Guides

/ 4x4 camper vans: Sprinter AWD, Transit AWD and what four-wheel drive changes

4X4 CAMPER VANS: SPRINTER AWD, TRANSIT AWD AND WHAT FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE CHANGES

THE SHORT ANSWER

A 4x4 camper van is usually a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter or Ford Transit with factory all-wheel drive, or a van converted by a specialist such as Quigley. The ProMaster is front-wheel drive only. On a Sprinter, AWD adds $6,900 to $6,910, takes 309 to 364 lb off payload and raises the floor 2 to 4 in.

Last updated 25 November 2026

KEY TAKEAWAYS

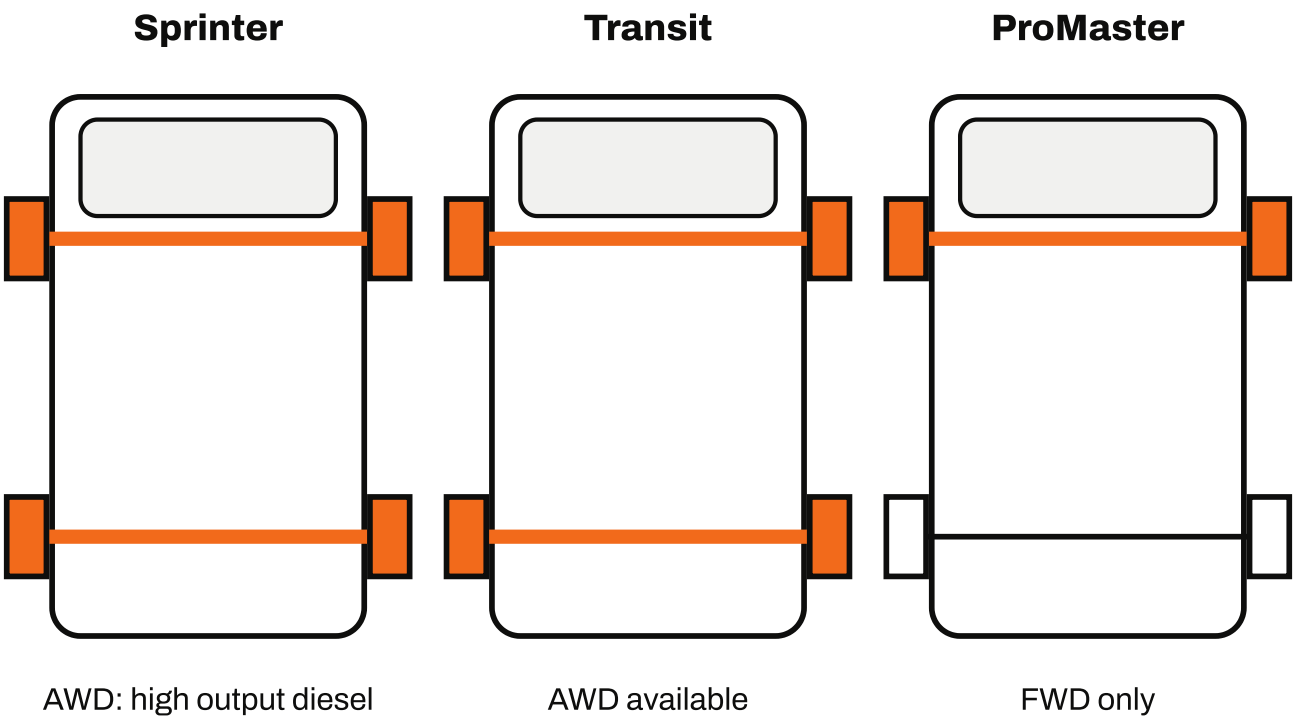
- Of the three big US vans, the Sprinter and Transit are sold with all-wheel drive; the ProMaster is front-wheel drive only.
- On Mercedes-Benz's own spec panels, AWD adds $6,900 to $6,910 to a Sprinter's MSRP and takes 309 to 364 lb off its payload.
- AWD Sprinters sit higher: the load floor rises 2 to 4 in and the high roof van stands 0 to 4 in taller.
- No official fuel economy exists for these vans: the EPA does not test vans over 8,500 lb GVWR.

18 verified US camper van builders in our directory mention 4x4 or AWD, and 7 US makers convert, lift or armor vans for it.

Four-wheel drive is the most asked-about option on a camper van and the easiest to buy on reflex. This guide puts the makers' own numbers on what it changes, and lists who builds it.

WHICH CAMPER VANS COME WITH 4X4 OR AWD FROM THE FACTORY?

The Sprinter and the Transit. Mercedes-Benz offers electronically engaged AWD on the Sprinter with the high output diesel; the Transit is sold in AWD and 2WD versions; Ram says the ProMaster is front-wheel drive only. [1][4][2]



On Mercedes-Benz's 2027 Sprinter Cargo Van page, every AWD configuration is listed with the 4-cylinder diesel high output engine, and the option is described as electronically engaged

AWD for tougher terrain and weather.[1] Ram says the 2026 ProMaster's front-wheel drive is intentional, giving a lower load floor and a tighter turning radius.[2] For the Transit we have no Ford page from today: Ford's sites refused our requests. Two lift makers confirm the AWD model exists by selling kits for it: Quigley's QLift fits the Transit AWD and 2WD, and Transit Off Road sells AWD and 2WD 2 inch kits.[4][5]

Builders still write 4x4 Sprinter: several in our directory describe their vans that way.[11] Mercedes-Benz's current page uses AWD, and does not mention a low range,[1] so ask a builder which system a given van has.

WHAT DOES AWD CHANGE ON A SPRINTER?

