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Is Early Model Year Introduction a Scam?



Sometime in the mid-nineties, RV manufacturers violated their long-standing practice of introducing next year's models on July 1. This trend has escalated in the last few years to a point where buyers are totally confused. Here's why:

The lack of controls within the RV industry has allowed unscrupulous dealers to manipulate buyers of new motor homes and towables. They lure consumers with the idea that they can be the first to possess the latest technological innovations -- plus an extra year of ownership without depreciation. Of course, this is false.

The innovations are generally not significant.; and if you purchase an RV four or five months ahead of its normal introduction time, you will not add to its resale value. Depreciation begins when you take possession of the RV—period!

It's difficult for us, or anyone, to understand why this trend has come into play. We suspect, however, that it is a ploy on the part of some manufacturers to trap the unwary buyer. Unfortunately, most of the manufacturers who use this process are those who produce lower-quality motor homes and towables.

Another negative effect of early introduction is that the earlier a new brand lineup is introduced, the more it changes during that year. For example, as of March 2006, over two dozen brands are being manufactured as 2007 models. Specifications for these models will probably change several times during 2006. Models will be dropped and new ones added—which confuses everyone.

When manufacturers rush to print their new brochures well ahead of the competition, mistakes are often made. Wrong specs sometimes end up with the wrong models and wrong model names with the wrong floor plans. One major fifth wheel manufacturer changed lengths and dry weights for their 2006 models four times in as many months. You have to wonder if it's a case of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing. All these practices hurt the consumer in the long run.

The good dealers, too, are hurt when their current-year inventory suddenly becomes obsolete close to the beginning of the year. If you ask dealers of "better" brands whether they would like to see manufacturer's new model year release dates standardized to the historical July 1, most would answer a resounding "Yes!".

It's a consumer's nightmare:

Manufacturers count on the consumer to pressure dealers into offering "new, newer, newest". "New" always attracts consumers' attention—like bees to honey. In this time of falling profits for many RV corporations, manufacturers are understandably eager to maximize profit potential by being the first to offer something "new". Ultimately, this kind of game amounts to a scam that benefits only the manufacturer.



Whether you are considering an RV for fulltiming, snowbirding, vacationing, or simply weekend getaways, be sure to check our [RV Ratings CD](#) before you buy.