



SAFETY AND LICENSE INFORMATION FOR 15-PASSENGER VANS



*Prepared by Chief Executive Office, Risk Management Branch
Loss Control and Prevention Section*

Contact LossControl@ceo.lacounty.gov for additional information

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 57% of the 235 15-passenger van occupants killed in rollover crashes from 2010-2019 were ejected. 69% of this population were known to not be wearing a seat belt.

15-passenger vans are widely used for transporting groups but can pose safety risks to inexperienced drivers and other road users. We recommend that van drivers insist all occupants wear seat belts at all times; that drivers are trained and experienced; that tires are checked weekly using the manufacturer's recommended pressure levels; and that no loads are placed on the roof.

While convenient, 15-passenger vans do not drive like minivans. Drivers and passengers must use caution to minimize risks. Drivers should take the following safety precautions:

- **EXPERIENCE:** Fifteen-passenger vans should only be driven by experienced, licensed drivers who operate this type of vehicle on a regular basis.
- **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.
- **TIRE PRESSURE:** Inspect the tires and check tire pressure before each use.
- **OCCUPANCY:** Never allow more than 15 people to ride in a 15-passenger van.
- **CARGO:** Cargo should be placed forward of the rear axle; avoid overloading the van or placing any loads on the roof.

SIZE: A 15-passenger van is substantially longer and wider than a car and thus requires more space to maneuver.

*License Requirements for All Van Drivers

General: This is for general transportation of adults to and from worksites, such as transporting employees from headquarters to a field location.

Drivers must have a Class C driver's license, and the driver should complete defensive driver safety training before operating the van.

Vanpool: This is used primarily for nonprofit work-related transportation of adults for ridesharing purposes.

Example: group of employees commuting between home and work.

Class C driver's license plus a medical certificate card (DL51A) as required of Commercial License Drivers. Additionally, the driver shall keep a statement in the vanpool vehicle signed under penalty of perjury, that he or she has not been convicted of reckless driving, drunk driving, or a hit-and-run offense in the last five years (CA Vehicle Codes 668, 34509, 12804.9 (3)(j)). The driver should be trained in defensive driving safety before operating the van.

Youth Bus: This is used to transport children (9-14 child passengers) at or below the 12th-grade level directly from a public or private school to an organized non-school-related youth activity within 25 miles of that location. In addition to the destinations specified, a youth bus may also be used to transport children at or below the 12th-grade level to or from their place of residence (CA Vehicle Code 680).

Example: using a van with more than 10 passengers (children and driver) and transporting from residence to a County-sponsored youth program.

Class B driver's license requirements plus

- *Passenger transport vehicle endorsement (P); and*
- *Youth bus certificate (CA Vehicle Code 12523); and*
- *First aid qualification (CA Vehicle Code 12522).*

The van shall be inspected and certified initially before use and at least once each school year or annually to ascertain whether its condition complies with all provisions of law. Inspections and certifications will be conducted and issued by the Department of the California Highway Patrol (CA Vehicle Code 2807.3)

For questions or assistance regarding 15-passenger van operation requirements, please contact the Chief Executive Office's Loss Control and Prevention Section at LossControl@ceo.lacounty.gov.



Alert! 15-passenger van drivers

15-passenger vans handle differently from other vehicles such as passenger cars. They do not respond as well to abrupt turns and require additional braking distance.

REDUCE YOUR CHANCE OF ROLLOVER

Check your vehicle loading

- Heavily loaded 15-passenger vans – those with 10 or more passengers or with loads placed on the roofs – have an increased chance of rollover.
- If possible, have passengers and cargo forward of the rear axle and avoid placing any loads on the roof.

Check your tires

- Excessively worn or improperly inflated tires can lead to a loss-of-control situation and a rollover.
- At least once a month, check that the van's tires are properly inflated and the tread is not worn down.

Check your safety belts

- 80% of people killed in rollover crashes in 15-passenger vans were not wearing their safety belts.
- Require all occupants to use their safety belts or appropriate child restraints.

Check your road conditions

- Most rollovers occur at high speeds as a result of sudden steering maneuvers.
- Use caution on interstates and rural roads to avoid running off the road.
- If your van's wheels should drop off the roadway, gradually slow down and steer back onto the roadway when it is safe to do so.

Check yourself, the driver

- U.S. DOT recommends 15-passenger vans be driven by trained and experienced drivers.
- Ensure you are well rested and alert.
- Maintain a safe speed for weather and road conditions.



TDD 800-424-9153

