

RV Gadget Box | Route-1 POI database

Compiled by Mark Nemeth #45776, *Escapees* Magazine Technical Advisor

Whacking your forehead on a low-hanging opening or cabinet can be extremely painful. Whacking your RV's forehead on a low clearance bridge can be equally painful and a lot more expensive! The goal of this column is to help prevent RV low-clearance accidents (you'll have to watch out for your own forehead).

The critical first step is to know exactly how tall your RV is. Don't take anyone else's word for it; measure it yourself. Park the RV on a

level surface and, using a 16-foot tape measure and a helper, determine the highest point on the RV. Often it will be the air conditioner or a vent cover. To be on the safe side, take that maximum measurement and add a couple of inches to it. Make a label that says "minimum safe clearance XX feet, XX inches." Replace the XXs with your measurements, of course, and stick it on your dashboard where it is clearly visible. That way, anyone who drives the RV will know what the required minimum clearance is for safe operation.

Now that you know your RV's height, you need some tools to help you avoid low bridges and roadway

obstructions. While you can always watch for warning signs, sometimes they are missing or obscured. You can purchase truckers' guides that list low clearances, but most concentrate primarily on truck routes and major highways, which doesn't always work well for RVers who like to get off the beaten path. Surely, there is a better answer!

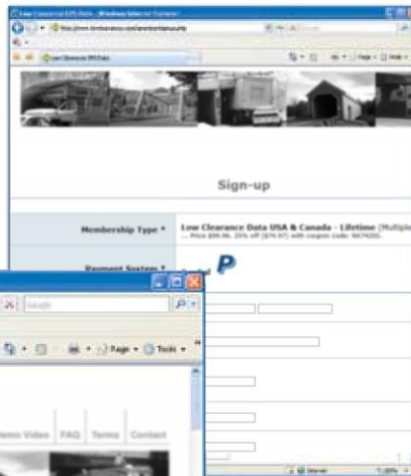
Enter the GPS: The folks at www.lowclearances.com recognized the need for easily accessible roadway clearance information and have developed a product called the Route-1 POI database. Route-1 is an extensive list of roadway heights, including low clearances, from 5' 6" all the way up to 15' 11", under railway bridges, pedestrian walkways, overpasses and through tunnels. They offer what is essentially a subscription service to their continuously updated and growing database for an annual fee of \$19.95. With versions available for Garmin, TomTom, Navman, Delorme Street Atlas, Microsoft Streets and Trips and Google Earth, almost anyone can install and use it. And, since the prices of these gadgets have come down enough that they are in the affordable zone, buying a small GPS unit and adding the Route-1 database to it is a good investment if it prevents even a minor accident.

Here's how it works:

Go to www.lowclearances.com and click on "Subscribe." Fill out the registration form and enter your type of mapping device. You will receive the database files that are designed for your device and easy-to-follow instructions for installation. Subscribers also get access to all the other formats that are available. Once you have installed Route-1 and selected the clearances below your vehicle height, your GPS system will alert you to the hazards on your route that are below the clearance height of your vehicle. Database updates will be provided for 12

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Jon Mills, www.lowclearances.com



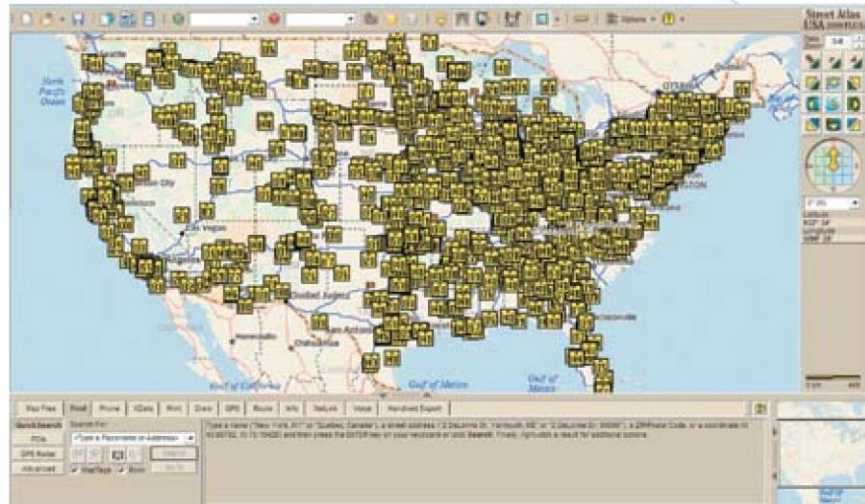
Do you have a favorite RV gadget? E-mail techquestions@escapees.com and tell Mark about it. If he likes it, he just may purchase one and review it in the "RV Gadget Box" column and credit you with discovering it. Visit www.escapees.com/rvgadgetbox for terms, conditions and rules for product submissions.

LowClearances.com

Experts in GPS data

months, and then you will need to pony up another \$19.95 annually to continue receiving updates.

I tested Route-1 on a TomTom, Delorme Street Atlas and Garmin Nuvi, and I thought it worked well. It is a little tricky to install on some devices, but the instructions are clear and concise. The user interface is not elegant, but it gets the job done. This is a fairly new and still-developing product, so we can expect improvements and enhancements in the coming months. When queried about coverage, Jon Mills at www.lowclearances.com responded: "As far as we know, the database is easily the



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largest and most comprehensive available for low clearances. Not all bridges are included as yet, so we are adding to and refining the product on an ongoing basis to improve usability and functionality. Percentage wise, it's probably in the region of 70 or 80 percent coverage at this time." Route-1 users who find any inaccuracy or omission in the database are encouraged to submit corrections and additions via e-mail.

www.LowClearances.com was started in 2008 by Jon Mills and Nick Sundby after identifying the need for a high-quality low-clearance POI database for the American RV and trucker communities. With previous experience designing POI databases for other markets, it seemed clear that the existing low-clearance information was far too small to be of any real use to serious RV or truck drivers. The goal was to produce a product with at least 3,000 alerts upon initial release, and the current database consists of more than 3,500 alerts, making it 10 times larger than any other low-clearance POI database available.



Low Clearance Database

For information or to subscribe, visit www.lowclearances.com or e-mail mail@lowclearances.com.

Annual fee of \$19.95

