



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Risk Management

PO Box 163500
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12 – 15 Passenger Van Guidelines

Departments contemplating renting passenger vans designed to transport more than 9 people need to consider the risks associated with them. The [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) (NHTSA) and the [U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#) have both documented serious safety problems and issued cautionary warnings regarding the use of 15-passenger vans. A study conducted by the NHTSA is referenced multiple times throughout this guideline; please [click here](#) for a copy of the study. Additionally, [Florida Statute 1006.22](#), which governs K-12 Education, states that only vehicles designed to transport less than 10 individuals, other than school buses, can be used to transport students. The following outlines our recommendation and issues with passenger vans. For additional questions, please contact Risk Management at 407-823-0206:

We do not recommend or advise departments to rent a passenger van which exceeds 9 occupants. However, this recommendation does not include buses. If the department feels that they cannot meet their requirements without the use of a passenger van, the below considerations must to be met before renting a passenger van:

Per the [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#), commercial motor carrier vehicles used for direct compensation (i.e. rental company) must comply with the below safety regulations ([part 385, 390-396](#)). Additionally, any department renting a passenger van, must review and confirm compliance with each regulation below. Please note that these regulations refer to companies which provide a driver in addition to the passenger van. Any UCF employee operating a passenger van must have the proper driver's license, training and experience:

1. Carriers are required to file a motor identification report (section 390.19);
2. Carriers are required to mark their vehicles with USDOT ID number and legal name of operator (section 390.21);
3. Carriers subject to safety fitness procedures (part 385);
4. Accident register recordkeeping (section 390.15);
5. Driver qualification and medical examination requirements (part 391);
6. Required to maintain and update driver qualification files (section 391.51);
7. Required to comply with maximum driving time standards (section 395.5);
8. Required to maintain records of duty status (section 395.8) or time records (for drivers covered by the short-haul exemption in section 395.1(e)(1)); and
9. Recordkeeping for inspection, repair, and maintenance (part 396).

In addition to the above, the rental company will need to supply a Certificate of Insurance showing a minimum of \$1 million per occurrence General Liability coverage and \$1 million per accident Automobile Liability coverage and an Additional Insured – Endorsement naming “University of Central Florida Board of Trustees” for both coverages.



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The following are issues with passenger vans which hold more than 9 occupants:

Tires: According to the NHTSA, 57% of 15-passenger vans have at least one significantly under-inflated tire. The quality of the tires as well as the tire pressure have a large effect on the amount of control the driver has over the vehicle. Due to the constantly changing passenger size (weight), the tire pressure is always changing and needs to be monitored closely. Any variation in the manufacturers' recommendations for tire pressure can cause an increased probability of a roll-over accident. Additionally, the tire threads should be inspected prior to accepting the vehicle.

Center of Gravity: The center of gravity of an empty passenger van is already higher than most standard vehicles. When empty a passenger van has the same risk of a roll-over crash as a pick-up truck. The center of gravity for passenger vans can shift depending on how passengers load into the van. In a 15-passenger van with 10 or more occupants, the roll-over rate is three times the rate of that of a vehicle with 4 or less occupants. For example, if the first several passengers fill the back portion of the van, then the center of gravity will shift to the back axles resulting in less pressure on the front portion of the vehicle. Additionally, steering for the driver becomes much more difficult because the front wheels are not fully touching the ground and could even come off, if the van was to hit a pot hole or drive over a speed bump too quickly.

Seat Belts: Compliance among occupants in a passenger van is significantly lower than a standard vehicle when it comes to wearing a seat belt. Therefore, an occupant is three times as likely to be killed in a single-vehicle crash as an occupant wearing a seat belt. Additionally, seat belts should be regularly checked and replaced if there are any missing, broken or damaged belts and/or buckles.

Driver: Due to the increased risks associated with passenger vans, the [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#) has implemented additional requirements beyond the standard driver's license for commercial operators of passenger vans. The driver must be 21 years of age, carry a valid commercial drivers' license, received training specific to driving a passenger van, and be physically fit.

Cargo: Passenger vans were originally designed to haul cargo, not people, so the safety features found on a standard vehicle, such as a mini-van, were omitted. Due to the required load (in pounds) that the van was expected to carry, the vehicle was designed similarly to a truck, with a comparable chassis, suspension and engine; all of these design features can greatly affect handling. Therefore, cargo should not be placed on the roof, nor the rear of the van as the cargo can shift the Center of Gravity.

Although this guideline is specific to passenger vans which exceed 9 occupants, departments should also consider the following items when renting smaller passenger vans: age of the driver, driver experience and training, driver's motor vehicle record, maintenance and repair record of the vehicle and qualifications of the vendor.