

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
Oregon State Office
P.O. Box 2965
Portland, OR 97208

In Reply Refer to:

1112/1525 (OR-959/950) P

November 14, 2002

EMS TRANSMISSION 11/18/2002
Information Bulletin No. OR-2003-031

To: All Employees, Oregon/Washington

From: Deputy State Director for Management Services

Subject: Restrictions on the Operation and Use of 15-Passenger Vans

Attached for your information is WO IB No. 2002-008, which provides interim guidance regarding the operation and use of 15-Passenger vans within the Bureau of Land Management. All supervisors, managers, fleet managers and vehicle operators are expected to comply with this policy immediately.

Districts with Unions are reminded to notify their unions of this IB and satisfy any bargaining obligations before implementation. Your servicing Human Resources Office or Labor Relations Specialist can provide you assistance in this matter.

Signed by
John K. Keith
Associate Deputy State Director
for Management Services

Authenticated by
Mary O'Leary
Management Assistant

1 Attachment(s)

1 - [Information Bulletin No. 2003-008](#) (7 pp)

Distribution

WO-740

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240
<http://www.blm.gov>

September 19, 2002

In Reply Refer To:
1112 (WO700) P

EMS TRANSMISSION 10/09/2002
Information Bulletin No. 2003-008

To: State and Center Directors
From: Acting Assistant Director, Human Resources
Subject: Restrictions on the Operation and Use of 15-Passenger Vans

Over the past two years the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) has provided warnings about, and information regarding the safe operation of, 15-passenger vans. The recent tragic single vehicle roll-over accident that resulted in multiple firefighter fatalities has underscored the importance of following the NHTSA guidance and developing controls to further protect our employees.

The NHTSA cautionary warning, issued April 15, 2002, and a copy of their flyer A Reducing the Risk of Rollover Crashes in 15-Passenger Vans are attached. Briefly, the NHTSA information indicates:

- Rollover risks are greatly increased when 10 or more people ride in 15-passenger vans, due to the passenger weight shifting the center of gravity up and back. Under these conditions the van has less resistance to rollovers and handles differently than other vehicles of a similar size.
- Placing any load on the roof also raises the center of gravity, increasing the rollover risk in an accident situation.
- More than 90 percent of the rollovers occur after a driver has lost control of the vehicle and has run off the road. These primarily happens: 1) on rural roads, 2) when the driver is fatigued or driving too fast for conditions, or 3) when the driver over-corrects the steering as a panic reaction to an emergency or to a wheel dropping off the road.
- Over the past decade, 80 percent of the people killed in rollover crashes in 15-passenger vans were unbelted.

Based on the information above, the following interim guidance will be adhered to prior to operation and use of 15-passenger vans. Supervisors will:

Attachment 1-1

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- \$ Assign only experienced drivers to operate 15-passenger vans.
 - \$ Ensure drivers have a clear understanding of complexities associated with operating these vehicles.
 - \$ Ensure drivers receive a copy of the NHTSA flyer, A Reducing the Risk of Rollover Crashes in 15-Passenger Vans@ (attached).
 - \$ Reiterate the requirement that ALL drivers and passengers must wear seat belts at all times.
 - \$ Remove the rear seat of the 15-passenger vans.
 - \$ Properly screen the rear area to provide a small storage space for cargo items. (60 days allowed for compliance).
 - \$ Remove roof racks, except those that carry only light loads (e.g., ladder rack, survey poles, rowing oars, etc.). Roof racks shall not be used for extraneous, exterior heavy loads (e.g., rafts, crew gear, radio kits, etc.). (60

days allowed for compliance).

Because of our inability to modify rental vehicles, the rental of 15-passenger vans is prohibited.

A risk assessment will be completed and approved by a State or Center Director before new vehicle orders for 15 passenger vans are placed.

This guidance will be followed until manufacturers can implement design changes to improve the stability of these vans.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Bruce Prater, Bureau Safety Manager, at (303) 236-2530.

Signed by:
Marilyn H. Johnson
Acting Assistant Director
Human Resources

Authenticated by:
Barbara J. Brown
Policy & Records Group, WO-560

2 Attachments

- 1 - [Dept. of Transportation News Release](#) (2 pp)
- 2 - [Reducing the Risk of Rollover Crashes in 15-Passenger Vans](#) (3 pp)

Attachment 1-2



**U.S. Department of
Transportation**

News :

**Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590**

**Contact: Rae Tyson
Telephone: (202) 366-9550**

NHTSA 27-02 Monday, April 15, 2002

NHTSA Repeats Rollover Warning To Users of 15-Passenger Vans

The nation's top motor vehicle safety executive, Jeffrey Runge, M.D., head of the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), today reissued a cautionary warning to users of 15-passenger vans because of an increased rollover risk under certain conditions. A similar warning was issued in 2001.

The safety agency also unveiled a consumer flyer for users of 15-passenger vans.

NHTSA research has shown that 15-passenger vans have a rollover risk that increases dramatically as the number of occupants increases from fewer than five to more than ten. In fact, 15-passenger vans (with 10 or more occupants) had a rollover rate in single vehicle crashes that is nearly three times the rate of those that were lightly loaded.

"Because of these risks, it is vital that users of 15-passenger vans be aware of some safety precautions that will significantly reduce the risk," said Dr. Runge.

Attachment 1-1

- _ Among the recommendations are the following:
- _ It is important that 15-passenger vans be operated by trained, experienced drivers.
- _ Insist that all occupants wear seat belts at all times. Eighty percent of those who died in 15-passenger van rollovers nationwide in the year 2000 were not buckled up. Wearing seat belts dramatically increases the chances of survival during a rollover crash. In fatal, single-vehicle rollovers involving 15-passenger vans over the past decade, 92 percent of belted occupants survived.

NHTSA is reissuing this advisory to specifically alert summertime users of 15-passenger vans. The agency also has prepared a flyer on 15-passenger van safety that is available on the web at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/Hot/15PassVans/index.htm>. The agency also is considering the potential benefits of an additional warning label about rollover and seat belt use that would be visible to the driver and passengers of 15-passenger vans, respectively.

While federal law prohibits the sale of 15-passenger vans for the school-related transport of high school age and younger students, no such prohibition exists for vehicles to transport college students or other passengers.

A copy of the NHTSA analysis of the rollover characteristics of 15-passenger vans can be found at: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-30/ncsa/AvailInf.html> under "Research Notes". The new consumer advisory also is available at: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/announce/.

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