

Van Certification Manual



Environmental Health and Safety Office

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHARLOTTE
GUIDELINES FOR VAN DRIVERS

Becoming an “Approved” Van Driver:

- You must have a valid driver’s license and be an employee of UNC Charlotte.
- You must review this self-study van certification manual.
- You must successfully pass the online van certification test.
- Complete the employee section of the van certification authorization form and schedule a time to complete the van road test with an authorized road tester.
- The authorized road tester will complete the practice driving section of your van certification authorization form during an on campus van road test.
- The employee must have the supervisor authorization section completed by their appropriate supervisor and if you are a student employee an Authorizing Vice Chancellor/designee must also sign.
- Return the completed van certification authorization form to the EHS Office.
- After completing all the steps above, you will be issued a **VAN DRIVER AUTHORIZATION** card by the EHS Office.

To Obtain Van Keys:

- You must display a Van Driver Authorization card and a valid driver’s license to the University official who dispatches the vehicle.
- You must have on file with the University EHS Office a completed Van Certification Authorization form.

Getting Familiar with the Van

- You must have your driver's license with you at all times when driving. No License – No Driving
- Walk around the van and do a quick visual inspection of the *exterior* of the van looking for any dents, checking tires, lights, etc
- *(NOTE): Properly inflated tires and tire tread are very important for the safe handling of the vehicle. Please check out the tires thoroughly and bring any concerns to the attention of the Motor Fleet Representative or appropriate department staff before proceeding.*
- Visually check to be sure that all seats are locked to their floor brackets, and that there are enough functioning seat belts for all passengers. Each person is required to wear a seat belt.
- Adjust the seat, mirrors, and tilt steering wheel to your comfort before driving. Do not adjust the tilt steering or the seat position while the van is moving.
- Most UNC Charlotte vans use 87 octane unleaded gas. Check the gas or diesel fuel (in both tanks if van is so equipped). There are three places to verify what type of fuel is needed:
1. Instrument Panel 2. Fuel Tank Opening 3. Van Manual
- Make sure the van is in proper running condition. Test the efficiency of the vehicle equipment to ensure it works, i.e., the horn, windshield wipers, headlights, brake lights, reverse lights, emergency flashers, turn signals, doors, brakes, instrument panel, etc. Report any problems to the appropriate department staff or to the Motor Fleet Representative before proceeding. If the van is not in proper running condition, it may be not used.
- All UNC Charlotte vehicles must be used for business purposes only. Any personal or unauthorized use of UNC Charlotte vehicles is prohibited. For those campus vehicles which are supplied a credit card, any use other than the intended purpose of fueling the van is against UNC Charlotte policy.

It is the personal responsibility of all drivers to report in writing all convictions for moving traffic violations within 48 hours to their supervisor whether conviction resulted from driving a van or any other public or private vehicle. Conviction may result in suspension of UNC Charlotte van driving privileges.

- Keep the van locked when no one is with it to avoid having the credit cards or other items stolen. In addition to locking all doors, it is essential that all window latches are secured.
- Clean trash from the van at the beginning and end of each trip. Keep the van in clean condition to eliminate any trash that may roll up under your feet while driving.
- Remember, YOU are responsible for returning this vehicle back in the condition it was in when you checked it out. This includes any damage to the van, any trash, or any item that is kept with vehicle.
- UNC Charlotte vans use 10W-30 weight oil. Do not continue to drive if the oil warning light comes on, stop immediately and if you are knowledgeable check the oil.
- Consistently check the vehicle's instrument panel and observe how the vehicle handles while driving. If anything out of the ordinary like noises, odors, brakes, or if you suspect that the vehicle is not handling properly, stop as soon as possible and investigate.
- Motor Fleet van customers should contact the Motor Fleet Representative (704-687-0596) if any mechanical issues arise with your van during the trip. You will be instructed as to what to do. For all other vans, maintenance and mechanical issues need to be directed to the supervisor at Facilities Management Automotive shop.

