



West Chester University

Human Resources



## West Chester University 15 Passenger Van Policy

I. **PURPOSE:** This policy is established to prevent increased risk of accidents or injuries associated with the use of 15 passenger vans, noted in recent research and warnings issued by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). These warnings indicate that 15 passenger vans from all domestic manufacturers have a significantly increased risk of roll-over than other vehicles under certain driving and occupancy conditions.

Note 1: This policy will be effective as a guideline immediately, until formally approved by Cabinet.

Note 2: **Definition:** A 15 passenger van is a van with seating for 15 passenger, including the driver (driver + 14 passengers).

II. **POLICY:** The University will require certain precautions and enforce certain restrictions on the use of 15 passenger vans consistent with NHTSA warnings in order to reduce the risk of accidents or injuries associated with their use.

A. Limitations on Use:

1. **Driving Limited to Employees:** Drivers must be current employees of the University who are 21 years of age or older, possess a valid state operator's license, have a safe driving record and successfully complete a WCU-required training program for driving 15 passenger vans.

2. **Passengers:** Passengers are normally limited to persons who are 18 years of age or older and are employees, students of the University, or other individuals on official University business for which the vehicle has been signed out. Exceptions to the age restriction are made for students of the University who are under the age of 18. These students may ride in the 15 passenger vans. Family members who are not WCU employees are expressly prohibited from riding the vehicles.

Advancement/Development Office use on campus or within 5 miles of campus are exempt from the passenger provisions of this policy.

3. **Training:** A 15 passenger van driver safety course will be developed jointly, by the Public Safety Department and Facilities Support Services. At such time as the course is available, successful completion of the course will be required before a new driver may be issued a 15 passenger van. Current drivers will have 90 days from the date training becomes available to complete the course. The course goal will be to familiarize drivers with this policy, as well as provide practical instruction on the handling characteristics of 15 passenger vans, proper backing, braking, obstacle avoidance and return to road technique if a wheel drops off the roadway. The training will consist of satisfactory completion of an on-line program as well as an actual driving session.

4. **Safe Driving Record:** A safe driving record generally means no suspensions or revocations within the past 2 years, and no accidents for which the operator was cited.

B. Operating Restrictions:

1. **Distance and Hours Restrictions:** Fatigue is a primary factor in 15 passenger van accidents. High speed travel is also a major factor in 15 passenger van accidents. When other options exist for longer trips, the University strongly discourages use of 15 passenger vans. If, as a last resort, 15 passenger vans must be used, night driving should be kept to minimum, and driver rotation every two hours is recommended. Travel itineraries should avoid high speed, limited access highways where possible.

2. **Vehicle Occupancy:** Occupancy is limited to the manufacturer's assigned seating capacity.

3. **Leased Vehicles:** 15 passenger vans may not be leased by employees as part of a travel itinerary.

4. **Weather Restrictions:** Poor weather is a major contributing factor in 15 passenger van accidents. Operation of 15 passenger vans during hazardous weather conditions is discouraged. Safe driving conditions are road conditions absent snow-cover, heavy rain, ice, fog or forecasts predicting such conditions. If drivers already on the road are confronted by developing conditions such as these, the vehicle should be stopped in a safe location until conditions improve.

5. **Cell Phones:** Drivers operating 15 passenger vans may not use cell phones while the vehicle is in operation.

6. **Seat Belt Requirement:** The driver and all passengers must wear seat belts at all times while the vehicle is in operation.

7. **Load Evenly:** Passengers will be seated from the front seats back. (If 10 passengers are riding, the first 10 seats will be occupied.) The roof will not

be used for storage for any purpose. Keep luggage on the floor if at all possible.

8. **No Towing:** 15 passenger vans may never tow a trailer.

### III. **PROCEDURE:**

#### A. Drivers:

1. **15 Passenger Van Course Completion:** Existing drivers must successfully complete the 15 Passenger Van Course with 90 days of notice of its availability. New drivers will complete the course before driving the vehicle.

2. **Visual Inspection Before Use:** Prior to use, drivers are responsible for making a visual inspection of the mirrors, tires and other safety equipment of the vehicle.

3. **Mapping Routes:** Drivers should take care to map routes when using 15 passenger vans to avoid limited access and other high speed highways whenever possible.

4. **Driver's Record:** Otherwise approved drivers of 15 passenger vans are expected to self-report suspensions or revocation of driving privileges by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDot) to the Public Safety Department.

#### B. Public Safety Department:

1. **15 Passenger Driver Familiarization Course:** The Public Safety Department will conduct the live driving portion of the course and advise the Director of Facilities Support Services or designee of employees who have successfully completed that portion of the course.

2. **Driving Records:** The Public Safety Department will verify initially and each year thereafter that 15 passenger van operators have safe driving records. Operators without safe driving records will be removed from the 15 passenger van operators list.

3. **Suspension/Restoration of Driving Privileges for 15 Passenger Vans:** The Public Safety Department will make determinations of when an employee's 15 passenger van driving privileges will be suspended or restored, in accordance with this policy.

#### C. Facilities Support Services (Transportation):

1. **15 Passenger Van Familiarization Course:** Facilities Support Services will conduct the on-line portion of the course and will be the repository for all records associated with this training.

2. **Notice:** A permanent notice shall be placed in all 15 passenger vans highlighting the operating restrictions associated with 15 passenger vans. The notice shall be highly visible to the driver of the vehicle from the driver's seat.

2. **Safety Equipment:** 15 passenger vans will be checked regularly for tire wear and serviceability of all safety equipment.

3. **First Aid Kits:** Facilities Support Services (Transportation Office) will ensure that all 15 passenger vans have first aid kits.

4. **Unsafe Operating Conditions:** The Director of Facilities Support Services or designee is responsible for determining if alternatives to 15 passenger van travel exist and when driving conditions are unsafe for a 15 passenger van to be used. Facilities Support Services will work with the department requesting the 15 passenger van to make alternate transportation arrangements for that trip.

5. **NHTSA Placard:** Facilities Support Services will make NHTSA safety placards entitled "Reducing the Risk of Roll-Over Crashes in 15 Passenger Vans" available to drivers before operating a 15 Passenger van.

D. **Policy Violations:** Failure to comply with these requirements may result in a driver or a department losing access to 15 passenger vans.