

Some Quick Remarks About Autoformers

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An Autoformer is actually an Auto-Transformer. We use the shortened version of the name when referring to them. Voltage Booster and Voltage Regulator are other commonly used terms for auto-transformer.

According to one of the first Autoformer manufacturers, "Autoformers are designed to increase the Voltage to your RV and help eliminate Low Voltage damage to your electrical appliances."

Another manufacturer stated, "Voltage Regulators automatically and continually monitor Line Voltage conditions and boost Voltage to an acceptable level, when needed, helping prevent Low Voltage damage to the RV's appliances and electronic devices."

While the "purpose" of an Autoformer is to protect your equipment from Low Voltage, there is a lot of controversy about Autoformers. Whether or not an Autoformer "steals power," if the Autoformer truly has a practical 10% to 16% boost capability, or even if such a small percentage of boost is worth the unit's price, I will not debate in this article. There are already plenty of online forums that will.

An Autoformer is only capable of boosting minor Low Voltages. More importantly, I want you to know that none of the Autoformers can automatically protect you from Wiring Faults!! (i.e., Open Ground, Reverse Polarity, Open Neutral, and Accidental 240V.) Yes, with simple diagnostic lights, they may indicate to you if a Fault exists, but you must take decisive action to protect your electrical equipment and your RV (i.e., UNPLUG from the Post)!

An Autoformer typically provides limited surge suppression only for itself – not for your RV. Their "RV" surge suppression feature only exists because the Autoformer uses a step-up transformer to do its job. Unfortunately, a surge cannot be stepped up. It just "burns out" the transformer. And, by the way, Autoformers are very heavy. The 50 Amp models weigh between 40 and 46 pounds, and, in most cases, you must pay to ship the unit back to the manufacturer to have it repaired.

One last thing – All existing Autoformers do absolutely nothing to adjust (buck) the Voltage "down" if it is too high (> 132 Volts).

So, if you are thinking about getting an Autoformer, please read its operating/instruction manual carefully. Then, call the autoformer manufacturer if you have any questions or need clarification.