Price, payload and height. Across five matched pairs on Mercedes-Benz's spec panels, AWD adds $6,900 to $6,910 to the MSRP, takes 309 to 364 lb off payload, and raises the load floor 2 to 4 in.[1]

2027 SPRINTER, HIGH OUTPUT DIESEL	AWD ADDS	PAYLOAD LB, RWD TO AWD	FLOOR IN	HEIGHT IN
2500, 144 in, standard roof	+$6,900	4,211 to 3,858	28 to 31	100 to 100
2500, 144 in, high roof	+$6,900	4,134 to 3,781	28 to 31	107 to 111
3500XD, 144 in, high roof	+$6,900	5,662 to 5,353	29 to 31	109 to 111
2500, 170 in, high roof	+$6,910	3,814 to 3,450	27 to 31	107 to 111
2500, 170 in extended, high roof	+$6,910	3,704 to 3,351	27 to 31	107 to 111

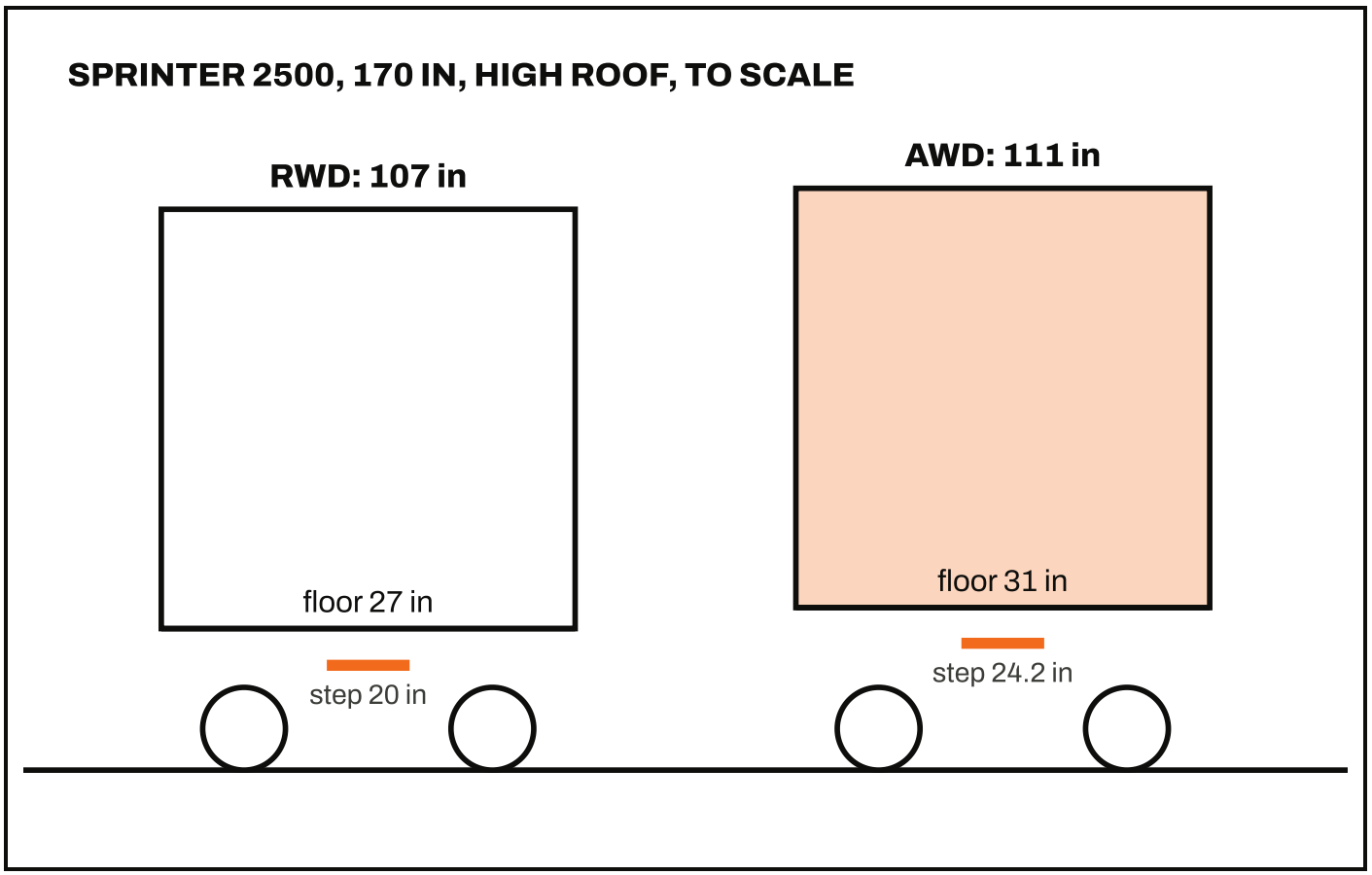
Source: Mercedes-Benz Vans USA, 2027 Sprinter Cargo Van spec panels, read 25 November 2026.[1] Differences are our arithmetic. MSRP excludes transportation, destination, taxes and options.

PAYLOAD LOST TO AWD

How much payload each Sprinter gives up with AWD



Source: Mercedes-Benz Vans USA, 2027 Sprinter Cargo Van spec panels, read 25 November 2026. [1] Differences are our arithmetic.



The payload loss matches the added curb weight in every pair, because the gross vehicle weight rating does not change.[1] That matches what our payload guide found for the 2500s.

Mercedes-Benz does not publish ground clearance on this page; the load floor and first step heights are the nearest figures, and both rise with AWD.[1] The fuel tank is 24.5 gallons on every configuration listed.[1]

WHAT FUEL ECONOMY DOES A 4X4 VAN GET?

There is no official number. The EPA does not test vans over 8,500 lb gross vehicle weight rating, every Sprinter we compared is rated 9,050 lb or more, and Mercedes-Benz publishes no mpg figure on its page.[7][1]

fueleconomy.gov says vans, pickups and SUVs over 8,500 lb gross vehicle weight are heavy-duty vehicles to which fuel economy regulations do not apply, so they are not tested,[7] and its search returns no 2025 to 2027 Mercedes-Benz Sprinter.[8] Any mpg figure you read for an AWD camper van is an owner's or a reviewer's, not a tested one. We do not quote one here.

CAN YOU CONVERT A TRANSIT, PROMASTER OR OLDER VAN TO 4X4?

Some, through specialists. Quigley converts 2015 to 2019 Transits and is developing a system for 2020 and newer; Advanced 4x4 Vans converts Ford, GM and Nissan vans. Neither lists the ProMaster.[3][6]

Quigley says it is the only company qualified for Ford's Special Vehicle Engineering program for 4x4 systems on Transit and E-Series models, and that the factory warranty is kept on the unaltered parts of the van.[3] Its Transit system uses a two-speed transfer case (4Hi and 4Low) with a manual shifter and adds about 2 inches of ride height.[3] Conversions are offered on used 2015 to 2019 Transits; for 2020 and newer, Quigley says it is developing the NextGen4x4, with an expected release of early 2026, a date that had passed when we read the page on 25 November 2026 without a newer one shown.[3] Ask Quigley for current availability.

