

# 15 Passenger Van Training

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## **Purpose**

To establish a University training program regarding the safe use and operations of the 15-passenger van.

## **Objective**

To reduce the risk of accidents and possible injury or death associated with the operation of the 15-passenger vans. Risk reduction is achieved through assurances that vans will be operated by safe and knowledgeable drivers, that vans are in proper and safe working order and that all drivers follow safe operating procedures.

## **Program Elements**

1. Driver's license check and review: Applicants must complete the Van Safety Training Registration. Applicants will have their driving records checked. Drivers with two or more moving violations or any chemical violations within a two year time period will not be allowed to participate in the Van Training.
2. Training: ALL DRIVERS MUST participate in the driver's training program approved by the University to be allowed to drive University vans. Additional training may be requested or required by departments. A score of 70% must be made on written test to pass. The test will be general knowledge of driving and materials covered in this program. Upon passing the written test, the student will drive the 15-passenger van with the Instructor. Any life – threatening maneuver or failure to follow instructions will be grounds for dismissal from the program.
3. Inspections: Each vehicle must be inspected in accordance with University policy performed by the Motor Pool Department prior to the trip. Vans used for trips must receive an operational inspection by the driver before the vehicle leaves the parking lot. The driver will use the Inspection Log to document the inspection process and this log is located on the back of the mileage card given to the driver when vehicle is picked up.

## Operations

### Tips to Prevent Rollovers

1. Properly maintain tire pressure before driving any 15-passenger van. Check the Federal Certification label (usually located on the driver's door). This label lists the vehicles gross weight load limits, minimum allowable tire size and the cold inflation pressure for the front and rear tires. You can also find the same information in the owner's manual, along with Safe Driving Tips for the van.
2. Be careful on rural roads, particularly on curved roads without shoulders. Always maintain a safe speed to avoid running off the road. Remember the posted speed IS NOT the safest speed – REDUCE SPEED!!
3. Know what to do if your wheels drop off the roadway or pavement. Gradually reduce speed and steer back onto the roadway when safe to do so. It may be that you must come to a complete stop before you can steer onto roadway.
4. Avoid extreme panic-like steering. This may cause a rollover, especially at high rates of speed.
5. Do not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. If you are taking prescription drugs, check warning label for effects on driving. Do not drive while sleepy or inattentive. Do not drive too fast for the conditions (weather, night driving, road conditions, etc.).
6. The risk of a rollover crash is greatly increased when eleven (11) or more people ride in a 15-passenger van or when a load is placed on the roof. These two conditions change the van's center of gravity. Therefore, it is required that no more than ten (10) people ride in the vehicle, filling the front seats, leaving the rear seats empty, and that roof cargo be eliminated. All occupants of the van must wear seat belts while traveling.

### Guidelines for driving 15-passenger vans

- Do not talk on cell phone or text while driving.
- Drive during the day if possible.
- Keep gas tank at least half full.
- Require someone to be awake in the front seat on long trips.
- Take frequent rest stops (every two hours recommended)
- Report all accidents to University Transportation, call Police in area of accident for report. Info on what to do in case of accident is in the vehicle.
- Adjust mirrors before starting trip.
- Check blind spots before changing lanes.
- Increase following distance, (1) car length for every (10) miles per hour you are traveling
- Always drive (5) miles below posted speed limit
- You may exceed the speed limit only when passing a slower vehicle ahead of you
- Use spotter when backing.

## **Danger Points and Review**

### **Danger #1**

Vans are more likely to tip over due to their higher center of gravity. Reduce your speed to below the post speed limit. Posted speed limits may be safe for cars but not for vans. Always wear your seat belt and insure that all your passengers stay buckled up.

### **Danger #2**

15-passenger vans have larger blind spots than cars. Adjust your mirror so you can see the sides of the van. Before changing lanes, always check for other traffic in the blind spot, check both side door mirrors. When necessary, ask a passenger if it is clear to make the maneuver.

### **Danger #3**

15-passenger vans are taller and longer than cars. When being passed by a large semi-truck, grip the steering wheel firmly and be prepared for the van to be pushed by the wind. Try to keep the area beside your van clear of other vehicles. Check the height of your van before attempting to enter parking deck.

### **Danger #4**

15-passenger vans are heavier than cars, especially when loaded with passengers. Allow more time and distance when pulling into traffic, compensating for the slower acceleration. The measure to be used by the driver of a 15-passenger van who is following another vehicle under good road conditions is to maintain (1) car length for every ten miles per hour your vehicle is traveling.

### **Danger #5**

All mirrors should be used when backing the 15-passenger van. Drive to the driver's side when backing, frequently checking the right mirror. The safest way to back is to use a spotter to direct you into the space. The spotter must be a mature person (no playing around).