



Guide to setting up an Aire

Overview

This guide is intended to explain the steps required to start an Aire with or without a water and waste point. This is a general guide only and not intended to replace advice from your local planning authority.

An Aire is overnight parking for a self-contained motorcaravan only. They are not campsites so awnings etc. are not allowed. See appendix A “Do I open an Aire or a Campsite”.

Do I require planning consent?

- The easiest option is to apply for an exemption certificate which allows you to operate year-round as a 5-unit site. This is a simple online form and the license is issued by Motorhome Fun or the Motor Caravanners’ Club. Both organisations support CAMpRA and allow non-members to use the site.
- If you wish to operate with more than 5 units the best option is to speak to your local planning office about a site license to operate as an Aire (they will most likely treat this as a motorcaravan campsite). It is important that you make it clear that the site will be for “self-contained motorcaravans only” so there is no requirement for toilets or showers.
- How easy it is to get planning consent depends on your local planning department and unfortunately this varies throughout the UK from a very supportive and easy process to a brick wall of red tape. This is why CAMpRA recommend the exemption certification unless you are planning a big site. This also allows you to set up and test the idea with minimum investment.

Do I need hardstanding?

- Preferably yes as motorcaravans will get stuck in soft ground. Grass pitches are only suitable if well drained and dry which limits your year-round availability.
- Hard standing can be made with reinforced matting, hardcore or tarmac etc. What is important is that motorcaravan pitches need to be fairly level.
- If you have limited space the 5 units can be on separate areas, for example we have an Aire with 3 spaces on one area of hard standing and 2 more in a separate tarmac area.

How much room do I need?

- This is a difficult question as there are several things to consider:
 - Access from the road onto the site. This may restrict the length of vehicle that you can accept.
 - Manoeuvring on site. Again, this may restrict the length of vehicle (our survey indicates 96% of UK motorcaravans are 8m or less).
 - Length of parking bays (see appendix B)
 - Spacing as an Aire is for parking only with no external equipment. We have commissioned a fire safety report on motorcaravan spacing which recommends 3m, however if you apply for

planning for a campsite license (more than 5 units) they will most likely state 6m under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960. Several councils are considering our fire safety report but again it depends on your council. If space is limited and you are unsure, we suggest that you approach your fire department with the [Fire Safety Report for Motor Caravan Overnight Parking](#) and request their guidance. CAMpRA cannot give a definite answer only advise on the current regulations.

What else do I need?

- Although an Aire can be as simple as overnight parking it is preferable to provide basic water and waste disposal and a rubbish bin (or recycling) if possible. This also opens up the possibility of charging for passing motorcaravans to use the water and waste point. Some sites on popular routes generate more revenue from passing motorcaravans than from the overnight parking.
- Waste points can be a simple manhole, a DIY or commercial unit from £320 + vat to a proper drive over grey waste grid or an above ground storage tank see (appendix C).
- An Aire should be a basic 48 hour overnight stop, recommended max 24-hour advance reservation if it assists you or just turn up and park. We do not recommend EHU, toilets or showers as these increases your set up costs, maintenance cost and time spent looking after the site and it becomes a campsite resulting in the need to increase overnight fees to cover the costs.

Assistance Available:

- Lots of information on the CAMpRA business hub: <https://campra.org.uk/business-hub/>

Or contact us on: contact@campra.org.uk

Appendix A. Do I open an Aire or a Campsite?

This is a guide to help you decide if you want to operate as a campsite or an Aire. It is designed to explain the main differences of the two sites operating with a 5-unit exemption certification.

Advantage of a Campsite:

- Open to Caravans and motorcaravans.
- Can be grass.
- Can operate on sloping or uneven ground.
- Tend to book for longer stays as they are setting up camp.
- A full facility site can command a higher nightly fee.

Disadvantage of a Campsite:

- Cost of initial set up.
- Requires 6m spacing with provision for erecting awnings on each pitch.
- Pitches need to be mown regularly as they are used for external camping equipment.
- Policy required to manage the use of groundsheets to prevent damage to grass.
- You need to provide water, black waste and grey waste emptying, litter bin or recycling.
- You need to operate a booking system and decide if you require deposits as sites are often booked months in advance.
- If you operate through one of the big clubs you are restricted to members only a need to record membership details.
- Caravans often request electric hook up on sites, which are expensive to install and must be tested regularly.
- Caravans often request toilets and showers which incurs set up cost and increase cleaning and maintenance costs.
- Although stays tend to be longer the season is mainly 6 months, Easter to October.
- Due to booking a long time in advance you will get a high level of cancellations or no shows.
- As visitors are camping and gathering outside or in their awnings there will be some noise.