The questions addressing claims arising from accidents involving all vehicles operated on University business please refer to the following policy:

<http://legal.uncc.edu/sites/legal.uncc.edu/files/media/mvins.pdf>

15 - Passenger Van Safety ALERT

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has issued three consecutive ADVISORIES to consumers of 15 - passenger vans because of an increased rollover risk under certain conditions.

NHTSA found that the risk of a rollover crash is greatly increased when 10 or more people ride in a 15 – passenger van.

In fact, their statistics indicate that a 15-passenger van with 10 or more occupants had a rollover rate in single vehicles accidents of nearly 3 times the rate for lightly loaded vans. Higher occupancy level of the 15 – passenger van caused crash severity to increase.

This increased risk occurs because the passenger weight raises the vehicle's center of gravity and causes it to shift rearward, increasing vertical load on the rear tires. As a result, the van has less resistance to rollover and handles differently.

Nearly 80 percent of those who died in 15 – passenger van rollovers nationwide between 1990 and 2003 were not buckled up. SEAT BELT USE IS MANDATORY!

Situations that contribute to a potential rollover are:

The van goes off a rural road, striking a ditch or embankment or when it digs into soft soil.

The driver is fatigued or driving too fast for conditions and loses control.

The driver overcorrects the steering as a panic reaction to an emergency or to a wheel dropping off the pavement.

How can rollover crashes be prevented? :

Avoid conditions that lead to a loss of control

Drive cautiously on rural roads

Make sure the tires are properly inflated and the tread is not worn.
The manufacturer's recommendation for correct tire pressure is located on the vehicle's identification placard found usually on the driver's doorsill or in the tire owner's manual.

SAFE DRIVING GUIDELINES

BASIC SAFETY

- Drive Defensively - others may not! This includes being constantly alert to possible dangers. Be constantly vigilant! If you see flashing lights, vehicles ahead with brake lights on, children or animals near the roadway, cars getting ready to pull out of side streets or driveways, or traffic lights that may be about to change, prepare to brake by removing your foot from the accelerator and be prepared to stop. Anticipate other driver's actions, even if they are inappropriate.
- Learn to COVER THE BRAKE. Move your foot from the accelerator and hold it above the brake pedal. The van will begin to slow even before you decide that you really do need to apply the brakes. Your braking distance and time will be shortened because you are anticipating the need to stop
- Do not leave the driver's seat while the engine is running. The emergency brake should always be set when leaving the vehicle.
- Drive with both hands on the wheel. This is especially important in heavy traffic, bad weather or winding roads.
- Do not rush! Do not drive while distracted. Accidents are more likely when the driver is rushing to meet a schedule, or the driver's attention is focused on things other than the road. (For example: changing the radio station, trying to eat, reading a map, or looking back at the passengers adjusting). It is a good idea to have the person in the passenger seat assist in navigating, adjust the radio, etc. It is more important to arrive safely than to be there on time.
- Do not exceed posted speed limits. Drive slower and more carefully than you would in your in own vehicle. Adjust your speed for changes in traffic, weather, pedestrians, intersections, or darkness. Always be prepared to stop! You have passengers who are depending on you.
- Obey all state Motor Vehicle and other applicable laws.
- You are required to **stop** at all railroad crossings and look both ways regardless of whether the arm is down or the signals are flashing. It is against the law to go around any railroad crossing arm gate or any other activated warning device.
- If you have consumed *any* alcohol in the previous **8** hours, do not drive the van. This does not simply mean you must be below the legal blood alcohol limit. This means *any* amount of alcohol. The same is also true for any drugs, prescription or non-prescription that can affect one's driving ability. You are not allowed to

transport any intoxicating beverages, drugs or substances in a state-owned vehicle.