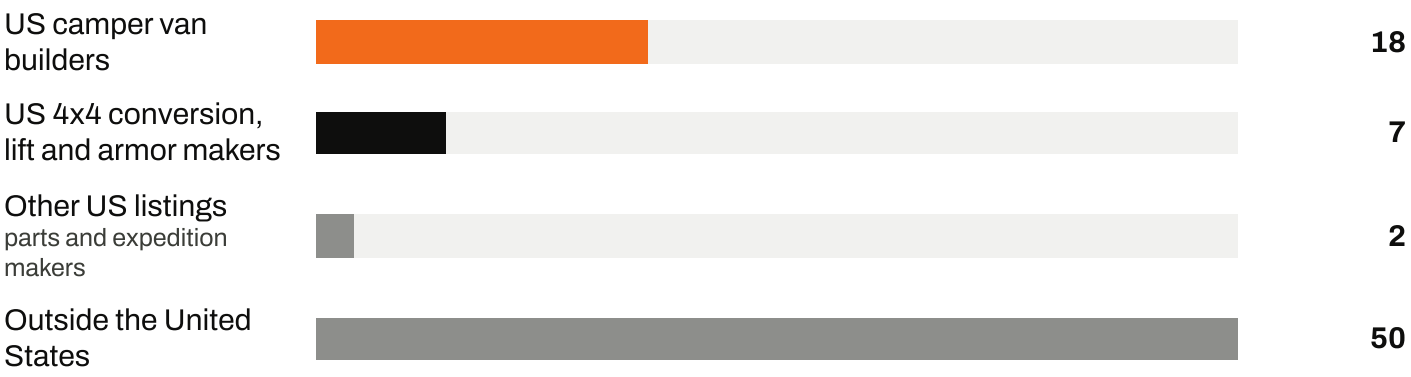
If your van already has AWD and you want height, the QLift adds 2 inches to the Transit AWD or 2WD while keeping factory driveline angles, Quigley says, and it lists authorized installers.[4] Lift kits for every platform are compared in our suspension guide.

WHICH BUILDERS BUILD 4X4 AND AWD CAMPER VANS?

18 verified US camper van builders in our directory mention 4x4 or AWD in their own description, and 7 US makers convert, lift or armor vans for it. The lists below are computed from the directory data, not typed. [11]

DIRECTORY COUNT

Verified listings that mention 4x4 or AWD



Source: vanlife.co directory data, verified listings, counted when the page is built. [11] A mention means the word appears in the listing's name, description or listed builds; it is not a check of every van a builder makes.

Of these US camper van builders, 14 name the Sprinter, 7 the Transit and 3 the ProMaster among the vans they build on. [11] A builder that names the ProMaster may still offer 4x4 only on another van; ask.

US camper van builders that mention 4x4 or AWD

Adventure Van Conversions, Sacramento, California: European-born builder of purpose-built adventure camper vans, mostly 4x4 Sprinters, with named models and a US presence in Sacramento.

AEONrv, Reno, Nevada: Reno, Nevada manufacturer of all-season electric off-road RVs with a composite cabin on a Ford AWD chassis, in two models.

Beachside Custom Vans, Atlantic Beach, Florida: Builds semi-custom and fully custom Mercedes Sprinter AWD camper vans by hand in Atlantic Beach, Florida.

Campovans, Santa Barbara, California: Santa Barbara custom van builder, mostly Mercedes Sprinter 4x4, also selling van accessories, installs and DIY conversion help.

Chinook RV, Peru, Indiana: American motorhome manufacturer of luxury all-wheel drive Class B and B+ RVs on Ford Transit and Mercedes-Benz Sprinter, sold through authorized dealers.

DLM Distribution, Lake Crystal, Minnesota: Chrysler Pacifica AWD Mini-T

EGM Built, Boise, Idaho: Builds off-grid camper conversions on 144 and 170 wheelbase AWD Mercedes Benz Sprinter vans, founded in 2015.

Elevated Vanworks, Reno, Nevada: Reno-based Adventure Wagon completion studio finishing high-end Sprinter AWD camper vans, with DIY build help and a rental van.

Field Van, Fresno, California: Fresno camper van builder offering set model conversions, fully custom builds and pop tops on Sprinter, Transit, ProMaster and its own Ford 4x4 Classic.

FunTrail West, Nevada: Designs and builds custom adventure vans and rents out its own built-out all-wheel-drive Ford Transit vans.

Grech RV, Riverside, California: 2027 STRADA-ion AWD

Noovo, Las Vegas, Nevada: Las Vegas camper van maker selling three Class B models, Lite, Plus and Next AWD, built on Sprinter and ProMaster vans.

Outside Van, Portland, Oregon: Portland, Oregon builder of purpose-built AWD and 4WD adventure vans since 2007, sold through dealers, plus an upfit and service center.

Rally Van, Texas: Builds hand crafted custom adventure vans on Mercedes Sprinter 4x4 chassis, working closely with customers; founded by former professional cyclist Chris Boice.

Reparadise, West Valley City, Utah: 2026 SAGA Vans Spec Build 2024 Mercedes Sprinter 144 AWD

Team Adventure USA, North Liberty, Iowa: Solivagant 4x4

VAN CONVERSION SHOP, Miramar, Florida: Miramar, Florida Mercedes Sprinter upfitter building luxury JetVans plus camper, mobile office and 4x4 van conversions.

VanCraft Campervans, Salt Lake City, Utah: Salt Lake City maker of off-grid Mercedes Sprinter AWD campervans in four models, also offering campervan rentals and service.

US makers that convert, lift or armor vans for 4x4

Advanced 4x4 Vans, Salt Lake City, Utah: Salt Lake City company converting Ford, GM and Nissan vans, buses and RVs to four-wheel drive, plus 4x4 van bumpers, lighting and

accessories.

AJs 4x4 Vans, Hillsboro, Oregon: Hillsboro, Oregon shop converting Ford and Chevy vans and RVs, including Class B campers, to four-wheel drive, plus custom off-road fabrication.

