

CATALINA FOOTHILLS
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Safety Procedures and Policies for Driving Vans and the Mini-Buses



Course Objective

The objective of this presentation is to increase the safety awareness of passenger van drivers, thus reducing the risk of accidents, especially rollovers.





Cause for Concern:

National Highway Transportation Safety Administration Report

Multi-passenger vans have an increased rollover risk under certain conditions.

The risk of rollover increases dramatically as the number of occupants increases from fewer than five occupants to over ten passengers.

Prepare for the differences of driving a larger vehicle!!

Many people, when they hop into the driver's seat of a multi-passenger van or bus, expect to drive it just like they do their own car. Unfortunately, this belief puts them and their passengers at risk, because these vehicles don't handle like passenger cars.

Driving them requires certain safety precautions.

Understanding why these types of vehicles need special care will get you and your STUDENTS to your destination safely.

Safety Guidelines

The first thing to remember when driving a van is that it isn't simply a big car.

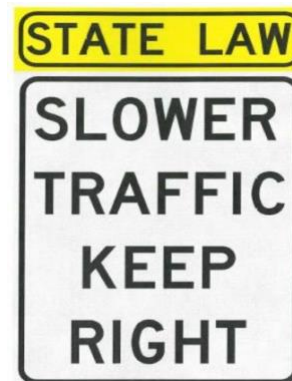
A van handles differently, especially when fully loaded. Drivers should be trained and experienced.

Take the time BEFORE you take students and practice driving one of these large vehicles.



Obey all Driving Laws!!

- Be aware of your surroundings and the traffic signs
- Never exceed speed limits
- Stay in the right lane unless passing slower vehicles, then return to right lane
- Drive with courtesy



Stay Alert and Focused!

- Be calm when driving
- Do NOT use a cell phones or other electronic devices while driving a district vehicle
- Check on road conditions prior to departing
- Know where you are going before leaving
- Drive defensively



Safety is the Key!

- Don't tailgate. Always leave more space between you and the vehicle in front of you than you would if you were driving a car. A van requires much more braking distance.
- On the highway, be mindful of your blind spots. Allow more space and use side-mirrors when changing lanes.
- Most rollovers are a result of sudden steering maneuver while traveling at high speeds.

Therefore:

- Do not follow other vehicles too closely
- Avoid changing lanes abruptly



Loading and Unloading

- Never overload a van
- Never exceed gross vehicle weight. GVW is the maximum allowable weight of the vehicle, including all passengers, cargo, and fuel
- Consult the metal tag on the inside of the driver's door for gross vehicle weight
- Never stack items above the level of the seat backs
- Cargo should be:
 - evenly distributed
 - packed as closely to the floor as possible
 - properly restrained and secured



Loading and Unloading

- Picking up and dropping off passengers is more than opening and closing the door.
- Do it right every day, and no one will remember or care.
- Do it wrong **once**, and no one will ever forget.
- Fill in the front seats first
- If possible, have passengers and cargo forward of the rear axle
- If the van is loaded to capacity, remind yourself that the center of gravity has shifted and the van will handle differently than when you are driving alone or with just a few people

Loading and Unloading

- You should never have more than the maximum # of people riding in the van
- Avoid placing loads on the roof of the van unless in approved carrying container on 2024 Suburban, doing so increases the risk of a rollover
- Put the van in park
- Set the parking brake
- Do not unload passengers on the traffic side of the van
Instruct passengers who **must** cross the street to cross *at least* 10 feet in front of the van/bus
- Wait for traffic to stop **before** you allow passengers to exit the bus
- Don't move the van/bus until all passengers are safely across the street and accounted for

Dealing with Aggressive Drivers

- Avoid eye contact
- Don't cut in front of other drivers
- Allow fellow drivers to merge
- Don't aggravate fellow drivers with hand gestures
- Don't tailgate
- Use your horn sparingly



Backing Up the Vehicle

- ALWAYS Use a spotter
- Back to the left (driver's side)
- Never back up if you miss a ramp/exit
- Use outside mirrors (adjust ahead of time, practice adjusting)
- Park in an area, if possible, where you do not have to back-up

Common Causes of Rollovers

- Hitting a Ditch or Embankment
- Running into soft soil
- Running into or over a curb or similar object
- Over-correcting the steering when:
 - A wheel drops off the pavement
 - Having a panic reaction to an emergency
- Over-correcting, referred to as over-steering, especially at high speeds

Minimizing Rollover Risks

- Ensure that all drivers are trained for safety of vehicle
- Perform pre- and post-trip maintenance checks
- Ensure that seatbelts are worn by all occupants
- Drive conservatively
- Check quality of tires and tires pressure
- Do not exceed the passenger/load capacity of the van
- Fill the front seats first
- Do not pull trailers
- Never load items on the roof, unless in approved carrying container on 2024 Suburban
- A full gas tank has a lower center of gravity
- Carry out routine maintenance checks
- Ensure that data is recorded

Emergency Situations

- Follow the emergency procedures on the back of the check out form.
- Always have your supervisor's phone number
- Contact Facilities

Driver Qualifications

The driver will:

- be an employee of the district and be 21 years old.
- have a valid, Arizona state-issued driver's license – no exceptions.
- have an acceptable Motor Vehicle Record (meets District's written policy for vehicle usage).
- complete all District driver training paperwork.
- have behind-the-wheel training (for mini-bus ONLY).
- be physically and emotionally prepared to drive.
- complete all pre-trip and post-trip inspection paperwork.

