



Van Training Manual

Purpose: There is an increased roll over risk associated with driving extended body vans. This risk increases with increased number of passengers and inexperience of drivers. FUMC and the driver of large passenger vans may be held criminally and financially responsible for injuries and fatalities due to negligence. The following manual along with the vehicle policy intended to increase awareness and provide training and regulations to increase safety while operating the FUMC van.

Drivers must be approved prior to operating the church van. Approval includes the following:

- 25 years of age or older
- Valid driver's license; a copy must be on file in church office
- No significant traffic violations. Drivers must sign release to have driving record checked on a random periodic basis.
- Member of Batesville First United Methodist Church

The Driver has specific responsibilities before, during, and after operating the church van. These rules are covered in the vehicle policy and on the church Van request form. These documents should be reviewed in addition to this training manual.

Rules for safety:

The following rules for safety must be followed at all times. The driver and group leader are responsible for ensuring that these rules are understood and followed.

- Seatbelts must be worn at all times. In the case of children, follow all laws regarding car/booster seats.
- At no time is an unlicensed person allowed to drive the church van. All drivers should receive training and approval prior to operating the church van.
- All state laws must be followed.
- The use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs by the driver or any passenger is prohibited at all times.
- No hazardous, disruptive activity or noise will be permitted while the vehicle is moving.
- All passengers must follow the driver's instructions.
- Keep all objects inside the vehicle.
- All windows must be kept clear of objects that may disrupt the driver's view.
- In case of an accident or emergency, stop; and do not exit the vehicle unless instructed by the driver.
- Always exit on the street side of the vehicle, never on the traffic side.
- Violation of these rules may result in the termination of the trip for the entire group or the removal of a participant from the trip.
- The safety of others and my own safety as the driver is a priority on this trip.
- Never load items on roof. Doing so raises the center of gravity and increases the roll over risk.

- DO NOT SPEED.
- Drivers should never use cell phones while driving. If necessary, have a passenger make the call or pull off the road to a safe location.

Extended body van information:

- A 15-passenger van does not handle like a car. There are major differences, such as a van's increased height, length, and weight of which the driver needs to be aware. The number one negative impact of a 15-passenger van's design versus that of a car is the van's increased tendency to tip and roll over, resulting in accidents that can cause both injury and death. Vans have a higher center of gravity than cars, which makes them much more susceptible to tipping or rolling over.
- Because of a van's height and shape, things like wind can have a greater affect on steering; so use caution, and slow down whenever it is windy.
- Vans are heavier than cars so they will take longer to accelerate and slow down. This means that they will require longer brake time, so be sure to allow yourself enough time to stop. The driver's seat of a van also is situated further out front over the front wheels, which can affect turning; so slow down, and use a wider area when turning your van to allow for the longer wheelbase and driver position.
- Blind spots for vans are different than for cars, so it is extremely important to be aware of them and adjust accordingly. To make your blind spots as small as possible, adjust mirrors so that just a sliver of the side or the van is visible. Leaning forward in your seat improves your angle of vision, further reducing the size of your blind spots. Lastly, be sure to glance over shoulder prior to any lane change.

Boarding and Departing:

There are several safety concerns you need to remember when assisting passengers in

Boarding and departing a 15-passenger van.

- Position the van out of traffic or the traveled lane.
- Always load forward seats first, leaving the back seats empty when fewer passengers are onboard. This practice keeps more weight on the steering axle and improves the handling characteristics of the van.
- Be sure to help any passenger needing special assistance if requested or required.
- When unloading passengers, remind exiting riders to walk behind the van and to be cautious of traffic.
- Child restraint seats should never be placed in the front or last seats in the van. To make sure child seats are properly installed, carefully read the vehicle owner's manual to insure proper placement and usage.
- Before starting the van, double check that you and all your passengers are securely buckled in and that all doors are securely shut and locked. *Nearly 87 percent of all those killed in a one vehicle large passenger van accidents were not wearing seatbelts.
- Always have the van turned off and the parking brake set before you or anyone else exits the vehicle

Safe Driving

Smart driving is safe driving, and one of the most critical aspects of smart driving is maintaining the buffer zone of safety. To maintain the buffer zone of safety, you need a safe distance between your van and the traffic around you. This allows you to stop when needed, without risking a collision. The proper distance you need is determined by three important factors:

1. Perception Distance – How far you travel between the time you notice a problem and you actually decide to brake.
2. Reaction Distance – How far you travel between deciding to and actually hitting your brake. For example, a van going 55 miles per hour, will travel 60 feet by the time you move your foot from the gas pedal to the brake pedal.
3. Braking Distance – The actual distance your van travels before it comes to a stop after brakes are applied. Covering your brake at the first indication that there might be a reason to slow down can greatly reduce your stopping distance.