Juggernaut USA - 4x4 Outfitters, Wheat Ridge, Colorado: Colorado maker of skid plates and off-road armor with an install shop in Wheat Ridge serving Jeeps, trucks and vans.

Main Line Overland, West Chester, Pennsylvania: 4x4 and expedition vehicle outfitter selling and installing van, Jeep and truck upgrades, and dealing truck campers, with shops in Pennsylvania, New Hampshire and North Carolina.

Quigley Motor Company, Manchester, Pennsylvania: Manchester, Pennsylvania maker of 4x4 conversions for GM, Ford Transit and Nissan vans, the Transit QLift 2 inch lift, drive shafts, bumpers and rocker guards.

Transit Off-Road: Maker of Ford Transit 2 inch lift kits for AWD and 2WD, tubular front and heavy duty rear bumpers, skid plates, light mounts and grab bars.

Ujoint Offroad, Fletcher, North Carolina: Makes DIY 4x4 conversion kits, axles, bumpers and racks for Ford E-Series vans and RVs, with turn-key installs in NC and CO.

Quigley Motor Company makes the Transit 4x4 system and QLift described above, from its own pages. For off-road trucks and expedition campers instead of vans, see expedition vehicle builders.

DO YOU NEED 4X4 AT ALL?

Only if your roads need it. Mojave National Preserve says most of its roadside sites need high clearance four-wheel drive while its campgrounds suit two-wheel drive vehicles and most RVs. Ask about your roads before you pay for AWD in money, payload and height. [10] [9]

Name three places you want to camp and ask each land manager about the road to it. [10]

If any says high clearance four-wheel drive, as Mojave does for most roadside sites, you need it. [9]

Price the AWD premium on the exact model, wheelbase and roof you want. [1]

Check the AWD payload still covers your build, water and passengers. [1]

Check the finished height against your garage, car parks and ferries. [1]

For a Transit conversion or lift, confirm model years and warranty in writing. [3] [4]

HOW TO CHOOSE AND SPEC A 4X4 OR AWD CAMPER VAN, STEP BY STEP

Seven steps from the roads you want to the builder who will do it, with the makers' own figures at each step. Sprinter figures are Mercedes-Benz's; Ford's sites could not be read on 25 November 2026.

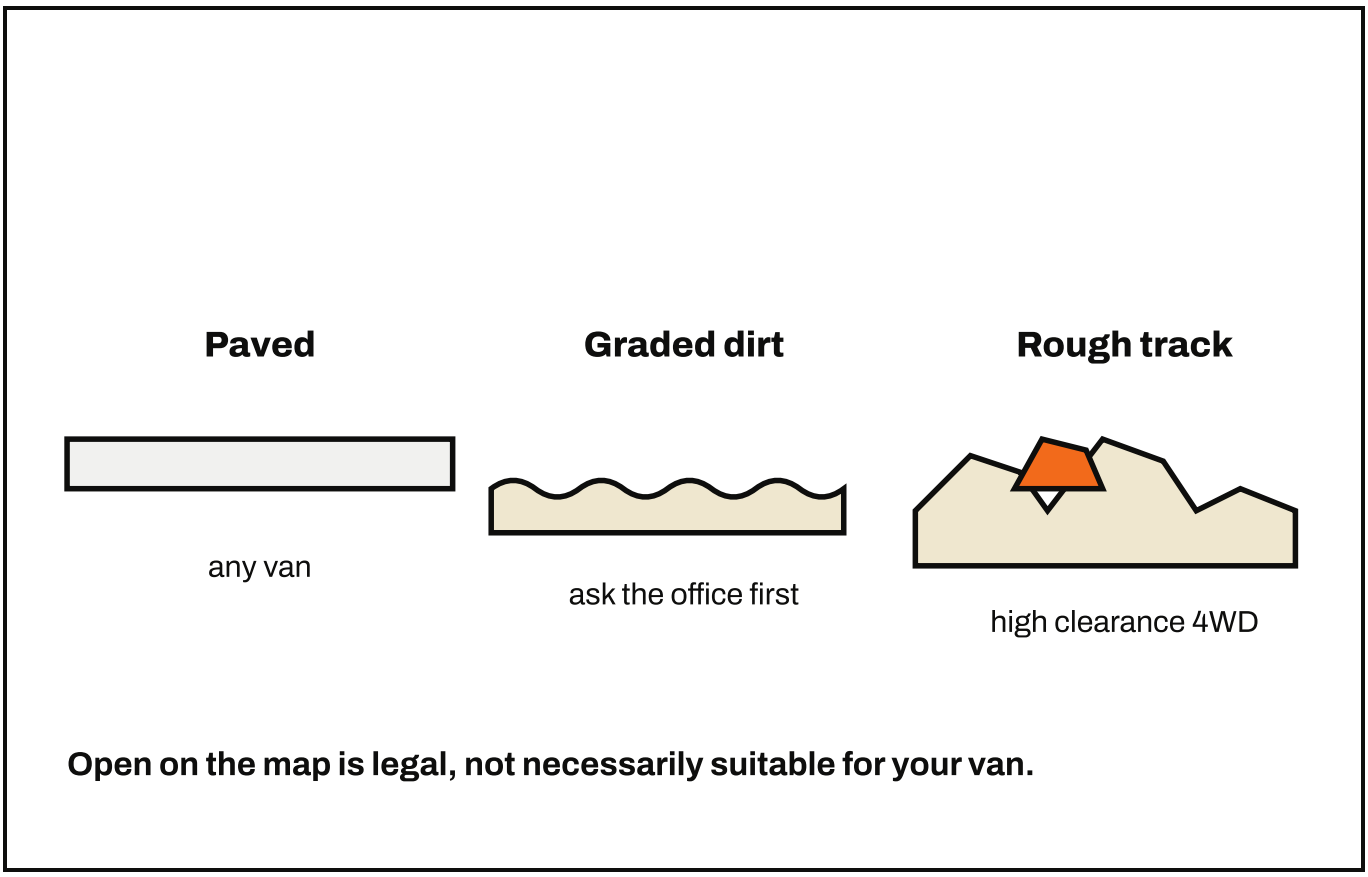
SKILL	STEPS
Beginner	**7**

TOOLS

- The land manager's map for where you want to camp
- Tape measure for garage and roof heights
- A truck scale ticket for the finished van

