24.01.99.L1.02 Van Safety

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Recent research conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has found that the risk of a rollover crash is greatly increased when 10 or more people ride in a 15-passenger van. This procedure is intended to establish minimum safety requirements for the use of large capacity passenger vans with a seating capacity of 10 or more. It is applicable to Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) faculty, staff, and students using such vans.

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<th>Procedures and Responsibilities</th>
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1. **VEHICLE RESTRICTIONS**
   1.1 Rooftop luggage carriers or racks will not be used on vans. Manufacturers advise such use of rooftop luggage carriers could render the operation of the vehicle unsafe and could cause the vehicle to be top heavy.
   1.2 Do not load the vehicle any heavier than the GVWR (total permissible weight of your vehicle including driver, passengers, and cargo) or the maximum front and rear GVWR (maximum permissible load on the front and rear axles). The Weight Rating can be found affixed to the inside panel of the driver’s door. Improper weight distribution can have an adverse effect on the way the vehicle handles and the way the brakes operate.
   1.3 Luggage/cargo carried inside the van should be packed as close to the floor as possible. Stacking luggage or cargo above the level of the van seat backs should be avoided. The luggage/cargo should be restrained as necessary to secure those items against shifting or falling in the event of an accident. Heavily loaded vans should have the load distributed evenly. Avoid excessive loading behind the rear axle of the van.

2. **TRAINING**
   TAMIU’s Office of Environmental Health and Safety shall provide driver training instruction specific to the operation of large capacity passenger vans. This face-to-face training is required before authorization will be given to operate a large capacity passenger van. Training is required for the use of leased/rented vans and or the use of the University’s van.
3. **DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS**
   3.1 Drivers must be at least 18 years of age.
   3.2 Drivers must possess and carry at least a valid Texas Class C Operator’s License (or equivalent license issued by another state).
   3.3 Drivers must receive large capacity van operation training as provided by the Office of Environmental Health and Safety every three (3) years.

4. **PASSENGER AND DRIVER RESTRICTIONS**
   4.1 The number of passengers (including the driver) should not exceed the number of working seat belts in the vehicle.
   4.2 Provided that all seat belts are functioning properly, passengers shall not exceed 10 people, this includes the driver. This number must be reduced by one for every 170 pounds of luggage/equipment.
   4.3 All passengers should be properly seated with seat belts fastened any time the vehicle is in motion.
   4.4 Passenger behavior that may distract the driver should be avoided.
   4.5 Drivers shall not engage in the following activities; smoking, operating a mobile device, texting, eating, horse-play while in the vehicle, picking up hitchhikers, exceeding the posted speed limits and disobeying other motor vehicle laws.
   4.6 Do not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. If you are taking prescription drugs, check warning label for effects on driving. Do not drive while sleepy or inattentive, or drive too fast for the conditions (weather, night driving, road conditions, etc.).

**Related Statutes, Policies, Regulations, Rules or Requirements**

Supplements System Policy 24.01, Risk Management
Supplements System Regulation 24.01.01, Supplemental Risk Management Standards
Supplements University Rule 13.04.99.L1, Student Travel
Supplements TAMIU Standard Administrative Procedure 13.04.99.L1.01, Student Travel
Supplements TAMIU Standard Administrative Procedure 24.01.99.L1.01, Travel Safety

**Contact Office**

For clarification or interpretation, contact the Office of Environmental Health and Safety, (956) 326-2194.