

STANDARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

24.01.01.M0.03 Van Safety Procedures

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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. VAN SAFETY DRIVER REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 Van Safety Training is required to 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. This training is available in TrainTraq and must be completed annually. Documentation of the completion of training is required and must be maintained by the department.
 - Employee training is accessed through TrainTraq - [2114470: Large Capacity Van Training](#)

- Non-employee training is accessed through external Gateway - [2114470: Large Capacity Van Training](#)
- Contact Transportation Services at 979-845-5846 or Fleet@tamu.edu for log in information.

3.2 Drivers must be at least 18 years of age.

3.3 Drivers must possess and carry at least a valid Texas Class C Operator's License (or equivalent license issued by another state).

4. PASSENGER RESTRICTIONS

4.1 The number of passengers (including the driver) should not exceed the number of working seat belts in the vehicle.

4.2 All passengers should be properly seated with seat belts fastened at any time the vehicle is in motion.

4.3 Transport of children less than eight (8) years of age should be in accordance with occupant protection laws of the appropriate state.

4.4 Passenger behavior that may distract the driver should be avoided.

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 979-845-5846.

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