- Do not fill the gas tank while the engine is running.
- In adverse weather conditions, turn your headlights on. State law requires that if your wipers are operating, then your headlights must be on.
- Do not pick up any hitchhikers.
- The van is **wide**. On narrow roads, or where construction barriers create narrow lanes, you will need to slow down, drive in the wider lane if possible, and use extra caution.
- The van is also **longer** than your car. It is necessary to make wider turns than you would in a car. Because the van is so long, the rear wheels tend to track further inside the turn than your front tires. Be careful not to side-swipe objects on the inside of the turn! If you have to swing a little wide to avoid hitting an object, be very cautious because oncoming traffic may not see your maneuver in time.

Use your mirrors as you turn to help you see where you are relative to the boundaries of your lane and how close you are to objects alongside the van. It is especially important to use your turn signals. Checking the mirrors also helps you to see other drivers who may mistake your maneuver and try to pass you.

- The van is also **heavier** than your car! It will take more time and distance to stop the van. Vans respond differently from regular passenger vehicles in the sense that they do not accelerate as rapidly or stop as rapidly. You will need to slow down gradually before you stop and be very aware of hazards that will require you to stop. This is extremely important when the van is fully loaded with passengers.
- The van is **taller** than your car! Remember this when driving under low underpasses or overhanging roofs. If you are unsure whether the van will fit under an underpass or overhang, do not take a chance. Go around the obstacle or take another route. The van's height also causes it to sway from side to side more than a car, especially when there's a load and/or a strong crosswind. You can verify the height of the vehicle by looking inside the driver's door at the latch or door post.
- Be aware of the blind spots associated with driving a larger vehicle. That is why constantly using the mirrors is important.

BRAKING AND STOPPING DISTANCES

- Use a light foot on the gas. Accelerate slowly and evenly to your desired speed. Accelerating too quickly will require braking to keep your speed under control.
- Maintain at least a 4 second following distance at all speeds. Don't tailgate! Double this distance in poor conditions. In rain and fog, drive at a speed that will allow you to stop well within the distance you can see ahead.
- Use the road to help control your speed. Anticipate that an uphill stretch will slow the van and going downhill will add speed so you need to decrease acceleration before you come over the top and start to descend.
- Generally look and plan ahead. Start braking earlier than you think you need to.
- Constant braking can lead to brake failure. Do not ride your brakes. Use the transmission to help hold your speed down on a long or steep downhill. Slow down and downshift to a lower gear before you begin to descend. Most UNC Charlotte vans are equipped with Overdrive. Refer to the owner's manual for how to turn the overdrive on and off. Turn the overdrive function *OFF* if you are down shifting to reduce your speed.

PASSING

- Use extreme caution when passing other vehicles.
- On the interstate or other four lanes roads:

Before pulling out to pass, check your mirrors and turn your head and look into the van's blind spot on the left side. Signal your intention well in advance.
- Maintain a steady speed while passing, and stay in the center of your lane.
- After you have passed the other vehicle, signal early before returning to the right lane. You will know you have given the other vehicle enough room when you can see him clearly in your rear view mirror (not the right side mirror). You may ask for a visual check by a passenger before pulling back to the right lane.
- Try to avoid passing on two lane roads, or any time passing will take you into a lane used by oncoming traffic. If you find yourself behind a very slow moving vehicle (such as farm machinery, etc.), do not try to pass until you are certain you have enough room and sight distance to do so safely. Of course you should promptly return to the right lane as soon as you can do so safely.

- Avoid driving in the left lane for extended periods. Faster vehicles will begin to pass you on the right, creating difficulties for you since you cannot see well on that side.

INTERSECTIONS

- When approaching an intersection always be prepared to stop. If the light is already green, it may change on you before you can safely go through the intersection. Slow down; cover your brake so you can come to a slow, gradual stop if the light does change.
- If the light is still green look **Left – Right** and then **Left** again to ensure all traffic has stopped. Proceed with caution!
- Never change lanes in or around an intersection.
- Watch for pedestrians in or about to enter the crosswalk. When stopping at an intersection, stay stopped behind the crosswalk.
- When turning left or right at an intersection, give the appropriate turn signal early enough so other drivers in front and behind you know what your intentions are.
- Check your mirrors while you turn to check traffic that may have turned with you or may try to merge into your blind spot.

