

# USI

15 Passenger Vans

2021



Boy Scouts Local Council  
Insurance Program

*Understand. Service. Innovate.*

# Guide to Safe Scouting - Transportation

- Use commercial transportation when possible
- Complete local or national tour plan (formerly known as tour permit)
- Seat belts required for all occupants
- All drivers licensed and insured, at least 18 years old
- CDL required for vehicles with more than 15 occupants (10 in CA)
- Do not travel in convoy
- Limit driving time to 10 hours

# Driver Qualifications – 15 Passenger Vans

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- Drivers should be at least 21 (25 is preferred)
- Younger drivers may be acceptable if they have specific experience operating a 15 passenger van
- Drivers should be trained on 15 passenger van operation and safety
- Drivers should complete a road test to demonstrate competency driving a van

# 15 Passenger Van Characteristics

- Substantially longer and wider than a car
- Reduced visibility to the sides and rear
- Requires more space and additional reliance on the side mirrors for changing lanes
- Does not respond as safely to abrupt steering maneuvers
- Improper loading of passengers and cargo can affect center of gravity and stability
- Requires additional braking time
  - The more weight you have, the longer it takes to stop
  - The higher the speed you are traveling, the longer it takes to stop

# 15 Passenger Van Recommendations

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- If possible, limit the number of passengers to 10 and NEVER carry more than 15 passengers in a 15 passenger van
- Load the van from the front to the rear keeping as much of the weight forward of the rear axle as possible
- Do not carry objects on the roof of 15 passenger vans and keep cargo as low to the floor as possible
- Vans should be operated by experienced drivers. Recommended minimum age of 21

# Recommendations Continued...

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- Van drivers should have had a recent physical exam
- Provide training to all van drivers
- Allow greater following distance in order to avoid panic stops and overcorrected steering maneuvers
- Never operate the vehicles under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Make sure tires are properly inflated, tread is adequate and there are no cracks or damage
- Check proper inflation sticker on door jamb

# Recommendations Continued...

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- Recommended pressures may be different for front and rear tires
- Studies have shown that over 57% of 15 passenger vans have at least one tired underinflated by 25%
- Complete a pre-trip safety inspection checklist on the van

# The Vehicle

- Always drive with your headlights on to be seen by other traffic
- Perform pre-trip inspections and notify appropriate person of any vehicle defects
- Never drive a vehicle with known mechanical defects





# Reducing Risk of Roll Over

- Do not load items on top of the vehicle or tow trailer
- Do not overload the vehicle with passengers and/or equipment
- Limiting van to 10 passengers is recommended (remove backseat to discourage use)
- Passengers should be distributed evenly from side to side for balance and sit towards the front of the vehicle
- Know what to do if your wheel drops off of the side of the roadway. GRADUALLY reduce speed and steer back onto the roadway when safe to do so
- Avoid panic steering and hard braking
- Never drive too fast for conditions or drive fatigued

# Reducing Risk of Roll Over



Slow down and drive cautiously, especially on rural roads. Shoulders, ditches and embankments, as well as on and off ramps, create the potential for vehicle roll over.



Reduce your speed BELOW the posted speed limit for all turns and poor road conditions.

**The posted speed limit is safe for cars – NOT 15 passenger vans.**

# Following Distance

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- Maintain a cushion of safety around the vehicle (no traffic on all sides)
- Drive in the right-hand lane whenever possible
- Recommended safe following distance is as follows:
  - When weather, road and visibility conditions are good, maintain 4 seconds behind other traffic
  - When weather, road or visibility conditions are bad, maintain at least 6 seconds behind other traffic



One thousand one  
One thousand two  
One thousand three  
One thousand four



When the vehicle in front of you passes a fixed object (i.e. a telephone pole or mailbox), count one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, etc. and you should not pass that same fixed object before the designated count.



- Stay well behind larger commercial vehicles so you can see around them for potential hazards.
- When following in traffic, if you cannot see the other vehicle's rearview mirror, you may be in their blind spot; avoid doing so.

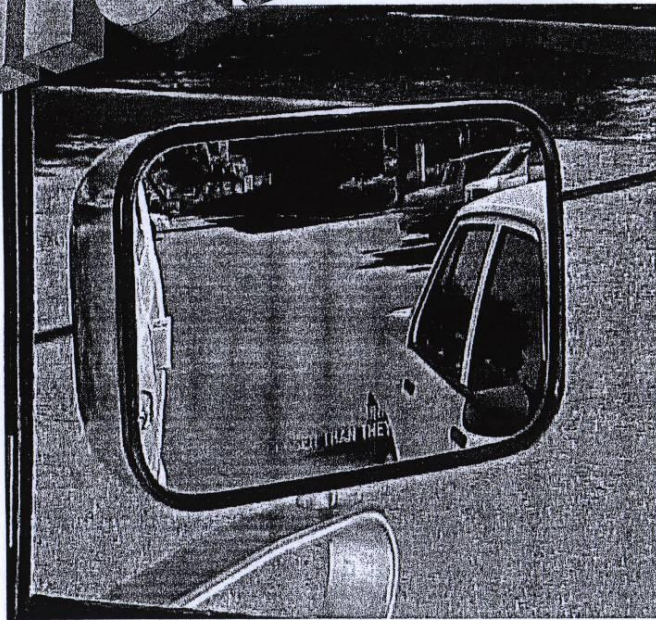
# Use of Mirrors

- Adjust mirrors so that you can barely see the edge of the van in the mirror
- If you must change lanes, always check for blind spots by first leaning forward in your seat to change your sight angle and then by turning your head
- Scan mirrors every 3 – 5 seconds
- The biggest blind spot is directly behind the vehicle
- Avoid backing whenever possible

