

STUDY SHOWS RV VACATIONS LEAVE SMALLER CARBON FOOTPRINT THAN FLY/DRIVE/HOTEL VACATIONS

RV vacations are more environmentally friendly than fly/drive/hotel vacations, according to a new study comparing total carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions or carbon footprints.

PKF Consulting, an internationally recognized consulting firm with expertise in travel and tourism, found that families of four taking RV vacations generate less CO₂ than families traveling on a plane, renting a car and staying in a hotel.

“RV vacations are not only fun, affordable and comfortable for families,” says Richard Coon, president of Recreation Vehicle Industry Association, “this study shows that they’re also more green than vacations including flying.”

PKF, headquartered in Alexandria, Va., analyzed the CO₂ emissions (in tons) of vacations varying in length from three, seven, 10 and 14 days to destinations such as Orlando, Fla.; New Orleans, La.; and Napa, Calif. The RV vacations analyzed included car/folding camping trailer; SUV/travel trailer; Type C motorhome; and Type A motorhome (diesel).

Using the carbon calculator methodology developed by Conservation International, an organization that promotes biodiversity conservation, PKF found that RV vacations, in all cases, had a softer environmental impact than the typical airline/rental car/hotel vacations.

For example, if the family of four was taking a 10-day trip from Minneapolis, Minn., to Branson, Mo., the study showed that a fly/drive/hotel vacation creates 1.81 more tons of carbon emissions than a vacation using a car/folding camping trailer; 1.35 more tons than an SUV/travel trailer trip; 0.92 more tons than a Type C motorhome trip; and 1.26 more tons than a vacation by Type A motorhome (diesel).

In calculating the CO₂ emissions, RV miles per gallon estimated to be were 12.5 mpg for a Type A motorhome (diesel) and 10 mpg for a Type C motorhome, based on industry averages supplied by RV manufacturers. PKF used a conversion rate of 1.18 road miles to 1.00 airline mile in its calculations. To determine CO₂ impact of the folding camping trailer and lightweight travel trailer, PKF added one additional gallon of fuel per 100 miles traveled per 1,000 pounds. PKF used a weight of 2,000 pounds for the folding camping trailer and 4,000 pounds for the lightweight travel trailer.