

**PROGRAM DIVISION
BULLETIN**

2005-67

December 6, 2005

Update – 12 and 15 Passenger Vans

In October of 2004 we put out Bulletin Notice FB-2004-45 which outlined our concern regarding the safety of 12 and 15 passenger vans. This is an update to the original bulletin to help you with the transition of identifying and disposing of these vehicles within our programs.

What is a 12 and 15 Passenger Van?

While the basic vehicles have issues the following are acceptable uses of these vehicles – Cargo Vans (seating for less than 5 passengers), EMT Vehicles, Wheelchair Transport. Any vehicle originally intended for to transport passengers, other than these exceptions, are subject to our disposal plan protocol and modification.

What is an acceptable Disposal Plan?

A documented plan signed by our insured committing that they modify the vehicles currently insured and to replace them (the modified vehicles) with acceptable alternative vehicles once they come off of lease, meet their normal replacement age or mileage but in no event longer than January 1, 2008. Attached is a sample Disposal Plan for your reference.

What about new business?

On new accounts insureds **MUST** commit to properly modify their vehicles and sign a Disposal Plan. If they are not willing to commit to this process we cannot provide automobile coverage.

What about renewals?

If the insured committed to modifying their vehicles and disposing of them you must be following up to ensure compliance. If they have not provided you with a signed Disposal Plan or have not properly modified their vehicles you must issue non-renewal of their automobile coverage.

What are the acceptable modifications?

The following are the current acceptable modifications:

- Removal of the rear seat to limit seating to 10 passengers or less
- Having dual rear wheels added to the vehicle by a licensed facility
- Converting , by a licensed facility, to wheelchair transportation only
- Removal of any roof racks
- Removal of any trailer hitches

What are the acceptable alternative vehicles?

There are many safety related issues regarding 12/15 passenger vans now on the market. These vehicles were originally designed as cargo vehicles (exempt from many government standards) and later adapted to carry passengers. The passage of the commercial driver laws several years ago made them even more attractive to organizations needing to transport small groups of people as it is the largest capacity vehicle exempt from the requirement to have a CDL.

Problems with the vehicle include a propensity to rollover during sudden movements such as drifting off the side of the road. Full size 12 and 15 passenger vans are not built to withstand rollover crashes the way most automobiles are. Further, they do not meet body joint strength and passenger seating and crash protection standards. The vans become increasing unstable as more passengers are added. This causes the center of gravity to rise and move toward the rear. Thus, when they do roll over there are often tragic consequences due to lack of protection for the occupants, most of whom ride without seat belt restraints.

The only acceptable alternative at the present time is to use vehicles that meet “Small School Activity Bus” standards. These are: FMVSS 220- Rollover Protection, FMVSS 221- Body Joint Strength and FMVSS 222-Passenger Seating and Crash Protection. Insured’s should specify that their replacement vehicles meet these standards and also are equipped with dual rear wheels.

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Other Risk Management Controls

Other control measures would be strict driver selection standards, driver training requirements, mandatory use of seat belts by all occupants and superior vehicle maintenance practices. Proper tire inflation and regular tire maintenance are critical to reducing roll over potential of these vehicles.

Future Updates

As more alternative vehicles come into the market we will work to provide you and our insureds with periodic updates. Many new vehicles are now available with electronic stabilization and other changes in an attempt to lower the roll over potential. We view these as positive changes however these vehicles have not been tested yet by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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Company Name:		
Company Address:		
Do you own 12 and 15 passenger vans	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, how many?		
Do you lease 12 and 15 passenger vans?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, how many?		
Do they operate on local roads at speeds less than 55 MPH?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Do they operate on highways or roads at speeds greater than 55 MPH?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Do they make routine shuttle-type routes	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Do they make occasional field trip type routes	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Please describe usage		
Have you removed the rear seat?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Have you converted them to cargo vans?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Have you installed dual rear wheels?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Have you removed the roof racks?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Have you removed trailer hitches?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Please describe modifications made		
Do you have a replacement plan for 12 and 15 passenger vans?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Will you replace them with mini vans?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Will you replace them with small school buses that meet Federal Motor Carrier Safety Standards 220, 221, and 222?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Will you subcontract transportation?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
What is the expected disposal date of all 12 and 15 passenger vans?		
Please describe the replacement plan		

Plan Completed By: _____ Date: _____

Office use only

Underwriting review by:
Home Office approval by:

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