

## NHTSA issues safety advisory for 15-passenger vans

15-passenger vans are more likely to be involved in a single-vehicle rollover crash than any other type of vehicle, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). NHTSA recently issued an advisory on 15-passenger vans, marking the fourth time in just five years that NHTSA issued a safety warning for these vehicles.

A recent NHTSA study found that 74 percent of all 15-passenger vans had improperly inflated tires. By contrast, 39 percent of passenger cars had improperly inflated tires. Improperly inflated tires can change handling characteristics, increasing the chance of a rollover crash in 15-passenger vans.

### Safety Precautions

NHTSA's safety advisory recommends the following safety precautions:

- Keep your passenger load light. NHTSA 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 10.
- Check the tire pressure of your van at least once a week.
- Require all occupants to use their seatbelts or the appropriate child restraint. Nearly 80 percent of those who have died nationwide in 15-passenger vans were not wearing seatbelts.

- Avoid placing any loads on the roof.
- Be mindful of speed and road conditions.

The good news is that such alerts and educational efforts have helped reduce fatalities in 15-passenger van rollover crashes. The percent of 15-passenger occupant fatalities that occurred as the result of rollover crashes is down from a high of 81 percent in 2000 to 52 percent in 2003.

### What This Means to Counties

Counties who use 15-passenger vans need to inform drivers about how to reduce rollover risks and how to better protect occupants in the event of a crash. CTSI recommends that in light of this information, counties should not purchase 15-passenger vans for transporting people.

For more information, visit the NHTSA's website at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov), or contact CTSI at 303-861-0507.