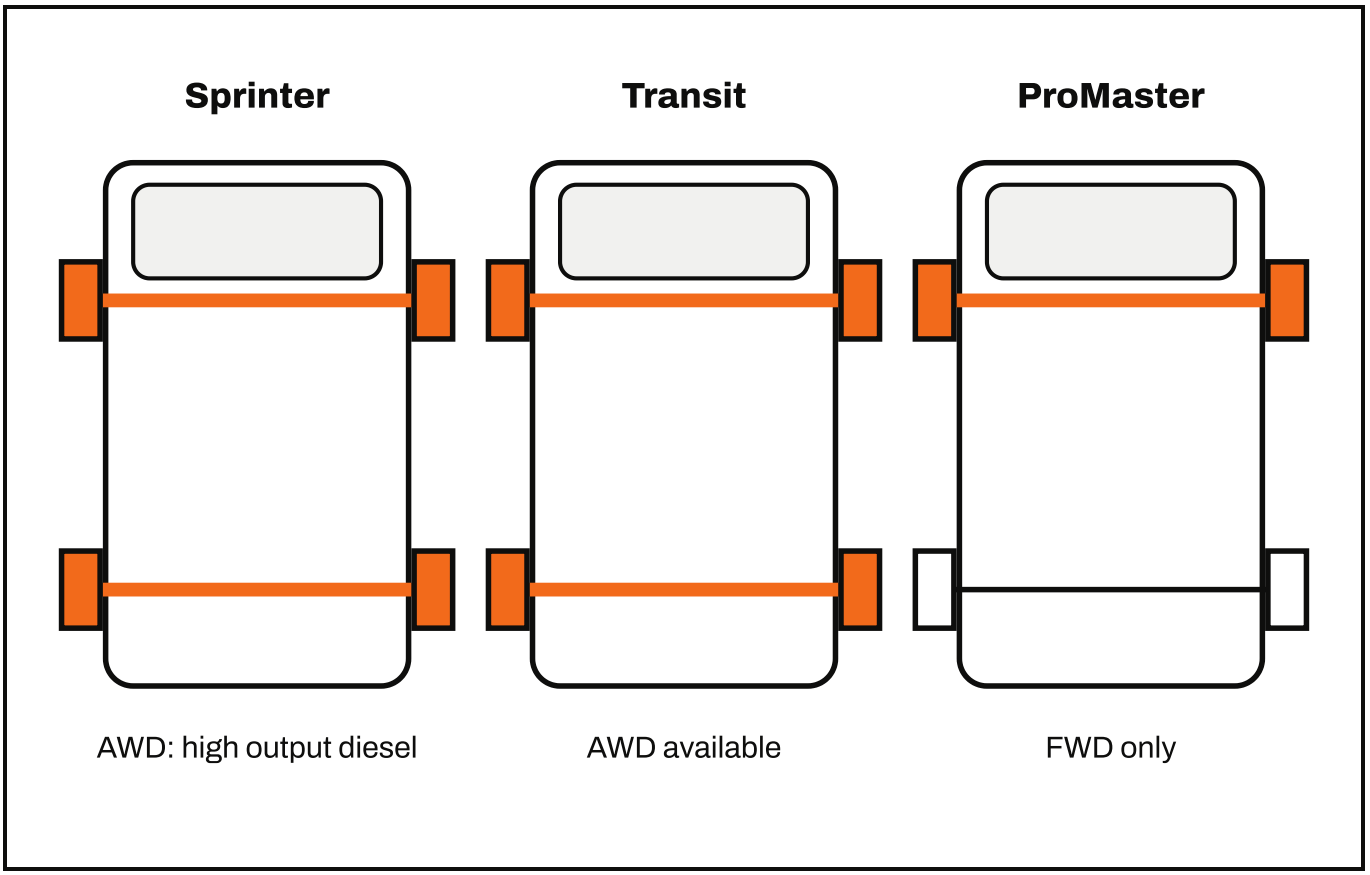
01 Decide which roads you actually need

List the places you want to sleep and ask the land manager about the roads to them. A road shown open on a Motor Vehicle Use Map is legal to drive, not necessarily maintained or suitable for your vehicle.[10] Mojave National Preserve says most of its roadside sites need a high clearance, four-wheel drive vehicle, while its developed campgrounds take two-wheel drive vehicles and most RVs.[9] Our dispersed camping guide covers the maps.