Advantage of an Aire:

- Low cost or zero cost to set up.
- As these are for self-contained motorcaravans to park overnight there is no requirement for an area to set out for equipment or awnings.
- Motorcaravans tour all year round.
- Due to the nomadic nature of touring motorcaravans there is no requirement to book in advance although for your own convenience you may ask for 24-hour notice.
- No requirement to operate a booking system.
- Aires are open to non-members so there is no requirement to maintain records or carry out membership checks.
- Can operate as an unmanned site.
- No deposit required.

- No cancellations or no shows.
- There is no requirement to add water or waste points although if provided this will provide more income as you will be able to charge higher site fees and will have the ability to attract passing trade.
- No requirement for litter bins but again would be beneficial.
- No requirement for electric hook up.
- No toilets or showers as Aires are for self-contained motorcaravans only.
- No issues with noise as Aires are not campsites so all activities take place within the vehicle unless as a private site you allow the use of camping chairs.

Disadvantage of an Aire:

- Needs to be reasonably level ground.
- Due to the weight of motorcaravans grass is not suitable if wet or soft unless recycled plastic grids or other reinforcement is used. Hard standings will allow year-round use.
- Self-contained motorcaravans only.
- Maximum stay 48 hours (this is normal but this is not a condition of the site license).

Appendix B. Motorcaravan Parking bays

Standard Parking bay 2.4m x 4.8m



Standard Parking bay 2.4m x 4.8m



Short wheelbase van conversion 2.26m x 4.96m

Standard Parking bay 2.4m x 4.8m



Long wheelbase van conversion 2.26m x 6.36m

Standard Parking bay 2.4m x 4.8m



Motorhome 2.34 wide up to 8m long

Recommended width for motorcaravan bays to allow for access, parking and overnight sleeping (no camping allowed - all activity to be wholly within the vehicle) is 5.5m.

With vehicles parked centrally this allows for parking manoeuvres and maintains the recommended 3m spacing between vehicles for overnight sleeping.

96% of UK vehicles are 8m or less and built on a standard van chassis with a rear overhang. This allows for shorter bays if they can reverse into the bay with the rear 1m or 2m over grass area at the edge of the car park.

Vehicles over 8m should be allocated parking in coach bays

Appendix C. Costs of waste points

Motorcaravans always travel with as little waste water on board as possible, and discharge as often as possible, usually every 3 to 4 days, this also helps with vehicle fuel economy.

Basic requirements

- Fresh water tap.
- Grey Waste (washing up and shower water) a simple drain away from the building can be sufficient but some motorhomes have to empty from underneath the vehicle so require a drive over drain. Again, this can be a simple drain or longer grill.
- Black waste (toilet cassette) emptying point this can be as simple as lifting an existing manhole connected to a sewer or septic tank but preferably a ready-made or self-build unit. If possible, there should be a separate tap with a short hose attached to allow rinsing of cassette (away from the drinking water tap and labeled (not drinking water)).
- Refuse bin if possible.

Solutions

Here is a guide for approximate costs of the following solutions. Local conditions will cause variations and self-build will be the cheapest. These are only a guide as every situation is different and installation cost will vary from nothing for a volunteer to the cost of builders and/or plumbers.

Grey Water Disposal Point

Simply dealt with by a drive over channel drain gulley connected to a soak away or sewer. Does not need the water supply tower shown in the photo if that is supplied elsewhere. Construction by local builder or self-build.



Cost: 3m channel drain, 3mx2m concrete slab
Soakaway 2m3

£600-700 (less if DIY)
approx. £1100

Black Water or Chemical WC Disposal Point

There are a number of solutions available with varying costs depending on the services already present on the site.

Elementary

Existing manhole on existing foul sewer.
Adapt manhole cover so it is easily opened and closed. A water standpipe close by with 1m hose is desirable for washing out cassettes.

