

RISK MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

15- PASSENGER VANS SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Experience:** Fifteen-passenger vans should only be driven by experienced, licensed drivers who operate this type of vehicle on a regular basis. A commercial driver's license is ideal. It's important to know that 15-passenger vans handle differently than cars, especially when fully loaded.
- **Attention:** Stay focused on the task of safe driving by being well rested, never using a handheld phone at the wheel, and limiting conversation with other passengers. Drivers shouldn't drive more than 8 hours per day.
- **Speed:** Always obey the posted speed limit, and reduce your speed as needed based on road or weather conditions. Remember that 15-passenger vans require additional braking time and cannot handle abrupt maneuvers the way cars can.
- **Seat Belts:** All occupants need to wear seat belts at all times.

57% Of The 235 15-Passenger Van Occupants Killed In Rollover Crashes From 2010-2019 Were Ejected.

69% Of 15-Passenger Van Occupants Killed In Crashes From 2010-2019 Were Known To Not Be Wearing A Seat Belt.

- **Tire Pressure:** Inspect the tires and check tire pressure before each use. A van's tires, including the spare tire, need to be properly inflated and the tread should not be worn down. Excessively worn or improperly inflated tires can lead to a loss of vehicle control and possibly a rollover. Check the driver's side door pillar or the owner's manual for the recommended tire size and pressure. Recommended tire pressure may be different for front and back tires.
- **Spare:** All tires weaken with age—even unused tires; avoid using an old spare on your 15-passenger van. Used 15-passenger vans may come with dangerous spare tires that are many years old. Check a tire's age by finding its Tire Identification Number (TIN) on the tire's sidewall. The last four digits of the TIN indicate the week and year the tire was made (e.g., 1010 = March 2010).
- **Occupancy:** Never allow more than 15 people to ride in a 15-passenger van. Fill the seats from front to back: when the van is not full, passengers should sit in seats that are in front of the rear axle.
- **Cargo:** Cargo should be placed forward of the rear axle; avoid overloading the van or placing any loads on the roof. See the vehicle owner's manual for maximum weight of passengers and cargo and to determine towing capability.
- **Size:** A 15-passenger van is substantially longer and wider than a car, and thus requires more space to maneuver. It also requires additional reliance on the side-view mirrors for changing lanes.

Risk Management recommends:

- Sending this bulletin to all drivers in your agency who may drive these vans.
<https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/15-passenger-vans#the-topic>
- Adhere to the NHTSA operational guidelines.

Call our office if you have any questions at all, or if we can be of assistance.

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