

STANDARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

24.01.01.M0.03 Van Safety Procedures

Approved April 18, 2002

Revised April 14, 2008

Revised March 20, 2012

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SAP Statement

This procedure is intended to establish minimum safety requirements for the use of large capacity passenger vans, regardless of the number of seats installed in the vans.

Official Procedure

1. GENERAL

1.1 The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) research shows that the risk of a rollover crash with large capacity passenger vans is reduced when drivers are appropriately trained, tires are properly sized and/or inflated, and cargo and passengers are loaded in a way that stabilizes the vehicle's center of gravity. (Link to additional information from the NHTSA on van safety: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/15-passenger-vans>.)

1.2 Large-capacity vans, those typically referred to as 10-15 passenger vans, are commonly used by the faculty, staff, and students of Texas A&M. These vans are often significantly larger than normal passenger cars and trucks. Under Texas law, drivers of these vans are not required to possess commercial driver's licenses.

1.3 Employees and students at Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ) are prohibited from driving large-capacity vans for any TAMUQ function or event.

2. VEHICLE MAINTENANCE AND RESTRICTIONS

- 2.1 All vans must be regularly maintained and kept in a roadworthy condition. University-owned vans (leased from the University Fleet or owned by departments) should meet the maintenance standards established by Transportation Services. Maintenance on vans obtained through a rental company is the responsibility of that rental company. 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.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 Trailers may be towed provided that the towing capacity and the trailer tongue-weight (hitch weight) under loaded conditions meet the manufacturer's recommendations. **Maximum towing capacity includes both the empty trailer and the trailer cargo weights.** The vehicle operator must be aware that towing a fully loaded trailer will adversely affect the stopping distance of the vehicle and may alter the normal handling characteristics of the vehicle.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 It is recommended that each vehicle traveling outside of Brazos County be equipped with an ABC-type fire extinguisher (2.5 pound or greater).

3. TRAINING

Transportation Services shall make available driver training instruction specific to the operation of large capacity passenger vans. Typically, such training shall consist of driver participation in web-based training; however, in extenuating circumstances alternate training (such as the review of selected literature, video instruction, classroom instruction or a combination of any of these) may be submitted.

- 3.1 It is required that this training be completed by all TAMU employees and students who drive a leased (through Transportation Services) or rented (commercially) large capacity passenger van, when TAMU funds are used for payment.
- 3.2 Training is required annually.

4. DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

- 4.1 Drivers must be at least 18 years of age.
- 4.2 Drivers must possess and carry at least a valid Texas Class C Operator's License (or equivalent license issued by another state).
- 4.3 Drivers should receive large capacity van operation instruction as provided by Transportation Services or some other form of certification documenting completion of appropriate training.

5. PASSENGER RESTRICTIONS

- 5.1 The number of passengers (including the driver) should not exceed the number of working seat belts in the vehicle.
- 5.2 All passengers should be properly seated with seat belts fastened at any time the vehicle is in motion.
- 5.3 Transport of children less than eight (8) years of age should be in accordance with occupant protection laws of the appropriate state.
- 5.4 Passenger behavior that may distract the driver should be avoided.

6. PRE-TRIP REQUIREMENTS (for out-of-Brazos County trips)

Copies of a travel itinerary and a passenger list shall be kept in the vehicle and filed with the responsible department. Organized student travel requires that the passenger list also be filed with the Student Affairs Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT@tamu.edu) prior to the trip. Passenger lists should include, at a minimum, the names, identification numbers, and emergency contact telephone numbers for all passengers (driver included).

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

Supplements [System Policy 24.01](#) and [System Regulation 24.01.01](#)

Contact Office

Information may be accessed via the Transportation Services webpage: <http://transport.tamu.edu> or by contacting Transportation Services at 845-5846.

OFFICE OF RESPONSIBILITY: [Transportation Services](#) and [Environmental Health and Safety](#)