BACKING

- Always **back in first** when you arrive at your parking spot. You will have a better view of the area you are backing into. If you nose into a spot and have to back out, then you will be backing into your blind spot and may hit something.
- If you have to back or maneuver out of a tight spot:

Walk completely around the van to inspect and ensure that everything is clear in your path and you are certain that you will not hit anything.

Use your horn to give a short warning honk before you begin to back up.

After you begin your backing, stop a few feet into your maneuver to take one more look in the mirrors again, just in case someone or some vehicle

has started to go behind you.

If there is someone else in the van with you, have them get out acting as a spotter to direct you around posts, cars, or other objects in your path. Be sure to roll down your window so that you can hear the spotter. Make sure the spotter stays safely away from the vehicle and is clearly visible to you at all times.

Be sure the spotter does not walk behind the vehicle so that you can see them at all times. Make sure you and the spotter communicate clearly and you both understand the hand signals for stop, slow, and turn. Make sure the spotter is aware of the hazards and does not lose sight of the possible dangers of surrounding traffic that may involve him/her.

Remember, the van is longer than most cars and may extend beyond the rear wheels, so the bumper may make contact with an object before the rear tires stop against the curb.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

- Pedestrians always have the right of way! As you spot pedestrians walking along the street, curb or getting ready to cross the road, begin slowing down by taking your foot off the accelerator.
- You are required to stop for pedestrians who are in the crosswalk or are about to enter the crosswalk.
- Be on the alert for pedestrian traffic and activity around parking lots, restaurants, college campuses and events. Pedestrians can be hidden behind cars, trucks, and buildings. Small children can dart out in front of you suddenly.
- Do not expect pedestrians to always use a designated crosswalk.
- Always stop behind the crosswalk. Do not proceed until each person has cleared the crosswalk. Look in both directions before proceeding.
- Do not hesitate to blow your horn to get the attention of pedestrians who are horse-playing near your path of travel and are not aware of your vehicle or other traffic. However, if you do use your horn, do so early enough that you do not startle them.

CHANGING LANES

- Changing lanes can take a lot of distance. You will need to be constantly aware of traffic and road conditions behind, ahead of, and around your vehicle.
- Check your mirrors frequently to:

See where other vehicles are. Has another car moved into your blind spot?
Do you know where you can go if you have to change lanes quickly?

Know what is going on around you, and look far enough ahead (12 to 15 seconds, or ¼ mile at 60 mph) to be ready to deal with upcoming road or traffic problems.

DRIVING WITH PASSENGERS

- YOU, the driver, are responsible for the safety of all passengers in the van.
- Every person in the vehicle is required to wear their seat belt.
- UNC Charlotte vans are not *allowed* to transport more than 15 people. Therefore, **DO NOT ALLOW MORE THAN 14 PASSENGERS** in the vehicle. **You, the driver, make 15.**
- *(NOTE): When there are less than 14 passengers in the vehicle, efforts should be made to have all passengers sit forward of the rear wheels. Always sit the passengers from the front of the van to the back.*
- It is expected that all drivers and passengers obey all applicable state and motor vehicle laws.
- The driver should not allow any horseplay that might lead to an injury or distract the driver.
- Smoking and/or consumption of alcohol is prohibited in all UNC Charlotte vehicles.
- Never drive with rear door open.
- Always shut the engine off while passengers are exiting or entering the vehicle.

DRIVING ON LONG TRIPS, AND ESPECIALLY LONG NIGHTS

- **NOTE: IF YOU ARE PLANNING A LONG TRIP WITH THE CAMPUS VEHICLE, YOU ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO HAVE ANOTHER VAN DRIVER CERTIFIED FOR SAFETY REASONS!**
- Safe driving requires concentration and can be tiring. Change drivers every 3-4 hours to avoid driver fatigue. If the current driver is having trouble keeping their eyes open, or is feeling particularly tired, they should pull over at the first safe spot and change drivers. If all approved drivers in the van are too tired to continue driving, then **STOP** and **REST**.
- **DON'T DRIVE WHEN YOU SUSPECT YOU MAY BE TOO TIRED TO DO SO SAFELY. Remember that driving while drowsy is as dangerous as driving while impaired.**
- On long trips, especially when driving at night, the front seat passenger must stay awake to help keep the driver alert and to assist the driver with navigation and passing.

