

Alternatives to Transporting Students

Presented by:

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Objectives

- Identify issues
- Provide risk management reminders
- Explain components of Wisconsin State Statute §121.555
- Audience Participation



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Your Presenters



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Why?

- Bus Driver Shortage
- More Athletic Teams
- Bus Driver Shortage
- More Clubs and Other Organizations
- Bus Driver Shortage



What are you doing?

- School District Vehicles
 - Limited to 10-passenger vehicles
- Car pools
 - Who is coordinating?
- Personal Vehicles
- Students Drive Themselves
- Coach has a Suburban
- Let's Borrow the Church's Bus
- Pay Parents to Drive
- Rideshare/Taxi



Large Van Regulation

- NHTSA 49 U.S.C. §30112(a)(2)
 - School district may not purchase or lease a 15-passenger van for student transportation unless it meets all of the safety requirements of a school bus.
 - School Bus Safety Requirements (According to FMVSS)
 - Yellow Paint, Reflective Tape, Stop-arm, Flashing Lights, etc.
- Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) – August 10, 2005
 - Section 10309 states in part: a school or school system may not purchase or lease a new 15-passenger van if it will be used significantly by, or on behalf of, the school or school system to transport preprimary, primary, or secondary school students to or from school or an event related to school, unless the 15-passenger van complies with the motor vehicle standards prescribed for school buses and multifunction school activity buses under this title.



Large Van Regulation

- **Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) (continued)**
 - Established penalties for dealerships selling or leasing 15-passenger vehicle to a school district without required safety features
 - \$10,000 penalty, up to \$15,000,000 for multiple violations
 - Defined 15 passenger – a vehicle that seats 10-14 passengers, not including the driver



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Large Van Regulation

- **Wisconsin DOT School Bus Definition**
 - motor vehicle which carries 10 or more passengers for the purposes of transporting students to or from school, curricular, or extracurricular activities.
 - Recommends avoiding use of van able to hold 11 or more passengers
 - Based on federal guidelines
- **Wisconsin State Statute §121.555**
 - Defines alternative methods of transportation
 - Limits vehicle size to 9 passengers or less



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Safety Concerns with Large Vans

- 2004 – 2013
 - 653 Americans died in crashes
 - 65 occupants per year
 - 60% of fatalities occurred when the van rolled over
- 2003-2007
 - 80% of occupants killed were not wearing their seatbelt
 - 60% killed in single-vehicle accidents were ejected
 - 92% properly restrained survived



Safety Concerns with Large Vans

- Rollover Rates when Vehicle Loaded to or Below Half the Designed Seating Capacity
 - Large Van – 2.2
 - Minivan – 1.7
 - SUV – 1.4
 - Pickup Trucks – 1.3
 - Passenger Cars – 1.3



Issues with Large Vans

- Higher Center of Gravity
 - Adding passengers and cargo moves the center of gravity higher and toward the rear of the vehicle.
 - Causes instability and the potential for drivers to lose control during emergency handling maneuvers.
- Flat sides contribute to instability in crosswinds
- Structural rigidity that was designed for the less demanding rigors of transporting cargo

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Issues with Large Vans

- Underinflated Tires
 - NHTSA Study – 75% 15-passenger vans had improperly inflated tires
 - Improperly inflated tires changes handling characteristics
 - Increases potential for a rollover crash
- Seating Configurations
 - Place excessive weight on left rear tire
- Tire blow-outs can cause driver to lose control of the vehicle

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Safety Recommendations for 10-Passenger Vans

- Make sure the vehicle is properly maintained
- Properly inflated tires are critical
 - Check tire pressure and wear prior to each trip
- Large vans handle differently
 - Use drivers familiar with handling issues
- Keep the load light
 - Do not overload the vehicle with students and athletic equipment
 - Overloading the vehicle increases rollover tendency



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Safety Recommendations for 10-Passenger Vans

- Require all occupants to use seat belts (or proper child restraints)
- Keep passengers and cargo in front of rear axle
 - Helps keep the center of gravity lower
- Do not place any load on the roof
- Be mindful of speed and road conditions
 - Rollover increases significantly at speeds over 50 mph
- Only qualified drivers
 - Training and experience are required to safely operate any vehicle
 - Make sure drivers are well rested and fully alert



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Transporting Students in Personal Vehicles

- School board must ensure compliance with Wis. Stat. § 121.555, and may consider including in contract the following:
 - Required insurance coverage limits
 - Annual inspection – comply with DOT rules and requirements of Wis. Stat. § 110.075
 - Operator Requirements -
 - Valid WI driver's license
 - 18 years of age
 - Sufficient use of hands/feet to operate brake and accelerator - may be waivable
 - Medical opinion every 3 years stating no mental or physical disability impacting ability to operate motor vehicle – can use examination report used for school staff
 - Limited to transporting the number of passengers that can be seated on permanently mounted seats facing forward without interfering with operator



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Thank you for your attention.



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