Before You Drive

Make sure you are competent and have a clear understanding of:

- proper mirror adjustments
- turning
- backing up
- overhead clearance
- hazard avoidance
- defensive driving
- Skidding
- night driving
- stopping distance
- loading/unloading
- safe emergency exiting
- communication devices
- safety equipment
- incident reporting

The Responsibility is on You!

- Please check out the van and drive it prior to picking up students
- **Do NOT** allow any students in the white fleet parking lot.
- Take the time to “test your ability” before driving students!
- Drive during the day if possible
- Have someone (not a student) stay awake in the front seat with you to help keep you alert
- Take breaks often, especially if feeling tired
- Never drive after drinking or taking drugs, including some prescription and over- the-counter medications
- Drive at a safe speed for the weather and road conditions
- Remember, the speed you normally drive in a car may be too fast for a van or mini-bus!

Vehicle Accidents

- Relax! Do not panic
- Check on passengers
- Remain at the scene of the accident
- Call police and wait for them to arrive
- Gather all of the facts:
 - summary of events, while they are fresh in your mind
 - date of accident
 - time of accident
 - location of passengers inside vehicle
 - contact information for all parties involved
 - photos of the scene, if possible
- Refer to “The Trust” Vehicle Insurance Card in the plastic sheet in the passenger seat and in the glove compartment
- Report the accident to school authorities, your supervisor & Facilities

Vehicle Accidents, Collision or Mechanical Difficulty

- During regular business hours, immediately call Lisa Taetle, 209-7521 at the District Office or Brian McNitt, 209-8508 at Facilities.
- If the accident occurs outside of business hours, call your supervisor immediately.
- When traveling you must be prepared with the following:
 - a cell phone
 - your supervisor's phone # and cell phone #
 - a credit card in case of emergency or incident requiring roadside assistance or vehicle repair
 - In the event of damage or loss to vehicle, the District will need the following:
 - description of vehicle (year, make, model, VIN, license plate, mileage)
 - date and time of loss
 - cause of loss
 - name of person involved in damage/loss to vehicle
 - person to contact and phone # regarding accident

Who to Contact

• The following individuals/departments are your points of contact for this program:

- Requesting and turning in all required District paperwork: David Roberts, droberts@cfdsd16.org, x8512
- Verification of district credit card agreement: Shawn Medford, smedford@cfdsd16.org, Business Office, MAC
- Checking out a vehicle, David Roberts, droberts@cfdsd16.org, x8512
- Verification of each driver's acceptable Motor Vehicle Record, David Roberts, droberts@cfdsd16.org, x8512
- Inspection and service of fleet, Facilities Dept, Dave Benson, dbenson@cfdsd16.org, x8510

Steps to Become an Authorized District driver

1. Driver requests required paperwork to become an approved District driver from David Roberts, droberts16@cfsd16.org.
2. Driver completes this PowerPoint presentation and turns in the [completion form at the end of this presentation](#)
3. Driver submits filled-out District paperwork to be an approved driver to David Roberts, droberts16@cfsd16.org
4. Driver requests a PO to be put into place for gas card from appropriate school entity.
5. Driver receives mini-bus training (if necessary). Please schedule through David Roberts, droberts16@cfsd16.org



Checkout Procedures

1. Driver makes a reservation for the date needed as soon as possible. Use the format below so that the appropriate vehicle can be reserved for you.

| Date(s) Vehicle Needed | Name of Driver | Number of Passengers Not Including Driver | Destination | Local/Out of Town | Time/Date picking up keys |
|------------------------|----------------|---|-------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

2. Driver picks up gas card from appropriate school entity.
3. Driver picks up keys from David Roberts @ HS Warehouse Receiving and fills out check-out paperwork
4. Pick up vehicle and make sure you are comfortable with the driving (you can test drive it, first!)
5. A pre-trip inspection takes place using provided checklist
6. A post-trip inspection occurs after the trip using provided checklist
7. Notify Facilities of any maintenance or repair items needed

Which Vehicle do You Need?

- 2024 Chevy Suburban seats 6 students (no students in front seat!)
- Toyota Sienna Minivan seats 6 students - no students in front seat!)
- Mini-Buses seat 14 Students (Need Behind-the-Wheel training to drive!)

Verification of viewing “Safety Procedures and Policies for Driving Vans and the Mini-Bus” PowerPoint Presentation

I, _____(please print name), do hereby affirm that I have viewed the entire Safety Procedures and Policies for Driving Vans and the Mini-Bus PowerPoint Presentation.

Signature

Date