

History of Aluminum at Airstream

1947	Heat-treatable copper-alloyed 24ST. Side and end panel sheets were 0.032 inches thick supplied by Kaiser Aluminum. Metal could be heat-treated to be as strong as mild steel. Material had high-purity aluminum cladding rolled on one side that made it brighter and more corrosion-resistant.
1960s	Alcoa became the supplier of choice. Same grade of aluminum now called Alclad 2024-T3.
1970s (early)	Experimented using 6061-T6 aluminum, a less expensive heat-treatable grade.
1970s (late)	Alcoa supplied 3004-H18 Brite panels, 0.032" thick.
1983-1993	Alcoa supplied a "Controlled Mill Finish" in a 3003-H18 and 3005-H18 grade – lower cost material in place of heat-treated aluminum.
1993-1994	Airstream widened the body, requiring stronger aluminum for the weight. Side and end panels remained 3003 or 3004-H18 but thickness increased to 0.040 ".
12-22-1992 to 7-31-95	Alumax coating: Serial Numbers 509137 through 510640; 7-31-95 1996 Model
7-31-95 to 1/1997	Alumax ends with trailer #510640 and we switched to Yenkin-Majestic as Plasticoat supplier. Used and sold to dealers until it was pulled on 1-1997
1-1997	We switched to Akzo as Plasticoat supplier.
1998	<p>We started using Alcoa pre-coated metal: Partial start in 1998; currently still use.</p> <p>Exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 512502 all Alcoa except seg#25 out of Alumax 8-7-1998 • 512503 all out of Alumax • 512504 all Alcoa except seg#25 out of Alumax • 512505 all Alcoa except seg#25 out of Alumax • 512506 all Alcoa except seg#25 out of Alumax • 512507 all out of Alumax • 512508 all Alcoa except seg#25 out of Alumax • 512509 all out of Alumax • 512510 all Alcoa except seg#25 out of Alumax • 512511 all out of Alumax • 512512 all Alcoa except seg#25 out of Alumax • 512514 all Alcoa except seg#25 out of Alumax • 512516 all Alcoa except seg#25 out of Alumax • 512518 all Alcoa except seg#25 out of Alumax • 512520 all Alcoa except seg#25 out of Alumax • 512521 all Alcoa except seg#25 out of Alumax • 512522 all Alcoa except seg#25 out of Alumax • 512524 start 27FT trailers and longer all out of Alcoa 8-19-1998 • 512613 begin all units are Alcoa 9-8-1998.
5-1999	We started using low voc plastic by Akzo –still currently in use.

Note: 6063-T5 grade aluminum –corrosion-resistant. With simple heat treatment, 6063-T5 is as strong as mild steel. Currently used for extrusion and ribs.