

# 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](mailto: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](mailto:risk@du.edu) to confirm that the purchase is allowable under this section.