

## Fifteen-Passenger Vans

Fifteen-passenger vans allow counties to carry up to 15 people from one location to another, making them a convenient transportation option; however, their size and shape make these vehicles more dangerous than smaller passenger vans. Research conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) found that the risk of a rollover crash increases when these vans carry more than five people. When carrying more than ten people, the single vehicle rollover rate was three times higher than when carrying fewer than five people.

### OFF BALANCE

Fifteen-passenger vans are not balanced. The walkway allowing access to the rear seats runs down one side of the van, meaning the side most passengers will sit on is heavier, placing a greater strain on it and causing unequal wear on the tires. This increases the odds of a blowout or rollover crash.

### NHTSA RECOMMENDATIONS

The NHTSA recommends that drivers and passengers follow these rules to help lessen the dangers of these vehicles.

- Check tire pressure. Improperly inflated or excessively worn tires can result in the loss of vehicle control and potentially a rollover incident.
- Be wary of spare tires. Even new-looking spare tires may be weak.
- Use an experienced driver. "Fifteen-passenger vans should only be operated by trained, experienced drivers who operate these vehicles on a regular basis," NHTSA notes. Additionally, drivers must be well-rested and never use a cell phone while driving.
- Keep size in mind. Fifteen-passenger vans are much longer and wider than cars and require more room to maneuver and change lanes.
- Take it slow. These large vans don't respond well to sudden steering maneuvers and require extra braking time.
- Don't overload. Never load the van with more than 15 people. If the van isn't completely full, have passengers sit in seats in front of the vehicle's rear axle. The same goes for cargo. Refrain from placing any loads on the roof.
- Always wear seat belts. "An unrestrained fifteen-passenger van occupant involved in a single-vehicle crash is approximately three times as likely to be killed as a restrained occupant," NHTSA cautions.



*Interior of fifteen-passenger van*

Source: <http://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/16467-the-hazards-of-15-passenger-vans>

### WHAT THIS MEANS FOR COUNTIES

While a fifteen-passenger van may seem like a good option for counties, they carry an increased risk of injury or loss of life. For more information, contact CTSI at (303) 861 0507.