

By Bill and Jenn Gehr

Dish Aiming Made Easy

TV4RV tripod system takes the frustration out of finding a direct view to multiple satellites

It's not uncommon for a motorhome to be fitted with multiple TVs that have high-definition capability. In order to maximize the viewing experience, satellite companies have developed high-definition receivers with digital video recorders (DVRs) that are designed to save your favorite shows. To successfully record these programs, a more complicated satellite antenna is necessary in order to capture multiple satellite signals at the same time. For those who prefer using a freestanding dish, a stand is needed that allows for more intricate aiming at the satellites. One that has all the bells and whistles — and is fairly easy to use — is the TV4RV Heavy-Duty Satellite Dish Tripod Stand featuring the eZEE-AIM system.

After years of hands-on experimentation, H&G Enterprises created the TV4RV, a heavy-duty satellite dish tripod designed to provide a solid foundation for any satellite antenna. The tripod's aluminum legs are infinitely adjustable and adapt to the most challenging terrain. Each leg can be adjusted for height and spread in almost unlimited increments. And



Heavy-duty tripod made by H&G Enterprises is designed to support any style dish.

H&G's well-thought-out accessories make all the difference when setting up a dish.

High winds can create a serious problem with all portable dishes. If not weighted or tied down properly, satellite stands subjected to stronger than usual wind can sometimes crash to the ground and quite possibly bend or damage the long Low Noise Block

(LNB) arm just enough to render the dish inoperable. H&G has designed a high-wind kit that works with its tripod that will withstand some of the worst wind events you'll likely encounter and are tested to 50-plus mph.

The optional satellite aiming scope



The combo package comes with a heavy-duty nylon bag for easy storage.

will enable users to look for a clear path to the satellites in the sky, over or between trees and bushes. This cleverly designed option ensures that the signal will not be missed when rotating for the optimal azimuth setting by eliminating the four- to five-second delay before the signal reaches the receiver. In addition, using the aiming scope eliminates the need for someone to stand in front of the TV inside the motorhome, wait for the signal and relay that information to the person aiming the dish. Can you say, "marriage saver"?

Why are portable HD satellite dishes sometimes cumbersome and challenging to use? HD antennas utilize a triple LNB and a large, oval dish to find the multiple satellites needed to produce a top-quality picture. Nailing down three or more satellites is tougher than aiming a small round dish with a single LNB that only needs to find a single satellite.

Unfortunately, dome-type automatic satellite dishes and automatic portable dishes that are easier to use will not support a high-definition DVR. Winegard's roof-mounted TRAV'LER Series TV antenna is fully capable of supporting an HD DVR as well as multiple TVs, but it takes up quite a bit of real estate. And, while these automatic dishes work very efficiently, they still have to combat a common nemesis: trees. It



Above from left: H&G's cleverly designed high-wind kit will help the tripod withstand a 65-mph wind even when set up on hard surfaces. The compass is custom-made to fit into the head assembly of the heavy-duty tripod for easy azimuth settings.

may be possible to drive around and find a space that has a clear view of the satellites, but this task would not work well in a full campground.

This is where the TV4RV tripod really shines. It can be easily moved to a remote location beyond obstructions that block the view to the satellites. It's almost impossible to aim large oval dishes with triple LNBs with a basic tripod with no markings for coordinates. Thankfully, the TV4RV directions are well thought out and easy to follow, especially for the critical initial setup. Optimal signal strength during this process will ensure quicker setup in the future.

To test the TV4RV tripod, we found a suitable location through a thick stand of trees using the compass set at 135 degrees (the azimuth coordinate for the area where we were parked). The tripod was set on the dirt and grass terrain and adjusted using the bubble level supplied

in the kit. Next, the optional satellite aiming scope was set at the required 35 degrees of elevation. Checking for obstructions, the scope was rotated 10 degrees left or right on the eZEE-AIM scale mounted on the top of the tripod. Satisfied that the line of sight for satellite signal was clear, the tripod was leveled while spreading the legs to the required 30- to 36-inch diameter. After rechecking the compass for azimuth (making sure there were no metal objects nearby that could affect the reading), the metal tripod leg spikes were driven into the ground using the foot pedal.

The next step — tying down the tripod — can be done using several methods depending on the terrain or surface. For this application, the ground screw stake and the supplied chain or a bungee cord can be used to tie down the mast assembly. H&G has a kit for concrete as well. The index



Below from left: Set the degrees of elevation and this custom aiming scope will enable you to check for obstructions in the line of sight. A solid aluminum machined mast is designed to fit a 2- or 1-5/8-inch bracket as well as supporting up to 35 pounds. The heavy-duty tripod has an infinite amount of adjustment for each leg, thus making the leveling process fast and easy.





Above from left: The heavy-duty bungee and tie-down stake secure the tripod in even the softest of dirt. Carefully set the dish onto the mast for the initial setup and follow the directions carefully. H&G's custom signal finder eliminates the need for the help of another person during the aiming process.



line on the mast was then aligned to the centerline of the eZEE-AIM scale. Lastly, the dish assembly was placed on the mast.

After setting the skew/tilt at 90 degrees and rotating the center of the LNB arm over the index mark line on the mast, the elevation is set for the



location. This process allows for signal fine-tuning from the main satellite (101 for DirecTV or 119 for DISH) by rotating the dish left or right on the mast assembly. Once the maximum signal is indicated on the signal finder, the bolts can be tightened to secure the dish to the mast assembly. The dish and

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most assemblies will remain clamped together as one unit when removed from the tripod.

The signal finder is then disconnected and the skew set. This will allow you to read the signal strength of all satellites on the receiver. We easily dialed in a signal strength of 94, which provided fantastic HD picture quality — in an area that would have been problematic for a rooftop dish.

The portability of this system is certainly convenient but that also means it's portable for the bad guys. Consider using a locking cable of some type that you can attach to a tree, water pipe, chain-link fence hardware or some other secure object. It's good to be able to move the unit to a spot with a great satellite view but that may also be a distance from your RV so security is a consideration.

There is no question that the TV4RV satellite dish tripod system and accessories will make finding a signal easy and efficient, whether you have a basic dish



with a single LNB or a large oval dish with multiple LNBs. TV4RV's website includes a newsletter link that contains many helpful suggestions and modifications to aid in setting up a satellite dish. With a little practice, it's easy to become proficient using this high-quality

portable system. It retails for \$159.95 and comes with a carrying bag. **M**

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