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Sick of being left in the dark on your adventures? Get expert advice on everything you need to know about 12V lighting on this week's episode of the Snowys Camping Show.

Our gear gurus Ben and Lauren were joined by Steve Buttigieg and Zac Buckley from Hard Korr, where they talked through the ins and outs of illuminating your vehicle and campsite on your outdoor adventures. They cover everything from lux vs lumens, daisy-chaining your lights, mounting options, installation, power consumption, and more. So, check it out below for all the details.

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Links to things mentioned in this episode:

- [Hard Korr Lighting range](#)
- [12V Lighting](#)



- [Driving Lights](#)
- [Orange lighting options](#)
- [Headtorches](#)
- [Australian Design Rules](#)
- [Regulations on vehicle lights for South Australia](#)

How did Hard Korr get started?

Hard Korr founders Kirk Buckley and Cameron Cross came from different professional backgrounds – Kirk was in building and construction, while Cameron’s experience was in audio and sales. Kirk needed Cameron to help him with an installation at his home one day. The two of them got chatting about boat lighting and at the time, there were no real 12V lighting for boats available so an idea sparked and together, they made their first boat light kit.

Kirk loved camping and went away a couple of times a year using the old-style gas lanterns. There wasn’t a lot around back then so, the idea to expand their product line was born. Originally it was called Korr Lighting, as one of Zac’s uncles walked into the shed where Kirk had been working on the range and exclaimed “Cor! That’s pretty cool”, and the ‘hard’ part of the name came later.

How do you choose 4WD lighting?

It depends on your application, if you’re doing a canopy fit-out – rigid bars are a great option, or you can hardwire them in. A more compact option is flexistrip lighting as they’re easy to pack and can be cut down to fit your setup.

What makes quality lighting?

Osram LEDs which are German, Lumileds which are Dutch, and CREE, which are American are the top-of-the-line chips that are the leading names in the industry which you should look out for when purchasing 4WD lighting. There are two main types of chips – the 3528 chip and 5050 chip. The 5050 is a lot brighter and you can tell immediately when you switch the lights on. Another quality feature to look out for is a silicone coating over the LEDs, this provides protection from water and dust so that you can use it reliably outdoors.

Lux vs lumens

Lumens are measured at the source of the light, but it doesn’t give you an indication of how far a light will go. Lux, on the other hand, is a measurement of light, so it’s useful information for when you are trying to work out your needs for lighting your vehicle.

How many lumens do you need?

For a headlamp, you just need to see your immediate surroundings so anything around 100 lumens or more is absolutely fine. However, if you’re getting into the hunting or fishing



category where you need a high-performance spotlight, a lot more lumens are needed, and you should consider the lux readings as well. Keep in mind that beam distance, is not actually all useable light, the lux reading is going to be more accurate for how far you'll be able to see.

RGB & colour temperatures

Colour temperatures affect your lux reading. For example, orange lighting gives a lower lumen output compared to white lights and will, therefore, have a lower lux reading. This is what makes orange light so effective at keeping bugs away.

White and orange are the most common lighting colours when it comes to the 4WDing and camping categories. Recently, Hard Korrr has brought out 3 colour technology which combines white and orange to create a third shade of warm white so that you get something in the middle for more versatility outdoors.

Limits with daisy chaining lighting

There are limitations with daisy chaining lighting within the Hard Korrr range, as the dimmers on their own have a 3.7-amp rating so they will run close to five 48cm bars in one series. You would then need to add 2 or 3-way splitters to branch off to run more bars in your setup.



Everyone's lighting needs will be different. Image: Hard Korrr

Working out your power consumption

The easiest way to work out your power consumption is to add up all the amp-hour power



requirements and then divide it by the useable amp hours you have in your battery.

When do you need to consider a secondary power source?

If you're only running lights in your setup, a secondary power source isn't needed, just the 12V cigarette outlet in your vehicle. Once you add a fridge, a fan and other gear, then you'll need to add an auxiliary battery to your setup.

Night driving lights

If you're driving in the hills, a light bar is great as it provides flooded light and gives you visibility to the side of the road. Whereas, with country driving, a spotlight is better as it will give you a lot of distance ahead. They don't immediately flood at the beginning, but as you travel further down the road that will expand out for better visibility. Both would cover you for all kinds of scenarios – as you will get distance and flood.

Mounting options

It depends on your preference whether you want to mount your lights on your bull bar or roof rack. Your roof rack will give you more spread, but if they're good quality lights then it shouldn't matter as they provide the visibility you need for your use.

How many lights can you mount on your vehicle?

Every state has their own law around the number of lights you can mount on your vehicle and where you can mount them, so it's important to check that out through the Australian Design Rules, which are linked to above.

Installation with an auto electrician

It's important to ensure that you safely install lighting in your vehicle, so go to an auto-electrician if you don't have expertise in that area. You could actually cause damage to your car, not to mention endanger yourself and others in the process.

Taking care of your lights

In terms of caring for your lighting, if it's high quality and weatherproof lighting, the upkeep will be minimal. However, it's a good idea to make sure that everything works before you leave so that you're not caught out at the campsite. You should also check that your auxiliary battery is fully charged so that you don't run out of power and keep your lights inside their case/bag to protect them when they're not in use.

Thanks for listening, tune in again for next week's episode!

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If you have any questions for Ben and Lauren, make sure you head over to our Facebook group and let us know as we'd love to hear from you.

Catch you out there!