CRUISE CONTROL

- Some vans are equipped with cruise control. If you are not familiar with cruise control, read the owner's manual before attempting to use it. It is imperative that you pay full attention to the road when the cruise control is on. Cruise Control is **not** an auto pilot! **Do Not Use Cruise Control on Slippery Roads, Winding or Unpaved Roads, in Heavy Traffic, or on City Streets.**

DRIVING ON UNPAVED ROADS

- Do not exceed 20-25 mph, or less if the conditions warrant it, on narrow unpaved roads.
- Braking is tricky on gravel and dirt since the van can skid easily. Consider using a lower gear to reduce your speed and save the brakes.
- Lookout for washboards (tightly spaced ripples) in the road surface. These can cause the van to "float" off the road.
- It is best to drive in the center of an unpaved road when visibility is adequate, except when entering a sharp turn or being approached by another vehicle: shoulders can be very unstable and may give way under your van.
- When being approached by another vehicle on a narrow dirt road, move slightly to the right and stop. Give the other driver a chance to decide what to do. Do not hurry! Be careful not to pull off onto an unstable shoulder. You may need to back

up to a wider part of the road – use a spotter and unload passengers if you feel this will be safer

- Consider using the horn on blind curves. At night, you may see the headlights of oncoming vehicles before you meet them. Proceed with caution by reducing your speed.
- Make U-turns only at safe turnarounds, not in the middle of a narrow road.
- If you can hear the transmission constantly switching in and out of overdrive while driving on hilly terrain, turn the overdrive function OFF.
- Turn the Overdrive OFF if you downshift to control your speed.

USE OF ROOF RACKS

- **Motor Fleet leased vans are not allowed to have roof racks.**

TOWING A TRAILER

- Motor Fleet leased vans are not allowed to have any towing devices attached. Departmental owned vans may have tow devices attached.
- When hooking the trailer to the van, make sure the ball makes a good connection with the trailer hitch, lock the hitch down, secure the hitch with the safety pin or bolt, and connect the safety chains.
- Check the trailer light to see that turn signals, flashers, brake lights and running lights function properly. If they do not work, try cleaning and repositioning the plug. Notify the appropriate departmental staff if you cannot get the lights to work.
- Make sure all items on the trailer are secure.
- At every gas stop, meal stop and change of drivers, check the trailer hitch, lighting connection and security of items on the trailer.
- Remember to allow for the added length of your vehicle when pulling a trailer. Allow extra room for changing lanes and turning. You should also allow yourself more following distance, since the van is now heavier and longer, and will need more room to stop.
- Backing a trailer takes practice. Improper backing can push the trailer tongue against the bumper and damage the hitch and the bumper.

IN EMERGENCIES

Follow instructions on *UNC Charlotte Accident Reporting*. *Notify the appropriate departmental staff.*

- Do not continue to operate a vehicle that is unsafe.
- Correct safety hazards in safe locations **off the highway or at a service station if at all possible**. *Use your emergency flashers to alert other drivers.*
- If the brakes do not seem to be working well, refer to your van operation manual. Some vans have self adjusting brakes. If they are still not safe, find a safe area to pull off the road and make alternate arrangements for passenger transport.
- In case of an accident, stay on the scene until the local authority arrives (police, medic). Get the names of all people involved in the accident. Get names, addresses, phone numbers, driver's license and insurance information from the other driver(s) and provide this information about you to them. Get names and phone numbers of witnesses. Take a photo of the accident scene.
- In any accident or mishap that will require repairs to the van, a police report must be completed by the local police or campus police. Obtain a copy of the police report and submit it immediately to the appropriate departmental staff for insurance purposes.
- In an accident or mishap that involves personal injury you must:
 - Call the Local Police or Authority (911)
 - Call Campus Police at (704) 687 -2200 as soon as possible and inform them of details. Make sure you give them complete and accurate information and a phone where you can be reached in case additional information is needed.
 - Contact the appropriate departmental staff yourself or through Campus Police. If there are standard emergency departmental procedures, activate those procedures.
 - Follow accident reporting procedures located in the van clipboard.
- Do not attempt to assess blame.

