

Use of 15-Passenger Vans

Exceptions and Expectations

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has repeatedly issued cautionary warnings on the unique risks of operating 15-passenger vans, especially when heavily loaded, given their propensity to roll over and cause serious injuries or deaths. For the safety of the University's drivers and passengers, **15-passenger vans may not be used to conduct University business or for any other University purpose, except as expressly approved in writing by the Office of Enterprise Risk Management.**

Restrictions include rentals in any country and are specific to the type of van, not the number of passengers (i.e., a 15-passenger van is not permitted even if it carries less than 15 passengers). Restrictions include 12-passenger vans originally manufactured to carry 15 passengers and modified by removing a row of seats.

Requesting an Exception

To request an exception to the University's prohibition on using a 15-passenger van to conduct University business or for any other University purpose, email risk@du.edu, and provide the following information:

- DU Department who manages/owns the van;
- Make and model of the van;
- Number of passengers to be transported in the van;
- Travel route from start to finish; and
- Description of all cargo to be carried in the van (no cargo may be stored on roofs or on any part of van's exterior).

Safety Requirements

In addition to the driving prerequisites and safety requirements provided in the [Use of University Vehicles Policy](#) and [DU Driving Procedures](#), drivers of 15-passenger vans must:

- Be at least 21 years old;
- Complete the virtual Passenger Van Safety course;
- Complete and sign DU's [15-Passenger Van Safety Inspection Checklist and Driving Guidelines](#);
- Transport **no more than 10 occupants**, including the driver;
- Avoid limited access and other high-speed highways whenever possible;
- Always drive 5 miles per hour below the posted speed limit;
- Drive no more than 8 hours per day, taking 30-minute breaks or alternating approved drivers every 4 hours; and
- Keep nighttime driving to a minimum.

Weight Distribution

Weight distribution is critical and must always comply with the owner's manual. Additionally, drivers must:

- **Never store any cargo on the roof** or any other part of the van's exterior;
- Seat passengers as far forward as possible in front of rear axle, in an arrangement to evenly distribute the load;
- Position cargo as close to the floor and as far forward as practical (always forward of the rear axle), piled no higher than seat level; and
- Restrain cargo to secure items against shifting or falling.

Purchase of 15-Passenger Vans

Considering the NHTSA's cautionary warnings, the University prohibits the purchase of traditional 15-passenger vans, specifically those described in NHTSA studies from 2001-2010. The restriction does not include newer 15-passenger vans redesigned with enhanced safety features. Before purchasing a 15-passenger van, email risk@du.edu to confirm that the purchase is allowable under this section.