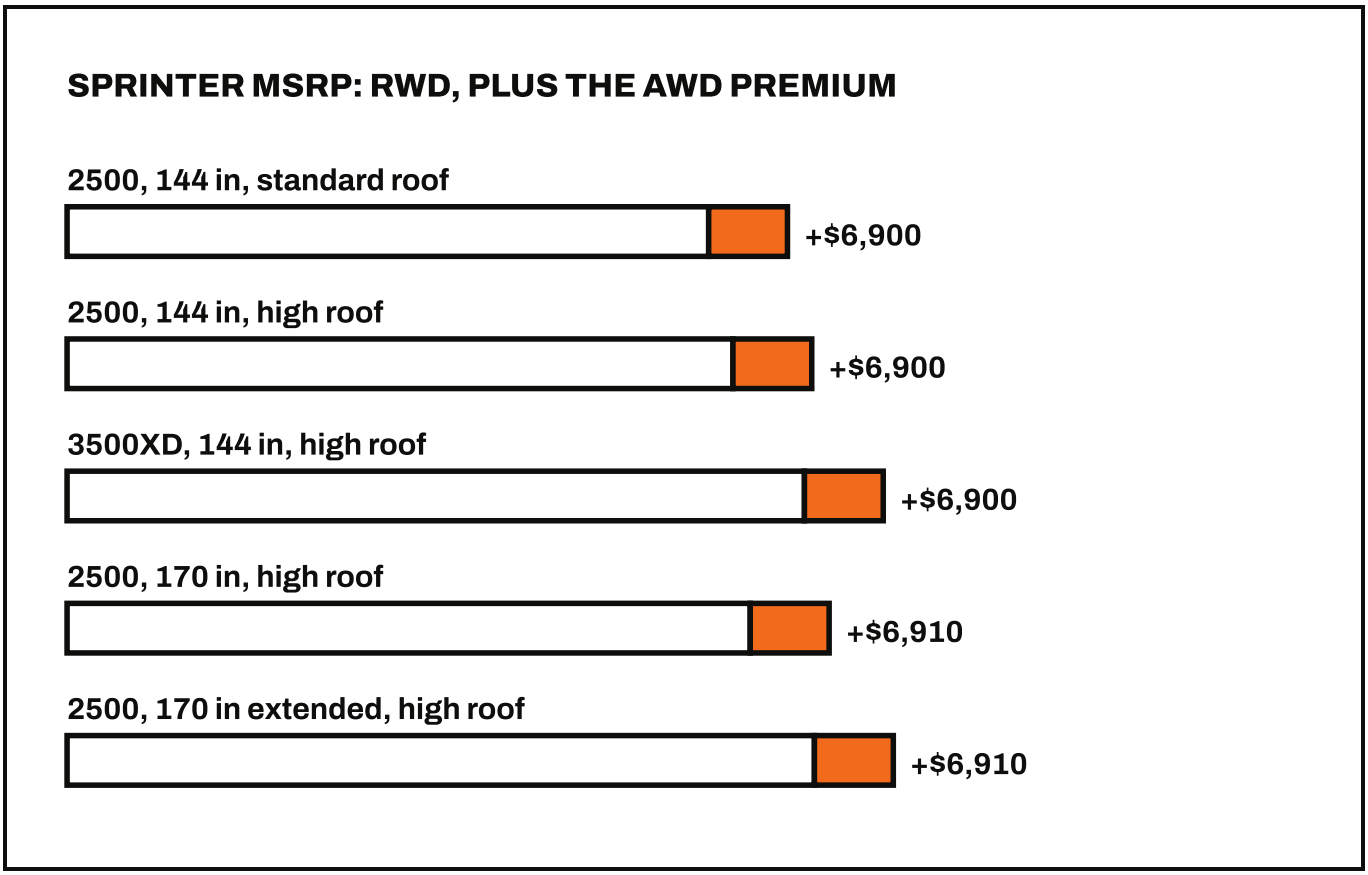
02 Pick the platform that offers it

The Sprinter offers AWD only with the high output diesel.[1] The Transit is sold with AWD; lift makers list kits for the Transit AWD and 2WD.[4][5] The ProMaster is front-wheel drive only.[2] For everything else that separates the three, see Sprinter vs Transit vs ProMaster.



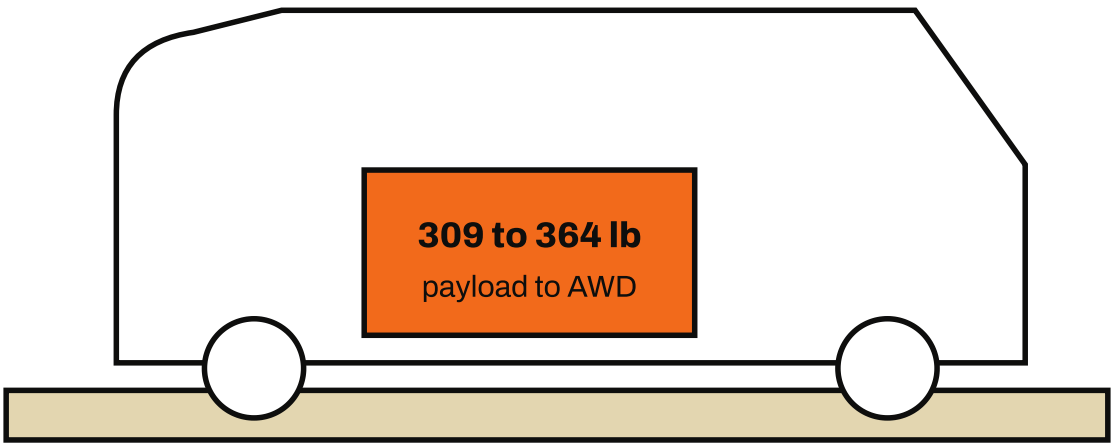
03 Budget for the AWD premium

On the Sprinter pairs we compared, AWD adds $6,900 to $6,910 to the MSRP of the same model, wheelbase and roof.[1] MSRP excludes destination, taxes and options,[1] and the conversion comes on top: see what a camper van costs.



