

advice for caravan owners



understanding how to make the best use of your caravan holiday home

Here are some of the points to bear in mind when you are planning holiday stays in your new holiday home. They have been prepared by the British Holiday & Home Parks Association and the National Caravan Council in the interests of ensuring customer familiarity with park opening periods and to avoid the misuse of caravan holiday homes which cannot be used as a main residence.

what is the length of the season?

Do check this with the park on which you are intending to buy a holiday home and make sure that you are satisfied that it will allow you the access you want during the year.

who decides the length of the season?

The local planning authority sets the maximum period that the park is permitted to be open for business each year. However, it is up to the park to decide, within that period, the actual dates during which the park will be open for you to visit your caravan holiday home.

why should the park decide a different period?

There may be a number of reasons, but often the closed period is used to carry out essential maintenance and improvement work so that holidaymakers can enjoy the open period without being inconvenienced by any disruption on the park.

can I use my holiday home in the winter?

Only if the park is open during the winter months. But do ask about the level of insulation in the holiday home you intend to buy: not all units are intended for occupation in severe weather conditions. If a caravan holiday home is used in cold months you should expect a higher level of condensation, both visible and unseen. Where central heating is provided, its primary purpose is to provide background heating during those colder months.

can I move permanently into my holiday home?

No. You will normally be restricted to using it for holiday or recreational purposes. If you were to live permanently in your holiday home, this would be in breach of the planning permission or site licence with serious legal consequences. In addition, a caravan holiday home is not designed to be a permanent residence.

what about spending consecutive months in the unit?

Any plans to use your holiday home other than for leisure breaks should be discussed with the park owner/manager before you purchase a caravan. It may be that local authority regulations, or the agreement you sign, will prohibit your taking up semi-residential status.

what's wrong with long-term occupation?

Holiday homes are designed to provide comfortable, high-quality accommodation for recreational use only. On the other hand, Park Homes for residential use are designed and built to a different specification, with greater emphasis, for example, on storage space and thermal insulation.

does the Mobile Homes Act 1983 apply to holiday parks?

No: this legislation was designed to protect the rights of owners of residential park homes on licensed residential home parks. It does not apply to caravan holiday homes sited on holiday parks.

then what are my rights?

Your rights are all contained within the "licence agreement" that you and the park will sign when you buy the unit. This agreement is the contract that will be made between you and the park and it includes your right to keep the holiday home on the park for a given period of years and the times during which you can use your unit.

does the agreement say anything more?

It does, including any rules applicable on the park such as the keeping of pets. That is why it is essential that you read the agreement thoroughly beforehand - and only commit yourself to it if you are happy with its contents. The agreement is there to ensure that everyone gets the most out of their holiday home ownership, and can look forward to years of trouble-free ownership.

what about insurance cover?

It is important to bear in mind that the cover that is provided for holiday homes is not the same as that for residential park homes when it comes to providing 'alternative accommodation.' For holiday homes, the insurance cover reflects the fact that the customer's permanent home is not the park. The cover does not extend to providing temporary re-housing in the event of damage to the holiday home.