



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

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15-Passenger Van Safety

This memo contains information pertaining to the safe operations and driving characteristics of 15-passenger vans. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has made several recommendations regarding the 15 passenger vans.

Areas of training for 15 passenger van drivers that need to be emphasized:

- 15-passenger vans should be operated by trained, experienced drivers. This includes giving the operator the opportunity to operate the van in a "test drive" that includes partially and fully loaded trips.
- All occupants wear safety belts at all times.
- Check the tire pressure and tread wear for proper inflation and no worn tread. It is recommended that you perform a daily pre-trip inspection.
- Do not tow a trailer behind a fully loaded van.
- Do not load on top of the van and, if needed, remove all luggage racks.
- Place the weight as far forward in the van as possible. When it is not full, passengers should sit in front of the rear axle.
- Never exceed fifteen passengers in these vehicles and for every 150 lbs. worth of gear - remove one passenger from the van.

Because 15 passenger vans are 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 well to abrupt steering maneuvers.
- Requires additional braking time.
- When a 15 passenger van is not full, passengers should sit in seats that are in front of the rear axle.
- If the wheels drop off the roadway, gradually reduce speed and steer it back onto the road. Never jerk the steering wheel as this is the cause of most rollovers.

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If you would like more information, listed below are two websites with information regarding the 15 passenger vans. They are:

www.nts.gov --National Transportation Safety Board that issued safety recommendations.

www.acacamps.org – American Camping Association web site. Check the “public policy” tab on the home page for information on the 15 passenger vans.