Cost – Tap and pipe – a few ££



Basic A

Use old WC & cistern with lid connected to existing foul sewer or a DIY unit. Water tap for cleaning cassette is desirable.

COST: approx. £200



Basic B

As Elementary but fit hopper over manhole to avoid splash back during cassette emptying.

COST: approx. £320 + VAT & delivery

Contact: www.ctdp.co.uk 01460 240 069



Basic +

As Basic B but with flushing hopper, therefore needs water connection.

COST: approx. £680 + VAT & delivery & water connection.

Contact: www.ctdp.co.uk 01460 240 069



Examples of waste points



Temporary Waste Storage

If you do not have a connection to either the mains sewage system or a septic tank/biodigester, you can still provide services using a temporary storage tank.

For example, a 2300 litre plastic effluent storage tank with tipping point hopper. It would need emptying when full. It just needs placing on a firm level surface. A water standpipe with non-concussive tap close by for washing cassettes would be preferable. NB a non-concussive tap has to be pressed to allow a discharge of water so controls water use and reduces waste.

COST:

2300L Effluent Tank	£1470
Tipping point (Hopper)	£260
High level alarm	£162
Water standpipe say	£150
Emptying approx.	£150/visit

As a guide to running costs a 2300L tank would hold approx. 75 cassette empties so emptying would cost approx. £2/cassette. Water for cleaning is approx. £0.03/10L

Other effluent tank capacities are available:

3400L -	£2,130
4450L -	£2,400

Contact: www.asapseptictanks.co.uk

01623 232 240



Example Costs of Emptying

Biffa Waste disposal - Domestic Tanker Services/Household Waste

Toilet waste does not always contain chemicals – from our survey only 9% of motorcaravans use non-bio chemicals in their toilet.

Calculations assume that each emptying consists of 20 litres for the toilet cassette and 30 litres for the waste tank. Therefore a 700-gallon tank (3182 litres) would take approximately 63 visits from motorcaravans to fill. The cost of removal is approximately £2 per 50 litres. A charge of £5 per motorcaravan would generate a £3 profit per emptying.

Base charge – Initial 700 gallons – Maximum 3 pipes	£130.00
Additional Charge – Per 100 gallons	£7.75
Additional Charge – Pipe lengths 4 – 5	£15.00
Additional Charge – Pipe lengths 6+	£60.00
Additional Charge – Emergency Emptying (within 48 hrs)	£56.00
Abortive Visit Charge	£46.25

Professional Units

These are self-contained towers often in stainless steel complete with water outlets for cassette rinsing and for fresh water refill. They can also be coin / token operated or will accept card payment

if a power supply is available. No UK supplier yet found so supplied from EU. Suitable for larger or more popular Aires where the capital cost can be justified.

EURO-RELAIS Multi-Service MINI Point – No payment system



Mini Point for 1 VEHICLE
Discreet and elegant, the Mini Point is perfect for seasonal use (e.g. outdoor hotel services).




Characteristics of the Euro-Relais 2021 MINI Point	
Mini Point: 1 Vehicle	
Payment	None
Lighting	None
Drinking water taps	1
Rinsing taps	1
Toilet drainage	Yes
Grey water drainage	Yes
Anti-freeze kit	Yes
Wi-Fi	No
Material	Base and cap: polyester, Column: 304-grade stainless steel, painted white
Control type	Push button PRESTO timer system
Locking	2-point locked door
Base (included)	To be interred and pre-connected with shared grey and wastewater drainage pipes

Mini point: 1 vehicle

M/ERMx1 2218 €HT

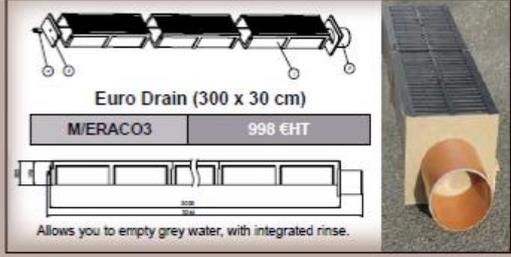
Base (required)

M/ERCE1 100 €HT



Euro Drain (300 x 30 cm)

M/ERACO3 998 €HT



Allows you to empty grey water, with integrated rinse.

COST : £2000 +

Contact: www.bornes-eurorelais.fr