The total amount of time you should have between yourself and another vehicle is an average of four seconds under ideal conditions.

- When conditions are poor, such as in rain or snow, you will need to allow more time to react and allow more distance between your van and other cars.
- Not only is it important to keep a safe distance from the vehicles in front of you, but also keep a safe distance from the vehicles behind you. If a vehicle is tailgating, it is best to slow down to encourage it to drop back or pass.
- Always be watchful of cars in the lanes next to you as well. Because of blind spots, try not to drive alongside another car for any extended length of time. This can inhibit your view and your van could be in another vehicle's blind spot. Scan your side and rear view mirrors every four seconds to continuously keep track of where traffic is.

Backing Up

Due to the size and shape of a 15-passenger van, backing up is more difficult than with a car, so it is important to Always double check what is behind you and above before you begin backing up. Check your side mirrors frequently and consistently as you back up. If possible, do not back into traffic. It is better to back from the street into a driveway or parking space and then pull into traffic. Having a person assist you can also help with backing up. Just make sure the person stands to the side, not directly behind the van and that they are always visible in your mirror.

Night Driving

When driving at night your vision is more limited, so you need to take extra caution; and use the high beams when possible. Also, be on the lookout for any drivers who appear to be swerving or acting recklessly. The greatest incidence of alcohol-related collisions occurs between 8:00 P.M. and 8:00 A.M.

Severe Weather

If possible, try not to drive during severe weather conditions. If you do need to be on the road in bad weather, drive slower; and allow even more distance between yourself and other vehicles. During rainy conditions, be extra cautious because vans are especially susceptible to hydroplaning. Hydroplaning happens when water builds up underneath the tires, causing them to lift off of the road, which inhibits steering and braking. Slow down if you feel the van begin to slip or slide, and take your foot off the accelerator immediately. Avoid any sudden stops or quick turns as it may cause you to skid.

Driver Fatigue

To prevent driver fatigue, make sure there are enough qualified drivers for long trips. Also, additional adult supervision for children can help the driver concentrate just on the task of driving. Be sure to get an adequate amount of rest the night before to avoid drowsy or impaired reactions. Schedule stops along the way to help you stay refreshed.

Panic Maneuvers

- A study by the NHTSA found that in 90 percent of rollover vehicle crashes, the driver lost control of the vehicle and ran off the road. Avoiding any sudden panic maneuvers such as slamming on the brakes or jerking the wheel, can go a long way to saving your life in a 15-passenger van.
- Also, a mistake like overcorrecting your steering as a reaction to an emergency can cause the 15-passenger van to roll over due to the vans high center of gravity.
- If you have a van wheel drop off the side of the road, the key thing to remember is to keep your wheels straight. Without severe braking, slow the van down until it is almost at a complete stop; then slowly return to the roadway.

Information is intended to increase awareness of hazards associated with driving extended body vans. It is not all inclusive, more information can be found at safechruch.com. Source of information safechruch.com and UnitedMethodistInsurance.com

Authorized driver check list

Name: _____

Initial each blank and sign the form at the bottom. A copy of your current driver's licenses must be on file in the church office.

_____ I acknowledge receipt of Batesville First United Methodist Church Vehicle Policies and the Batesville FUMC van training manual.

_____ I have read and understand the policy and training manual.

_____ I agree to follow all rules and policies including safe sanctuaries when operating a vehicle on a Batesville FUMC sponsored trips

_____ I have given Batesville FUMC a copy of my driver's license. I agree to keep a current copy of my driver's license on file in the church office.

_____ I have signed the authorization to check my driving records and criminal background check authorization.

_____ The authorization to check my driving records includes the authorization to randomly check my driving records and will remain active until I notify Batesville FUMC in writing that I no longer wish to have my driving records randomly checked.

Signature

Date