04 Recheck the payload

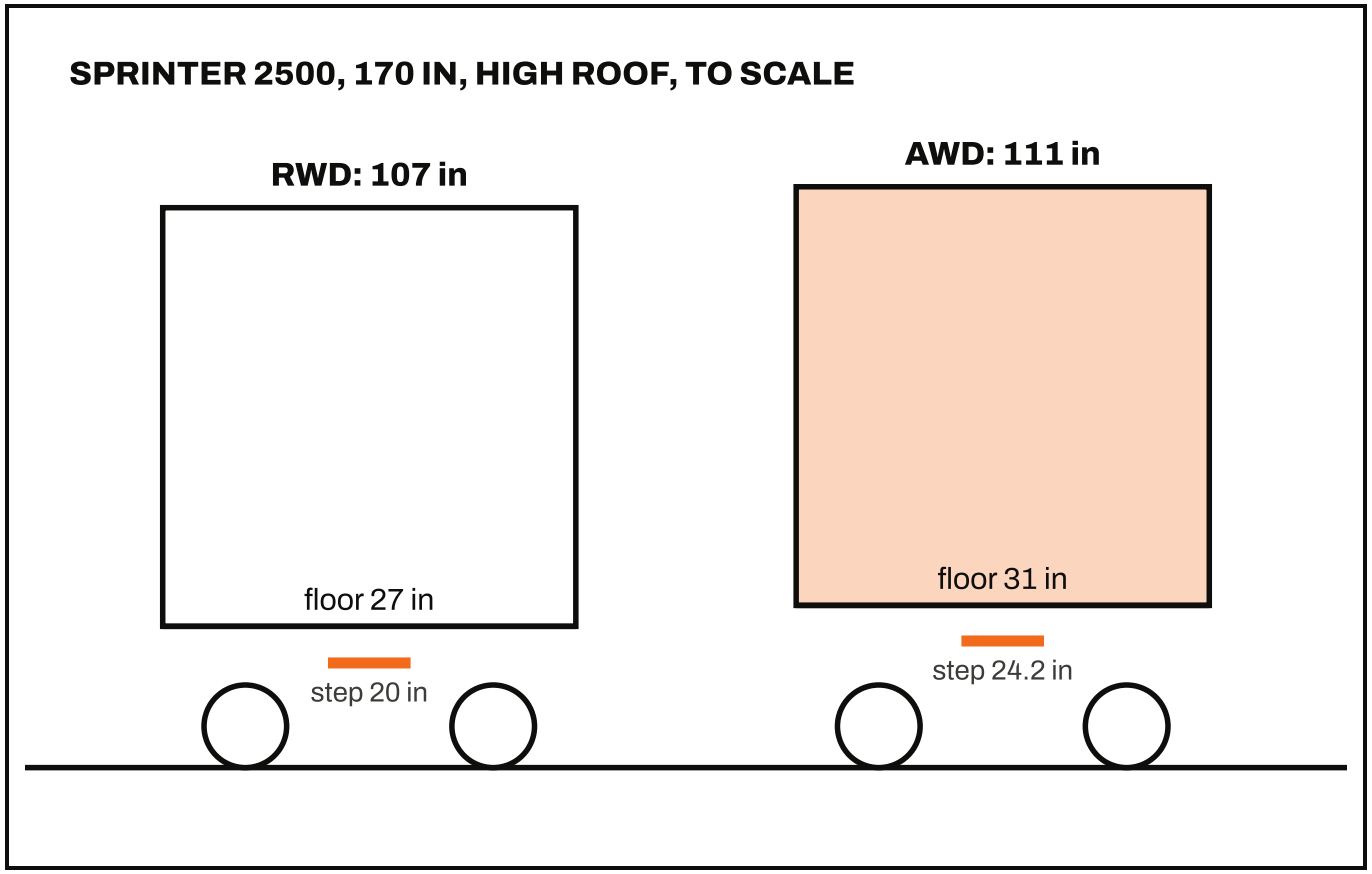
AWD adds 309 to 364 lb of curb weight on the Sprinter pairs, and the gross rating stays the same, so payload falls by that much.[1] Plan the build to the AWD figure, then weigh the finished van axle by axle, as our payload guide explains.



Weigh the finished van; compare each axle with its rating.

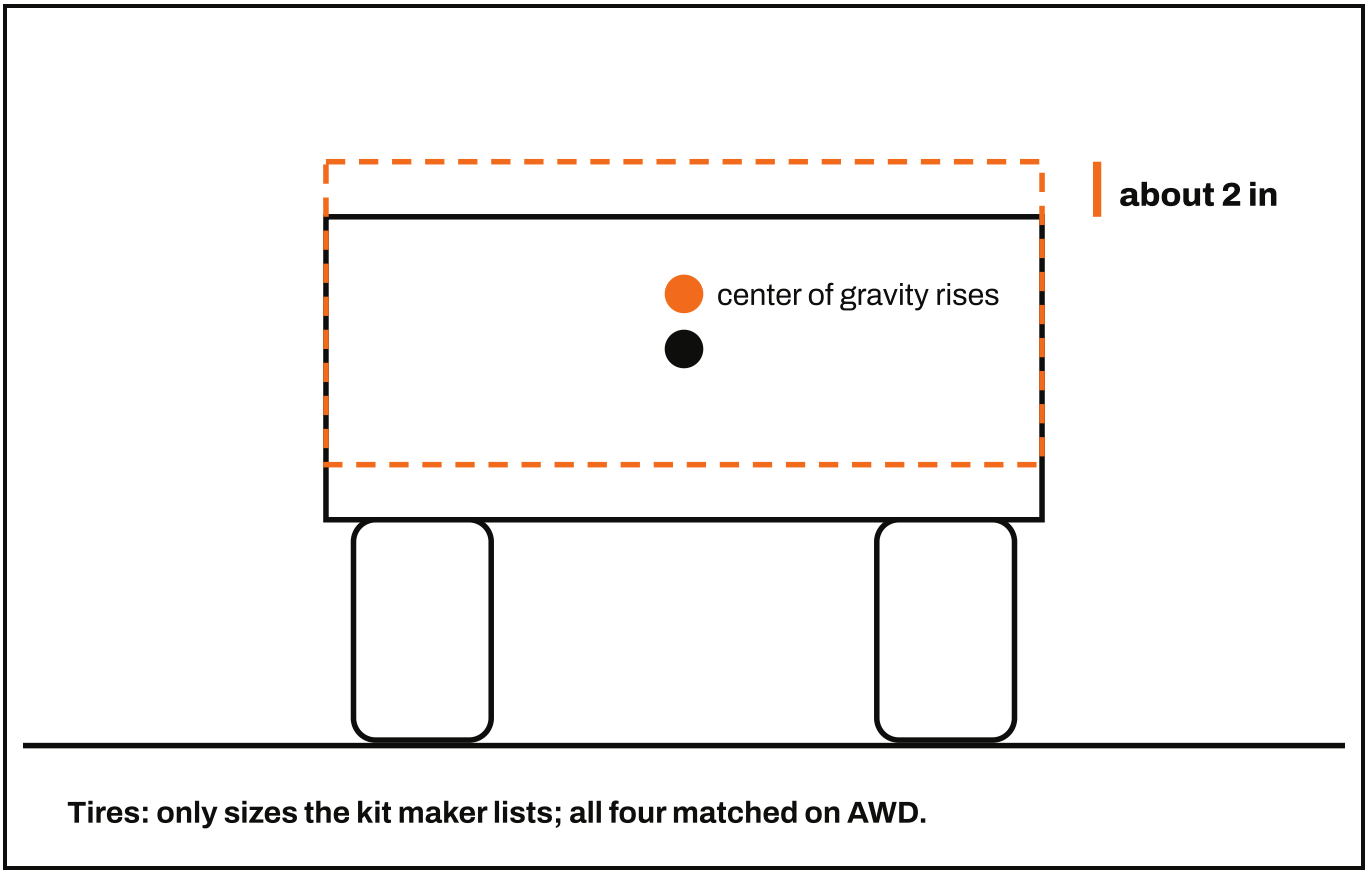
05 Measure the height you will live with

The AWD Sprinters stand 0 to 4 in taller overall and their load floor sits 2 to 4 in higher, with a higher first step.[1] Check garage doors, car parks and ferries against the finished height, and remember a roof rack, fan or solar panel adds more. Mercedes-Benz does not publish ground clearance on the page, so the load floor height is the closest maker figure.



