized diagnostic tools to detect hidden issues, and provide detailed reports with photos documenting all findings. Even if the inspection reveals no major problems, the peace of mind knowing you are buying a solid RV is valuable, and the report serves as documentation of the RV's condition at purchase time for insurance and future reference.

What does a Level 2 RV inspection include?

Yes, an RV inspection is still absolutely worth the cost and should be treated as essential before buying any used RV. A \$700-\$1,500 professional inspection on a higher-value rig can easily save you \$5,000-\$20,000 or more by uncovering major problems like roof leaks, structural or frame issues, hidden water, or flood damage, failing appliances, or serious electrical faults before you own them. For smaller trailers and simpler motorhomes in the \$400-\$800 inspection range, the same logic applies at slightly smaller dollar amounts—the upside in avoided repairs and bad purchases usually dwarfs the inspection fee.

The inspection report also gives you significant negotiating leverage. You can use documented findings to ask the seller to reduce the price to cover repair estimates, complete specific repairs before closing, offer repair credit, or, if the problems are severe, walk away from the deal entirely. Experienced, credentialed inspectors who work with RVs every day know common failure points on specific makes and models, bring diagnostic tools (like moisture meters and infrared thermometers) that most buyers don't have, and provide detailed, photo-rich reports you can refer back to later. Even if the inspector does not find any major issues, the peace of mind of knowing you're buying a solid RV—and

having written documentation of its condition at the time of purchase for insurance and resale—is often well worth the cost.

How long does an RV inspection take?

RV inspection duration varies based on the RV type, size, inspection level, and what the inspector discovers during evaluation. A basic Level 1 inspection for a small Class C motorhome or travel trailer takes 3-4 hours on-site. A comprehensive Level 2 inspection for a mid-sized motorhome typically requires 6-8 hours on-site, plus an added 2-3 hours for the inspector to compile the detailed written report with photos.

Large Class A diesel pushers with multiple slide outs and complex systems require 8-10+ hours to evaluate thoroughly. Travel trailers take less time (2-4 hours) since there is no engine or transmission to inspect. If the inspector discovers significant problems or areas requiring deeper investigation, the inspection may take longer than originally estimated. After the on-site part, you will typically receive the detailed written report within 24-48 hours. Plan to be present during at least part of the inspection so the inspector can walk you through findings and answer questions, though buyers prefer to review the detailed written report later.

Can I negotiate RV price after inspection?

Yes, you can and absolutely should negotiate the RV price after receiving the inspection report if problems are discovered. The inspection report gives you concrete documentation of issues that require repair, providing strong leverage for negotiation. Common negotiation approaches include requesting the seller reduce the purchase price by the estimated repair cost (get quotes from RV repair shops for major issues), asking the seller to complete specific repairs before closing using qualified technicians, requesting the seller provide a repair credit at closing that you can use for fixes after purchase, or in cases of major undisclosed problems like frame damage or flood damage, walking away from the purchase entirely.

Sellers often prefer reducing the price over making repairs themselves because it is faster and less complicated. Be reasonable in negotiations — minor cosmetic issues should not derail a deal, but major problems affecting safety, habitability, or structural integrity justify

significant price reductions. If the seller refuses to negotiate on serious problems revealed by the inspection, that is a red flag suggesting they know the RV has issues and are trying to pass them to you.

What's the difference between RV inspection and state safety inspection?

An RV pre-purchase inspection and a mandatory state safety inspection serve completely different purposes and should never be treated as interchangeable. A pre-purchase inspection is a comprehensive evaluation you voluntarily pay for. It is typically in the \$400–\$1,500 range, depending on the rig and scope. It's designed to uncover problems with the RV's overall condition, including structure, roof, appliances, plumbing, electrical, propane, and mechanical systems. The inspector is working for you, provides a detailed written report with photos, and evaluates everything from roof leaks and soft spots to appliance operation, slide out function, and frame integrity.

By contrast, a mandatory state safety inspection is a legal requirement tied to registration and roadworthiness, usually costing far less (often around \$50–150) and focusing only on basic safety items needed to work on public roads. That typically means checking lights, brakes, tires, emissions, where applicable, and other minimum safety equipment—not hunting for leaks, delamination, appliance failures, water damage, or future reliability issues. An RV can easily “pass state inspection” and still be a bad purchase. Because of that, you should always get a comprehensive pre-purchase inspection in addition to any required state safety or emissions check.

Do I need an RV inspection for a new RV?

While new RVs from dealerships are less likely to have major problems than used RVs, buyers still opt for a pre-delivery inspection (PDI) to document the RV's condition and catch any manufacturing defects or dealer-prep issues before taking delivery. New RVs can have problems such as misaligned slide outs, appliances that do not work properly, plumbing leaks, electrical issues, or cosmetic damage from transport or storage at the dealership. A PDI typically costs \$200–\$500 for new RVs and takes less time than a used RV inspection, since you're verifying that everything works as designed rather than evaluating wear and tear.

The inspection documents any problems while the RV is still under full manufacturer warranty, making it easier to get repairs completed at no cost. Buyers skip inspections on brand-new RVs and simply conduct thorough walk-throughs themselves before accepting delivery, evaluating all appliances, slide outs, and systems. However, if you are not mechanically inclined or buy a high-end Class A motorhome, a professional PDI provides peace of mind and ensures nothing is missed during the excitement of taking delivery.

An RV inspection is one of the smartest investments you can make when buying a used RV. The few hundred dollars you spend on a professional evaluation can save you thousands on unexpected repairs and give you valuable negotiating leverage.