

Safety Considerations by Vehicle Type

11-15 Passenger Vans

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has published comprehensive road safety guidelines for large passenger vans that can be found [here](#).

These vans have an increased risk of rollover under certain conditions. The following recommendations reduce risk to fellow passengers and other drivers.

Closely monitor speed and conditions

- Vans are substantially longer and wider than a car, requiring more space to maneuver.
- Vans require additional braking time and cannot handle abrupt maneuvers.
- Appoint a “Spotter” to assist driver while backing up.

Strategically place passengers and cargo

- The number of passengers should not exceed the number of seat belts available.
- The use of seat belts is required by all passengers at all times while the vehicle is in motion.
- Passengers should fill the seats from front to back; if the van is not full, passengers should sit forward of the rear axle.
- Cargo should be placed forward of the rear axle and should never be mounted to the roof.

Avoid distractions while driving; appoint a navigator to provide directions and adjust any entertainment systems.

Ensure vehicle maintenance is up to date

- Inspect seat belts for proper function before every trip.
- Inspect tires (including spares) for proper inflation; spare tires should be replaced regularly as tires degrade with age.

Private Passenger Vehicles

- Number of passengers should not exceed the number of seatbelts available.
- The use of seatbelts is required by all passengers at all times while the vehicle is in motion.
- Avoid distractions while driving including talking/texting on your phone, eating and drinking, adjusting stereo or entertainment systems.
- Employ hands-free device holders.

Towing & Trailers

- Leave enough distance between you and the car in front of you to stop. The extra weight will reduce braking ability.
- Remember the contents of your trailer when braking hard. Sudden movements can dislodge items and cause shifting of cargo.
- Make wider turns to avoid running over curbs.
- Cars following you will tend to tailgate. They are not aware of your inability to stop, so it is up to you to be more vigilant when on the roadway.
- If your trailer begins to sway, release the accelerator pedal to reduce your speed. Do not apply the brakes as this can make the sway worse.

Spare Tires

per NHTSA

All tires weaken with age—even unused tires; avoid using an old spare on your 15-passenger van. Used 15-passenger vans may come with dangerous spare tires that are many years old. Check a tire's age by finding its Tire Identification Number (TIN) on the tire's sidewall. The last four digits of the TIN indicate the week and year the tire was made (e.g., 1010 = March 2010).