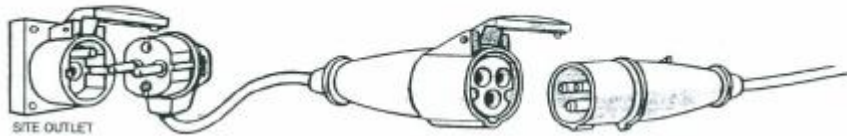


Electricity and Gas

Electricity

Approximately 80% of campsites in Europe will have the same 3-pin CEE17 hook-up that we have here in the UK. If the campsite has 2 pin hook-ups they are normally able to lend or hire an adaptor, however, they will only have a limited number available. We would recommend purchasing a continental two pin adaptor before you travel. Most caravan/motor caravan accessory will stock adaptors.

Typical 'French' style adaptor



You will find that European campsites have lower amps that you find in the UK. Caravan Club sites in the UK have an average of 16amp electricity, the majority of campsites that we work with overseas have 3 to 10 amps. To work out how many amps your appliances need, you can do the following equation: wattage \div voltage (220 in France) = amps

800 watt hairdryer – $800 \div 220 = 3.6$ amps

650 watt kettle – $650 \div 220 = 2.8$ amps

600 watt microwave – $600 \div 220 = 2.7$ amps

If you are staying on a site that has 6amp hook-ups you would not be able to use all three electrical items at the same time, you could use the kettle and microwave at the same time, as the combined amps of both of these items comes to 5.6, if you wanted to use all three items together you would need a minimum of 10 amps.

Reversed Polarity

Can be found on nearly all campsites outside of Ireland and the UK, it is caused when electricians on European sites swop the live and neutral wiring around in the bollard where you hook-up. Instead of the electricity entering your caravan down the live wiring it enters down the neutral wiring instead.

Reversed polarity will not stop your appliances from working or damage them, but it does mean that if you switch off your lights, kettle, iron or any appliance in your caravan the wiring behind the socket will still be live.

You can buy a polarity tester from most caravan/motor home accessory shops for under £10.00. You plug the tester into any socket in your caravan once you have hooked-up, and it will tell you if you have reversed polarity, if the test is positive there are a couple of options:

- Try another socket (you could find a hook-up post that has 4 sockets and only 1 or 2 have reversed polarity).
- Buy a spare connector before leaving home, switch the live and neutral wires around, and mark it clearly as “reversed”
- You can switch the live and neutral wires around when you arrive on site (very easy to do) just remember to swop them back before you return to the UK.
- In some cases you can turn the plug the other way up (if you are using a two pin adaptor) and this will sometimes reverse the polarity back to normal.

A lot of caravanners are happy to use their electrical equipment when reversed polarity is present without any concerns, however, you should take note of the following:

If you want to replace a light bulb, disconnect from the main bollard beforehand, as even though you have turned the light switch off, the wiring behind the light fitting will still be live.

If you switch off electrical sockets the wiring behind the socket will still be live, if you want to do any work on your electrics disconnect from the main bollard first.

Gas

It is not possible to exchange or re-fill Calor gas bottles outside of the UK, so if you are not able to take enough gas for your trip you have the following options:

Hire or purchase the local brand of gas in whichever country you are visiting. In France the popular brands are: Primagaz, Le Cube, Totalgaz and Butagaz, at the time of purchasing/hiring the bottle you will also need to buy an adaptor or regulator, in Spain the popular brands are Repsol and Cepsa, but again when you hire/purchase the bottle you will need to buy an adaptor/regulator.

Gas bottles that you hire or purchase overseas will not be exchangeable when you return to the UK.

Campingaz is available and exchangeable in nearly all European Countries (including the UK), but the largest bottle available is only 2.8kg. You can find Campingaz stockists via the following website www.campingaz.com (click on the English flag, then click on “Dealer Locator”).

We would advise all members to carry a Campingaz adaptor/regulator because if you do run out of gas, you should be able to find a Campingaz supplier where ever you are in Europe.

For help and advice regarding adaptors and regulators please contact www.gaslow.co.uk telephone: 0845 4000 600