- Do not make statements to the press. Please refer them to the office of Public Relations at the University.

Examples of Close Calls to Be Aware Of...

- Side Swipes:
 - Poles at loading docks
 - Poles in parking decks
 - Hard to see low-lying landscaping posts
 - Ticket machines at entrances of parking spaces
 - Other vehicles

- Top Swipes:
 - Signs hanging over parking areas
 - Low hanging wires
 - Carports

- Back Bumper:
 - Other vehicles while backing up
 - Low poles or posts

- Major:
 - Soft shoulder of road gives way
 - Other drivers not obeying traffic signs or signals

- Blind Spots:
 - Pole or object at the right front quarter panel of van
 - *Anything* behind the van

VEHICLE COMPARISONS

Vehicle Weight = approximately 3,800 lbs
Est. Passenger Wt. = 600 lbs
Total = 4,400 lbs



15'

4'6"

Van Vehicle Weight = 8,800 lbs
Est. Passenger Wt. = 2,250 lbs
Total = 11,050 lbs

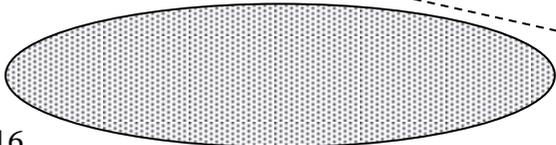


9'

20



Shaded Circle Indicate Potential Blind Spots





VAN CERTIFICATION AUTHORIZATION FORM

Instructions: Employee should complete the employee information section. The supervisor must complete the supervisor authorization section. All student employees must obtain the signature of an authorizing Vice Chancellor (VC) or designee before he or she is authorized to participate in the Van Certification program. The authorized road tester must complete the practice driving section during an on campus van road test. The form must be returned to Environmental Health and Safety office (EHSOffice@uncc.edu or fax 75302) and then a van driver authorization card will be administered.

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION SECTION

Name of Employee:	UNCC ID#:	GENDER: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	
Home Address:	City:	Zip Code:	Home Phone #:
Job Title:	Department:	Department Phone:	
Employment: Full Time____ Part Time____ Other____		Driving Record (Number of points on License): _____	
Date Online Test Completed: ____ / ____ / ____			
Employee Signature: _____		Date: _____	
FOR STUDENT EMPLOYEES AUTHORIZING VICE CHANCELLOR OR DESIGNEE SIGNATURE REQUIRED:			
Authorizing VC or designee(Print): _____		Signature: _____	Date: _____

SUPERVISOR AUTHORIZATION SECTION

Please complete the appropriate requirements and sign.

- I have verified employment with Human Resources.
- Employee has a valid driver's license.
- Employee has completed the online test (see above employee section).
- Employee has scheduled van road test with authorized road tester.

By signing this section, you certify that you have reviewed and completed the above requirements.

Supervisor (Print): _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

PRACTICE DRIVING SECTION

Please complete the appropriate requirements and sign.

- Conducted visual overview of van and safe driving techniques.
- Showed vehicle controls and adjustments.
- Explained to employee not to perform maintenance task unless they have received proper training/instruction.
- Monitored employee on campus driving techniques (i.e. backing, two hands on the steering wheel, wide turns, braking, smooth acceleration and general awareness).

By signing this section, you certify that you have reviewed and completed the above requirements.

Road Tester (Print): _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____