06 Keep lifts and tires within the maker's limits

Quigley says its Transit 4x4 system raises the van about 2 inches and raises the center of gravity slightly, so the van should be driven accordingly.[3] Its QLift is a 2 inch lift for the Transit AWD and 2WD.[4] Tire sizes, matched tires on AWD and lift kits are covered in our van tires and suspension and lift kits guides.



Tires: only sizes the kit maker lists; all four matched on AWD.

07 Choose a builder or converter that does it

The list below is computed from the directory: 18 verified US camper van builders and 7 US conversion, lift and armor makers mention 4x4 or AWD on their own sites.[11] Ask each one which drive systems and model years it works on, and get it in writing.

VERIFIED LISTINGS THAT MENTION 4X4 OR AWD

18	7	50
US camper van builders	US 4x4 and lift makers	Outside the US

Counted from the directory data when the page is built.

WHAT SHOULD YOU READ NEXT?

The guides that decide the rest of a four-wheel drive build.

Dispersed camping in a van: the maps and rules for the places 4x4 gets you.

Sprinter vs Transit vs ProMaster and 144 vs 170 wheelbase.

Suspension and lift kits, van tires and payload.

Building it yourself? Start at the DIY library, or browse conversion kits and parts makers.

The live version of this guide, with every source linked: vanlife.co/guides/4x4-camper-van. Builders, kits and parts makers we checked: vanlife.co/builders.

QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK

Is the Sprinter AWD a real 4x4?

Mercedes-Benz calls the current Sprinter's system electronically engaged AWD and offers it only with the high output diesel. Its cargo van page does not mention a low range. Aftermarket 4x4 systems differ: Quigley's Transit system, for example, uses a two-speed transfer case with 4Hi and 4Low and a manual shifter.

Does the Ram ProMaster come in AWD or 4x4?

No. Ram says the 2026 ProMaster has standard front-wheel drive, by design, for a lower load floor and a tighter turning radius. None of the 4x4 converters' pages we read on 25 November 2026 (Quigley, Advanced 4x4 Vans) lists a ProMaster conversion.

How much more does an AWD Sprinter cost?

On Mercedes-Benz's 2027 Sprinter Cargo Van spec panels, the AWD version of the same model, wheelbase and roof costs $6,900 to $6,910 more in MSRP than the rear-wheel drive high output version. MSRP excludes destination, taxes and options.

Does AWD reduce payload?

Yes. On the five Sprinter pairs we compared, AWD adds 309 to 364 lb of curb weight and takes the same amount off payload. In a finished camper van, that is weight you cannot spend on water, batteries or people.

What fuel economy does a 4x4 camper van get?

No official figure exists. The EPA does not test vans over 8,500 lb gross vehicle weight rating, and every Sprinter configuration we compared is rated 9,050 lb or more. fueleconomy.gov lists no 2025 to 2027 Sprinters, and Mercedes-Benz's cargo van page publishes no mpg figure.

Can you convert a Ford Transit to 4x4?

Quigley Motor Company converts 2015 to 2019 Transits to 4x4 and says it is developing a NextGen4x4 conversion for 2020 and newer Transits; its page still gave an expected release of early 2026 when we read it on 25 November 2026. Its QLift is a 2 inch lift for the Transit AWD and 2WD.

Do you need 4x4 for dispersed camping?

Not for most of it: many sites are on graded roads. But a road open on a Forest Service Motor Vehicle Use Map is legal, not necessarily suitable, and Mojave National Preserve says most of its roadside sites need a high clearance, four-wheel drive vehicle. Ask the local office about the road before you go.

SOURCES

Vehicle figures come from the makers' own pages, read on 25 November 2026; differences are our arithmetic. Ford's websites (ford.com, fordpro.com, Ford's newsroom and owner sites) refused our requests that day, so this page gives no Ford figures. Builder lists are computed from the vanlife.co directory data when the page is built.

Mercedes-Benz Vans USA, 2027 Sprinter Cargo Van: model spec panels and the Maximum Traction with AWD option (https://www.mbvans.com/en/sprinter/cargo-van). Read 25 November 2026

Ram, 2026 ProMaster FAQ (drive and transmission) (https://www.ramtrucks.com/ram-promaster/faq.html). Read 25 November 2026

Quigley Motor Company, 4x4 Ford Transit Vans (system, component guide, used vans, NextGen4x4) (https://www.quigley4x4.com/products/ford-transit/). Read 25 November 2026

Quigley Motor Company, Ford Transit QLift (2 inch lift for Transit AWD and 2WD, authorized installers) (https://www.quigley4x4.com/products/qlift/). Read 25 November 2026

Transit Off Road, home page product list (Ford Transit AWD and 2WD 2 inch lift kits) (https://transitoffroad.com/). Read 25 November 2026

Advanced 4x4 Vans, home page (4x4 conversions for Nissan, GM and Ford vans) (https://advanced4x4vans.com/). Read 25 November 2026

US Department of Energy and EPA, fueleconomy.gov, Frequently asked questions: vehicles over 8,500 lb GVWR (https://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/info.shtml). Read 25 November 2026

fueleconomy.gov, search for 2025 to 2027 Mercedes-Benz Sprinter (no vehicles listed) (https://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/PowerSearch.do?action=noform&path=1&year1=2025&year2=2027&make=Mercedes-Benz&baseModel=Sprinter&srchtyp=ymm). Read 25 November 2026

National Park Service, Mojave National Preserve, Camping (roadside sites and vehicle needs) (https://www.nps.gov/moja/planyourvisit/camping.htm). Read 25 November 2026

US Forest Service, Black Hills National Forest, FAQs: Motor Vehicle Use Map (https://www.fs.usda.gov/r02/blackhills/maps-guides/faqs-mvum). Read 25 November 2026

Vanlife builder directory: each verified listing's description, written from its own website (https://vanlife.co/builders). Counted when this page is built, data as of 25 November 2026