

## Find Your Overswing for Any RV

Your "overswing" is the distance the rear corner of your RV (whether a towable or drivable) actually swings out when you make a sharp turn—in either direction. If **anything** (another RV, vehicle, building, dumpster, sign, big light pole, etc.) is too close to your RV and you turn the steering wheel to drive away from that other object, your rear corner will likely hit that object. As show here, the resulting damage can be extensive. This happens because the rear axle is positioned some distance forward from the rear of your RV. If your rear axle was truly set at the rear of your RV, you would have no overswing because nothing would be sticking out. So...



- the more you have hanging out behind the rear axle, the more actual overswing you will have
- the more overswing you have, the farther you need to be parked away from other objects to the side
- you need to know how much overswing you really have.

You need to learn the exact space you need to help you maneuver your RV in tight spaces. You are likely driving a rig larger than anything in your past. Even if you drove a truck (semi tractor/trailer), that vehicle was hinged (articulated)—up near the front between the tractor and trailer—your motorhome is not. School bus driver training is the only help applicable to motorhome driving. Learning to maneuver and manipulate your motorhome is easy and fun to do. You will need five things...

1. your co-pilot
2. your RV

3. a large, empty parking lot (typical church parking lot on a Tuesday morning) with parking lines painted on the lot
4. about an hour

Do these easy exercises and you will know more about your coach than you thought possible and be a much better, safer driver!

### How to Find Your Overswing

Again... your "overswing" is the distance the rear corner of your RV (towable or drivable) actually swings out when you make a sharp turn—in either direction. On certain models of RVs, this can be greater than two feet (0.6 meters) so you must know this or at some point you will wipe out objects that are too close—or, those objects will wipe out the rear corner of your RV.

You have to be in the parking lot to learn exactly what your overswing measures. So, try this...

- A. Drive in and with plenty of room to maneuver in front and the sides, put it in park.
- B. Set up two traffic cones (or you can use a rock, can, or mark on the pavement). Put one at the rear passenger-side corner of the RV. Place the other at the center of the rear wheel (use the dual drive-wheel position if you have a tag axle). Use the rear axle for towables.
- C. Position the copilot on the rear passenger side, visible in the passenger mirror. Use a two-way radio if you have them.



- D. With the engine running and parking brake ON, turn the steer (front) wheels **maximum left**. Then with your foot on the brake, disengage the parking brake and/or put it in gear.
- E. **Creep** (drive very slowly) forward. Have the co-pilot move to stay visible in your mirror. The co-pilot will signal you (and possibly use the radio) to **stop you when the rear of the RV passes over the FRONT mark**.



- (Note that in this photo, the front cone would have been knocked over by the rockguard. I set the cone up again so you could see its position in the photo.) Doing this will cause the rear corner to swing out to maximum width. Shut down the RV.

- F. Measure from your front cone (mark, etc.) out to the **corner of your coach**. (Again, I set the cone even with the corner of the coach to better illustrate the measurement.) This



- measurement is your overswing or how far the rear corner of your RV actually swings out when you make a hard turn. **You must have at least this much clearance space when turning.**

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Note that your overswing is the same amount regardless of which way you turn the RV. There is no need to measure both sides unless you are just curious.

### **A Great Tip**

Next, transfer that overswing distance onto your metal awning wand, add 2–3 inches (5–8 cm), and mark the wand (a piece of electrical tape is good for marking). The next time you think you may wipe out your rear corner on a boulder or tree making a hard turn out of a campsite, quickly check it with your wand—now you know for sure.

How important is overswing? Very! Significant and costly damage can result from not knowing or not allowing for it. If you need convincing, go back and look at the first photograph!