



Van Safety Policy (12-15 Passenger)

Research conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (“NHTSA”) has found that the risk of a rollover crash is greatly increased when ten or more people ride in a fifteen-passenger van. The guidelines below establish minimum safety requirements when Cal State Fullerton faculty, staff, or students operate a twelve or fifteen-passenger van (“van”), regardless of the number of seats installed. Drivers should review the following information from the NHTSA on risk reduction of van rollovers, which may be found at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/document/15-passenger-van-safety>.

A. POLICY

- I. **No more than nine people, including the driver, may ride in any van owned, leased, rented or operated by the university.** Passengers should sit in seats that are in front of the rear axle.
- II. **The number of passengers may not exceed the number of working seats belts.** All passengers must be properly seated with seat belts fastened any time the van is in motion. One study of accidents that occurred over a ten-year period showed that 80 percent of people killed in rollover crashes in vans were unbelted. Drivers are responsible for enforcing this requirement.
- III. **Roof racks may not be used under any circumstance.** Placing any load on the roof raises the center of gravity and increases the likelihood of a rollover. Luggage/cargo carried inside a van should be packed as close to the floor as possible and may not be stacked above the level of the seat backs. Whenever possible, luggage/cargo should be restrained to secure items against shifting or falling. Heavily loaded vans should have the load distributed evenly. Avoid excessive loading behind the rear axle of the van.
- IV. **Individuals driving a van owned, leased, rented, or operated by the university must have completed a defensive driver course (online), van driver safety training course (online), and van driver safety training driving test (in-person).** Contact Environmental Health & Safety to schedule an in-person van driver safety training driving test.

B. GUIDELINES

Safety guidelines include but are not limited to the following. Additional safety guidelines are reviewed in the online and in-person van driver safety training courses.

- I. **Vans are more likely to rollover because the passenger weight raises the vehicle’s center of gravity and causes it to shift rearward.** Thus, van speed must be reduced

BELOW the speed limit posted for all turns. In addition, sudden jerky motions should be avoided when steering.

- II. **Because vans have larger blind spots than passenger cars**, mirrors must be adjusted so that the sides of the van can be seen. Convex mirrors should be used to increase the driver's field of view.
- III. **Because vans are heavier than passenger cars**, drivers must allow more time and distance when pulling into traffic or attempting to stop. Drivers should leave three to four car lengths between their van and the rear of the vehicle ahead.
- IV. **Because vans are taller and longer than passenger cars**, drivers should grip the steering wheel firmly and be prepared for the van to be pushed by the wind when exiting a tunnel or being passed by a large truck.
- V. **All vans must be regularly maintained and kept in a roadworthy condition.** University-owned vans (reserved from the CSUF Motor Pool or owned by departments) must meet maintenance standards established by the CSUF Auto Shop. Maintenance of vans obtained through a rental company is the responsibility of that rental company.
- VI. Trailers may be towed provided that the towing capacity and the trailer tongue-weight (hitch weight) under loaded conditions meet the manufacturer's recommendations. **Maximum towing capacity includes both the empty trailer and the trailer cargo weights.** Drivers must be aware that towing a fully loaded trailer will adversely affect the time and distance required to pull into traffic or stop the van, and may alter the van's normal handling characteristics.
- VII. **Copies of a travel itinerary and a passenger list must be filed with the responsible department and kept in the van.** Passenger lists should include, at a minimum, the names, identification numbers, and emergency contact telephone numbers for all passengers (driver included).

Responsible Executive: Vice President for Administration and Finance

Responsible Office: Environmental Health and Safety

Originally Issued: 10/2002

Revised: 3/2012, 3/2023