

Please note: 15 passenger vans are often referred to as 14 passenger vans.

The decision to use 15 passenger vans instead of other vehicles to transport crew should always be carefully considered. 15 passenger vans are known to be unstable and are prone to crushing when involved in rollover accidents. Even with reduced passenger loads the vehicle has a high centre of gravity, which can compromise the vehicles' stability. A 15 passenger van that is fully loaded with passengers has a potential for rollover that is five times higher than when the driver is the only occupant.

When heavily loaded, there's a problem of understeer at low speeds and of oversteer at higher speeds. This can cause issues for drivers who are unfamiliar with this issue. Loading the 15 passenger vans to their Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) also moves the centre of gravity to the rear.

15 passenger vans are only recommended when transporting workers to and from set or when driving short distances at low speeds. They are not recommended for transportation of workers at high speeds, long distances or in less than favourable road conditions.

Despite the name, it's best not to have more than 10 passengers (including the driver) in a 15 passenger van. Always ensure that the vehicle is still within the GVW when passengers are loaded.

8 passenger vans are a recommended alternative for transporting workers in unfavourable driving conditions or at higher speeds.

Driver Selection and Training

Any vehicle that is manufactured to carry over 10 passengers is considered a bus. Drivers of these vehicles must possess a Class 1, Class 2 or Class 4 license.

When assigning a driver, ensure that they have the appropriate license.

Drivers should provide a driver's abstract to ensure that they are safe drivers. Keep a copy of their abstract on file.

All drivers should receive an orientation outlining policies on pre-trip inspection logs, cell phone use and any other relevant company policies.

Use drivers who are familiar with the vehicle's driving characteristics and who are observant of driving conditions and speeds.

Reminder: Legislation requires that all employers must ensure that a young (under 25) or new (to the worksite) worker is given health and safety orientation and training specific to his/her workplace before the young or new worker begins work. This includes drivers and any passengers who are on a work related trip. Further information about Young and New Worker Orientations can be found on our site at www.actsafe.ca.

Vehicle Inspections

Vehicles must be inspected semi-annually (every 6 months) at a designated inspection facility authorized by the Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement Branch.

A pre-trip inspection and plan must be carried out by a qualified person each day before the first trip to ensure that the vehicle is in a safe operating condition.

The pre-trip inspection must include:

- service brakes, including trailer brake connections and brake adjustments;
- parking brake;
- steering mechanism;
- lighting devices and reflectors;
- tires (ensure they're properly inflated);
- horn;
- windshield wipers;
- rear vision mirrors;
- coupling devices;
- wheels and rims;
- seat belts (one for each passenger);
- fluid levels;
- emergency equipment (first aid kit, min. 5lb ABC fire extinguisher);
- load securement devices.

Before beginning any trip, the driver must ensure that all passengers are properly seated and wearing their

seat belts. Seat belts must be worn whenever the vehicle is in motion.

It's important to ensure that tires are properly inflated as research has recently found that 1 of 4 tires on 15 passenger vans are either under or over inflated. In some cases, the recommended pressures for front and rear tires may not be the same. Information on recommended pressure levels can be found:

- In the owner's manual
- The tire information label located on the driver's door.
- Inside the glove compartment door.

A sample tire information label can be found at:
www.tc.gc.ca/eng/roadsafety/tp-tp2823-inflating-421.htm

Additionally, Transport Canada recommends having four winter tires for driving in cold, snowy or icy conditions.

For trips lasting more than one day, the inspection must be carried out on the second and every subsequent day of the trip. This should preferably happen before the start of the trip or no later than the first rest stop of the day.

Written documentation of inspections must be kept. Drivers must also keep a log of hours.

Loading Vehicles

How a van is loaded changes how it handles. For this reason it's important to follow the loading instructions in the owner's manual.

Know how much weight your van can carry. To find this information:

- a) Find the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) on the driver's door post or in your owner's manual
- b) Find the weight of the empty van (net weight) in your owner's manual : then
- c) Take a) and subtract b). This will tell you how much weight you can add (people, cargo and fuel).

If the owner's manual is not available, get a new one from your local dealer or search for one online.

Commercial weigh scales can be used to check the weight of your loaded van; this can be done whether the scale is open or closed.

Cargo should be kept low and secure. This helps to keep the van's centre of gravity lower and reduces the risk of a rollover accident.

If carrying loads within the vehicle, tie-down straps, cargo cages, headache racks/luggage stops (strong wall-like structures within the van) or other restraints should be used to protect the driver and passengers against shifting cargo during travel. Loose loads can cause serious injuries during sudden stops and, especially, in the event of a collision.

Roof Racks and Trailers

Actsafe **does not** endorse carrying of luggage/cargo on roof racks or the pulling of trailers with these vans. Both have been shown to be unsafe with 15 passenger vans.

Online Resources

Registrar, Passenger Transportation Branch

www.th.gov.bc.ca/rpt/

This site provides information about the licensing requirements for those currently involved in, or wanting to obtain authority for, operating commercial ground passenger transportation services, as required by the Passenger Transportation Act and the Passenger Transportation Regulation.

WorkSafeBC Regulations

www2.worksafebc.com/publications/OHSRegulation/Home.asp

Refer to *WorkSafeBC OHS Regulation 17: Transportation of Workers*.

Please note: The material in this publication is intended only as educational information. This publication does not replace the Occupational Health & Safety Regulations administered by WorkSafeBC. Employers and workers should always refer to the regulation for specific requirements that apply to their activities.