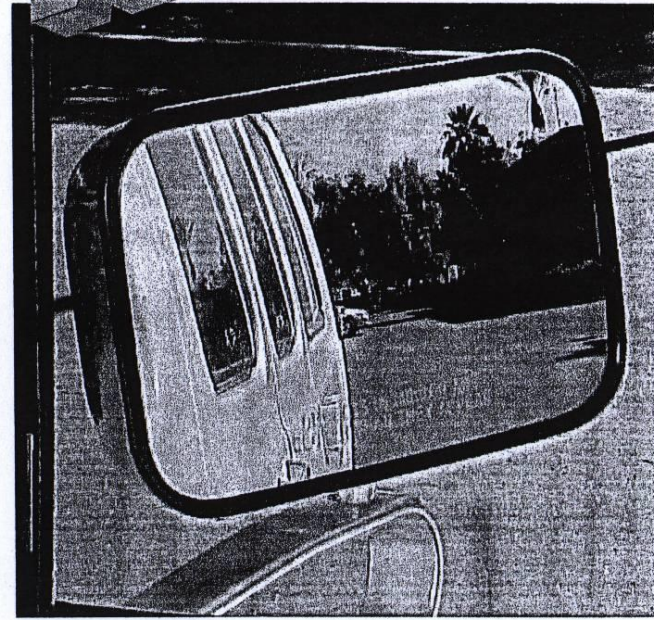




**RIGHT !!**



**WRONG !**







- Always communicate your intentions by using your turn signals
- A turn signal must be given continuously during at least the last 100 feet traveled before turning



- Always clean snow, ice and frost from all windows
- Secure any loose items within the vehicle so they do not cause injuries in a crash. This includes trash that can interfere with the pedals of the operation of the vehicle
- Remove snow and ice from the roof of the van, these can fly off the van causing a danger to other vehicles

# Drivers

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- MUST wear seat belts at ALL times
- Begin trip well rested
- Ensure all doors are locked, passengers are seated properly and using seat belts
- Plan travel route, use a navigator in the front seat if needed
- Allow longer stopping and following distances
- Plan turns in advance to allow adequate space
- Keep alert in order to respond quickly and safely to unexpected situations

# Passengers

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- Should NOT use interior lighting when the van is in transit
- Passengers should sit toward the front of the vehicle and be distributed evenly from side to side
- Never more than 15 people in a 15 passenger van (10 is the recommended limit)
- Avoid behaviors that may distract the driver

# Safety Belts

- Safety belts **MUST** be worn at all times
- In fatal, single-vehicle roll-overs involving 15 passenger vans over the past decade, 92% of belted occupants survived
- **THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR NOT BUCKLING UP!**



# Passenger Loading/Unloading

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- Drivers should use good judgment to decide how, when and where to unload passengers safely
- Always pick up and drop off passengers so that they do NOT have to cross traffic to get to their destination
- Keep all passengers away from the front and rear of the vehicle when crossing
- When loading/unloading at night rear doors may block view of tail lights or flashers by other drivers

# Preventing Backing Accidents

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- Avoid backing whenever possible
- Get out and check the area behind the van before backing
- Turn on four-way flashers and back SLOWLY
- Have a spotter assist you to back ONLY when they understand what is expected of them
- There is a blind spot in front of the van which may prevent operators from seeing children and others of short stature walking in front of the van
- Be aware of van passengers walking in front or behind the van as they board or exit the vehicle



The use of a responsible spotter when loading, unloading, backing or parking is recommended to ensure no person or object is in harm's way



# Distractions



- Cell phones are for emergencies only, and should only be used when the van is safely parked
- No food, drinks or smoking while driving
- Reading while driving is prohibited
- Read maps only when the van is safely parked

# Fatigue



- No more than 10 hours driving per day
- Drivers must be well rested
- Signs of fatigue
  - Excessive yawning and blinking
  - Difficulty focusing and keeping eyes open
  - Inattention and daydreaming
- The only cure for fatigue is to sleep
  - Stop and rest for 15 – 30 minutes
  - Longer than 30 minutes is not advisable

- Do not drive between midnight and 6 a.m.
- Be aware that 3pm – 5pm is a time when fatigue is common
- On long trips, schedule rest stops at least every two hours
- Drive during the day, if possible
- Have someone awake in the front passenger seat



# Weather Conditions

- Check weather conditions prior to any trip
- Be prepared not to go if conditions are extreme
- Leave early to avoid making mistakes or becoming anxious



# Crosswinds

- Because of the van's size and shape, you must be especially mindful of crosswinds
- Crosswinds can be created by open fields, overpasses, and bridges as well as exiting tunnels



- Crosswinds are also created by larger vehicles and buses
- Slow down during windy conditions, anticipate areas where crosswinds may occur

# Animals

- Animals present a hazard to any vehicle, but more so with a 15 passenger van
- Swerving to avoid small animals is dangerous, as it may cause the vehicle to roll over
- Use high beams whenever possible



**DON'T SWERVE!**

# 15 Passenger Van Summary

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- Proper selection of van drivers is critical
- Limit the number of passengers and the amount of cargo
- Maintain van properly, inspect prior to trip
- Reduce speeds, especially when driving rural roads
- Do not drive while fatigued
- Drive defensively and anticipate road hazards
- Avoid overcorrecting steering