



15-Passenger Van Safety Precautions

15-passenger vans are three times more likely to roll over when fully loaded. Adding passengers and cargo causes the center of gravity to move upward, increasing a vehicle's tendency to roll over and increasing the potential for the driver to lose control in emergency maneuvers.

Research has shown that 15-passenger vans have a rollover risk that increases dramatically as the number of occupants increases from fewer than five to more than ten. **In fact, 15-passenger vans with 10 or more occupants have a rollover rate in single vehicle crashes that is nearly three times the rate of those that were lightly loaded.**

How can you make a trip in a 15-passenger van safer?

- Middlebury College will **only allow 15-passenger vans to be filled to capacity for travel within 50 miles of Middlebury's campus.** More than 15 people should never be allowed to ride in a 15-passenger van.
- **Vans travelling further than 50 miles from campus will have a reduced capacity of 11 occupants** (driver plus 10 passengers).
- When the van is not full, **passengers should sit in seats that are in front of the rear axle.** The rear seat should remain empty when possible. This lowers the vehicle's center of gravity and lower the chance of a rollover crash.
- **Never exceed the posted speed limit.** Drive at a safe speed based on driving conditions. Analysis of 15-passenger van crashes also shows that the risk of rollover increases significantly at speeds over 50 miles per hour and on curvy roads.
- **Be particularly cautious on curved rural roads** and maintain a safe speed to avoid running off the road.
- **If your wheels drop off the roadway, or pavement, gradually reduce speed** and steer back onto the roadway when it is safe to do so.
- **Slow down if roads are wet or icy.** 15-passenger vans do not respond well to abrupt steering maneuvers and require additional braking time.
- Drivers must be **well-rested and attentive** to driving at all times. **Drivers are not permitted to use cell phones or GPS units at any time.**
- **All occupants must wear seatbelts at all times.** Nearly 80% of those who died nationwide in 15-passenger vans were not buckled up.

