

Erecting a Soplair awning; A “Very Detailed” Guide.

- Thread the awning into the channel and put it up on the roof.
- Tie it up there with a cord, from one opposite side end handle to the other, to stop the wind blowing it off.

Lay the frame parts out on the ground so that they are in the right places. **Refer to the diagram in the posting about the awning frame parts. Colour-code the poles in advance with tape. I use red (port, left) and green (starboard, right) with double stripes to indicate the centre ends.**

- Extend the adjustable bits so that they are roughly the right length, but don't tighten them very much.
- Assemble the frame, starting with the fitting into the middle socket on the van, the ridge pole and centre front pole. I use a cord to stop too much stress between the short van centre pole joint, the fitting on the 'van and the roof pole.
- Get someone to hold the centre pole upright while you assemble the rest of the frame.
- Put the rear roof poles into the short upright on the 'van centre fitting first, then hook the side roof poles through the holes in the ends and into the fitting on the 'van side.(again, refer to the aforementioned posted diagram)
- Lift up each of the outer end of these poles in turn and fit them into the corner legs, while your centre-pole -holder-person hands you the pole that connects the top of the corner leg to the top of the centre pole.
- (I know this sounds complicated but it is simple if you look at how all the parts fit together **AT HOME** on the lawn, **BEFORE** you start, and mark them. Look at the diagram to check where the bits go.

Now the centre-pole-holder-person can let go and help with the rest.

- Next fit the additional roof support bars but don't tighten the length adjusters yet.

Once you have the frame up put a few tent pegs and the mallet nice and handy so that you can peg the awning down BEFORE the wind tries to blow it away!

- Both of you can now carefully pull the awning roof over the frame and put in a peg or two to hold it down. If you are a bit on the short side carry a small broom (or walking stick) to lift the canvas in the centre part over the frame.
- Now you can adjust the length of the various poles to get the frame to fit snugly inside the roof.
- Fit the short canopy extension supports **before** you extend the legs to their full height.
- Zip the sides and front in place, **starting with the windward side** so that the wind doesn't get underneath too easily. Put in a peg or two to stop it blowing away if it's at all windy!

Don't permanently peg down the front corners until you have zipped in the front and sides, otherwise you have to take some of the pegs out again to get everything straight and square.

- Once the corners are OK put in the rest of the pegs, fit the skirt to the caravan and lay the groundsheet.
- Next make a cup of tea or have a beer!

(You will usually find that it is blowing a gale, pouring with rain and that there is an audience of other smug people who like to watch the entertainment the first time you put the awning up.)

In 5 years we have found this to be the best way to go about things. It is possible for one person to erect the awning on their own if they use two temporary guy-lines to hold the centre pole in place while they assemble the rest of the frame. I've done it a number of times.

I hope I have made things clear. Someone described this as “long-winded” but it tells you **everything**, which is what novices need

We opted for the glass fibre poles as they are much lighter to carry and don't corrode. When we collected the 'van and awning from Letchlade, Mark gave us two extra steel roof cross-poles, which he assured us went with the awning. We found that these are essential in times of heavy rain. Fit them on the lower side of the roof, otherwise you get huge pools of water, at least 30 litres, which stretch the canvas. The Ten Cate acrylic material is excellent stuff (they also make material for Space Suits) and wipes clean with just a wet cloth.