



# Adventist Risk Management, Inc.



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## Why Can't We Use the New 15-Passenger Vans?

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Manufacturers of the 15-passenger van say the safety problems of the vehicle have been addressed in the latest model. They are typically less expensive than buying a bus. Why shouldn't we use them?"

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) identifies the 15-passenger van as a particularly dangerous vehicle. Multiple deaths within our church organizations occurred due to the use of 15-passenger vans. The NHTSA reports that 653 occupants of 15-passenger vans were killed during 2004-2013 alone.

Van manufacturers claim improvements in the safety rating of the latest version of these vehicles. These claims must be verified by a qualified third-party, standard-setting organization, such as the NHTSA. The NHTSA released a statement on 15-passenger vans that cautions readers to check tires regularly due to the dangerous nature of these vehicles. There was no mention, however, of an improved safety rating. Therefore, the improvements do not qualify as verified.

Adventist Risk Management (ARM) and the [North American Division](#) (NAD) do not support the use of 15-passenger vans. Beginning in 2008 NAD, along with ARM, recommended the removal of these vans from ownership or use by all church organizations. All church organizations are encouraged to use other vehicles that are safe and verified.

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In addition to the NAD policy discouraging the use 15-passenger vans, the Division has included specific guidelines if the vans are used.

Your local conference or church organization may also have further specific guidelines for the use or may even prohibit the use of 15-passenger vans. Always check to see if your church organization has such guidelines before using these vehicles.

If your church organization is still in the process of selling any 15-passenger vans, it is strongly encouraged that these vehicles are disposed of immediately. If your local church board still chooses to use these dangerous vehicles, these NHTSA guidelines should be followed to provide as much safety as possible.

- Never overload the vehicle. The NHTSA recently said: *"Recognizing that 15-passenger vans are particularly sensitive to loading, the agency warns users never to overload these vehicles under any circumstances. NHTSA research shows overloading 15-passenger vans both increases rollover risk and makes the vehicle more unstable in any handling maneuvers."*
- If you are a passenger, make sure you buckle up for every trip.
- If you are an owner, make sure the vehicle is regularly maintained.
- Owners should have suspension and steering components inspected according to the manufacturer's recommended schedule and replace or repair these parts as necessary.
- Owners should ensure that vehicles are equipped with properly sized and load-rated tires.
- Owners should also make sure drivers are properly licensed and experienced in operating a 15-passenger van.
- Before every trip, check the tires for proper inflation and make sure there are no signs of wear or damage. Correct tire size and inflation pressure information can be found in the owner's manual and on the door pillar.

## Protect Your Flock

It is better to avoid risk and possible injury all together by using the safest means of transportation. If the only option is to use a not-so-safe vehicle, make sure all guidelines and procedures are followed. Psalm 4:8 (ESV) says, "In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." We can be sure that God will always protect us, but we must do our part to protect His flock by using the safest transportation possible.

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