

15-PASSENGER VAN SAFETY

1 TRIP PREPARATION

- **Properly maintain your tires.** Make sure your tires are properly inflated and the tread is not worn down. Worn tires can cause your van to slide sideways on wet or slippery pavement. Improper inflation can cause handling problems and can lead to catastrophic tire failures, such as blowouts. Therefore, check tire pressure and tread wear once a month.
- **Adjust your mirrors** so that you can see the side of your van in your side mirrors and use convex (Bubble) mirrors to increase your field of view.
- **ALWAYS WEAR A SEAT BELT** when operating and riding in a vehicle.
- Eliminate or **minimize distractions** to ensure close attention is paid to driving.
- **Enforce the agency driving policy.** Driver, *YOU'RE IN CHARGE.*

2 KEEP IT ON THE ROAD

- **Drive cautiously on rural roads.** Be particularly cautious on *curved* rural roads and maintain a safe speed to avoid running off the road.
- **Know what to do if your wheels drop off the roadway.** If your wheels drop off the roadway, or pavement, *gradually* reduce speed and steer back onto the roadway when it is safe to do so.

3 HIGHER CENTER OF GRAVITY

- More than 15 people should never be allowed to ride in a 15-passenger van. If possible, limit riders to 9 including the driver with no one on last row. When 9 passengers or less are riding, they should sit in seats that are in front of the rear axle.
- Roof racks should not be used for any type of cargo.
- Drive **BELOW** the posted speed limit for **all turns**. *The posted limit is safe for cars, not vans.*
- Try to avoid steering with sudden or jerky motions

4 VERY LARGE BLIND SPOTS

- Before changing lanes, you should always check blind spots by first leaning forward in your seat to change your sight angle and then by turning your head.
- Avoid backing when possible, such as parking head out. Backing should be done with a spotter.

5 HEAVIER ESPECIALLY WHEN LOADED

- Practice continual scanning of road conditions ahead to allow a controlled response to changing conditions.
- "Aim High" by looking 5 seconds ahead of the car in front.
- Use a 4-second following distance between your van and the rear of the vehicle ahead. This is done by starting to count when you see the rear bumper of the vehicle ahead of you pass a fixed object such as a signpost. Count "one-one thousand, two-one thousand, three-one thousand, four-one thousand". Your van should not reach the fixed object before you reach a count of "four-one thousand". If you do, slow down and increase the distance until you can count to "four-one thousand" before reaching the fixed object.
- Allow more time and distance when pulling into traffic than you would if operating a passenger car. This compensates for the slower acceleration of the passenger van.

6 TALLER AND LONGER

- When exiting a tunnel or being passed by a large truck, grip the steering wheel firmly and be prepared for the van to be pushed by the wind.
- Try to keep the area to the sides of your vehicle clear of other vehicles.
- Check the height of your van before attempting to enter any parking deck to ensure that there is enough room to fit.

