Dash Van Safety Guide

REDDUCING THE RISK OF ROLLOVER CRASHES IN 15-PASSENGER VANS

The risk of a rollover crash is greatly increased when 10 or more people ride in a 15-passenger van or when a load is placed on the roof of the van. These two conditions change the van's center of gravity. As a result, the van has less resistance to rollover and handles differently from other passenger vehicles making it more difficult to control in an emergency situation.

Most vehicle rollovers are single vehicle crashes in which the vehicle runs off the road and overturns when it strikes a ditch, embankment, soft soil, or other object.

Tips for Preventing Rollover

- Drivers must be well rested and maintain a safe speed for weather and road conditions.
- Drivers must be especially cautious on curved rural roads and maintain a safe speed to avoid running off the road.
- If the van's wheels drop off the roadway, gradually reduce speed and steer back onto the roadway when it is safe to do so.
- Make sure the van's tires are properly inflated and the tread is not worn down. Check tire pressure and treadwear once a month.

Buckle Up for Safety

Eighty percent of people killed in rollover crashes in 15-passenger vans were not wearing seat belts. Passengers can dramatically reduce their risk of being killed or seriously injured in a rollover crash by simply using their seat belts. Organizations that own 15-passenger vans should have a written seat belt use policy. Drivers should be responsible for enforcing the policy.

Other Tips for Safe Driving

When a 15-passenger van is not full, passengers should sit in seats that are in front of the rear axle. More than 15 people should never be allowed to ride in a 15-passenger van.

Because 15-passenger vans are substantially longer and wider than cars, they:
- Require more space and additional reliance on the side-view mirrors for changing lanes
- Do not respond as well to abrupt steering maneuvers
- Require additional braking time.

An Experienced Driver Makes a Difference

An organization that owns a 15-passenger van should select one or two experienced drivers to drive the van on a regular basis. These drivers will gain valuable experience handling the van and this experience will help make each trip a safe one.

NTSA
People Saving People
www.ntsa.gov

DOT Auto Safety HotLine
888-327-4236
TDD 800-424-9153

2/24/2004
Van Safety Guide

15 (14 passengers + 1 driver) Passenger

- **Screen all drivers** through MVR for Iowa licenses or establishing current license for out of state drivers.
- Require all drivers take a **short training program** via reading this tip sheet and the hangtag.
- **Require all passengers and the driver to wear proper safety restraints** any time the vehicle is in motion.
- **Remove the rear seat** of the vans to reduce loading behind the vehicle’s rear axle—*don't fill extra space* with luggage, etc.
- **Limit the capacity to** 10 persons **including the driver**, which dramatically reduces the risk of rollover.
- **Load forward seats first at all times**.
- **Do not tow anything behind the vehicle or load the roof**. Few exceptions may be made, e.g., crew club boats.
- **Conduct a full safety inspection of the vehicle, including all tires**, pre- and post-trip. Ensure tires are properly inflated and the tread is not worn down. Worn tires can cause your van to slide sideways on wet or slippery pavement. Improper inflation can cause handling problems and can lead to catastrophic tire failures, such as blowouts.
- **Include safety items on board**, such as a fire extinguisher, first aid kit and cellular phone (which should not be used during driving).
- **Give the fullest consideration to other, safer transportation options**.
- **Avoid conditions that lead to a loss of control**. Never drive while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Make sure you are well rested and attentive, and always slow down if the roads are wet or icy.
- **Drive cautiously on rural roads**. Be particularly cautious on **curved rural roads** and maintain a safe speed to avoid running off the road.
- **Know what to do if your wheels drop off the roadway**. If your wheels drop off the roadway, or pavement, **gradually reduce speed and steer back onto the roadway when it is safe to do so**.
- Because a **15-passenger van** is **substantially longer and wider than a car**, it:
  - Requires more space and additional reliance on the side-view mirrors for changing lanes.
  - Does not respond as well to abrupt steering maneuvers.
  - Requires additional braking time.
- **Promote usage of smaller vans or buses**.
- **Other 15 Passenger Van Tip Sources**:
  - Online program through AlertDriving.com/ EMC/LMC OR UE
  - Video program through Guide One for $60.
  - This safety tip sheet compiled using several renowned safety institutions
  - Require safety tips from rental agency -- Charles Gabus provides safety sheet to read
  - DOT Auto Safety HotLine: **888-327-4236/TDD 800-424-9153**

I have read and understand the safety precautions outlined in this Van Safety Guide. I will to the best of my ability practice these suggestions while driving on behalf of the University.

_____________________________    __________________________
Signature                                           Date

Department

(Return signed form to your department head before driving van on behalf of the university.)

Drake University Travel Policy