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UNC CHARLOTTE

Environmental Health and Safety

VAN CERTIFICATION MANUAL

UNC CHARLOTTE
9201 UNIVERSITY CITY BLVD., CHARLOTTE, NC 28223

Table of Contents

I. Guidelines for Van Drivers	3
II. Getting Familiar with the Van.....	4
III. 15 – Passenger Van Safety Alert.....	6
IV. Safe Driving Guidelines.....	7
V. Examples of Close Calls to Be Aware Of	16
VI. Vehicle Comparisons.....	17
VII. Van Certification Authorization Form.....	18

I. Guidelines for Van Drivers

A. Becoming an Approved Van Driver:

- Must have a valid driver's license and be an employee of UNC Charlotte.
- Must review this self-study van certification manual.
- 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 employee must have the supervisor authorization section completed by their appropriate supervisor. Student employees must also receive their Authorizing Vice Chancellor/designee's signature.
- The authorized road tester will complete the practice driving section of the Van Certification Authorization Form during an on-campus van road test.
- Return the completed Van Certification Authorization Form to the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Office.
- After completing the steps above, a **VAN DRIVER AUTHORIZATION** card will be issued to the employee by the EHS Office.
- The Van Driver Authorization card will expire when the employee separates from employment with the University or as management deems it necessary.
- Refresher training may periodically be required when the Van Driver Authorization card has expired, there is an unsatisfactory driving record, a vehicle incident has occurred, or management deems it necessary.

B. To Obtain Van Keys:

- A Van Driver Authorization card and valid driver's license must be displayed to the University official who dispatches the vehicle.
- The employee must have a completed Van Certification Authorization Form on file with the University EHS Office.

II. Getting Familiar with the Van

- The driver must have their driver's license with them at all times when driving. No License = No Driving
- Walk around the van to 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. 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 desired 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 level (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 shall not be 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 the 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 the feet while driving.
- Remember, the driver is responsible for returning the vehicle back in the condition that it was in when it was checked 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 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 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 the van during the trip. Instructions will be given as to what to do. For all other vans, maintenance and mechanical issues need to be directed to the supervisor at the Facilities Management Automotive shop.

For 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>

III. 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-vehicle 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.

IV. Safe Driving Guidelines

A. Basic Safety

- Drive Defensively - others may not! This includes being constantly alert to possible dangers. Be constantly vigilant! If the following are seen, 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 the foot from the accelerator and be prepared to stop. Anticipate other driver's actions, even if they are inappropriate.
- Learn to COVER THE BRAKE. The foot should be moved from the accelerator and held above the brake pedal. The van will begin to slow down even before the decision to apply the brakes is made. The braking distance and time will be shortened because the need to stop has been anticipated.
- 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 when the driver's attention is focused on things other than the road (i.e. changing the radio station, trying to eat, reading a map, or looking back at the passengers). 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 in a personal vehicle. Adjust the speed for changes in traffic, weather, pedestrians, intersections, or darkness. Always be prepared to stop! The passengers are depending on the driver.
- Obey all state motor vehicle and other applicable laws.
- Stopping at all railroad crossings is **required**. 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 **any** alcohol has been consumed within the previous **8** hours, do not drive the van. This does not simply mean being 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.

Transporting any intoxicating beverages, drugs, or substances in a state-owned vehicle is not allowed.

- Do not fill the gas tank while the engine is running.
- In adverse weather conditions, turn the headlights on. State law requires that if the wipers are operating, then the headlights must be on.
- Do not pick up any hitchhikers.
- The van is **wide**. On narrow roads, or where construction barriers create narrow lanes, slow down, drive in the wider lane if possible, and use extra caution.
- The van is also **longer** than a car. It is necessary to make wider turns than when driving a car. Because the van is so long, the rear wheels tend to track further inside the turn than the front tires. Be careful not to side-swipe objects on the inside of the turn! If swinging out a little wide would be helpful to avoid hitting an object, be very cautious as oncoming traffic may not see the maneuver in time.
- Use the mirrors while turning to stay within the boundaries of the lane and to steer clear of close objects alongside the van. It is especially important to use turn signals. Checking the mirror also assists with seeing other drivers who may mistake a maneuver and try to pass.
- The van is also **heavier** than a 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. Slow down gradually before stopping and be very aware of hazards that would require stopping. This is extremely important when the van is fully loaded with passengers.
- The van is **taller** than a car! Remember this when driving under low underpasses or overhanging roofs. If 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 is a load and/or a strong crosswind. The height of the vehicle can be verified 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.

B. Braking and Stopping Distances

- Use a light foot on the gas. Accelerate slowly and evenly to the desired speed. Accelerating too quickly will require braking to keep the speed under control.
- Maintain at least a 4 second following distance at all speeds. Do not tailgate! Double this distance in poor conditions. In rain and fog, drive at a speed that will allow stopping well within the distance that is seen ahead.
- Use the road to help control speed. Anticipate that an uphill stretch will slow the van and going downhill will add speed, so decrease acceleration before coming over the top and starting to descend the hill.
- Generally, look and plan ahead. Start braking earlier than initially anticipated.
- Constant braking can lead to brake failure. Do not ride the brakes. Use the transmission to help hold the speed down on a long or steep downhill. Slow down and downshift to a lower gear before beginning 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 down shifting to reduce the speed.

C. Passing

- Use extreme caution when passing other vehicles.
- Before pulling out to pass on the interstate or other four lane roads, check mirrors and turn head to look into the van's blind spot on the left side. Signal the intention well in advance.
- Maintain a steady speed while passing and stay in the center of the lane.
- After passing the other vehicle, signal early before returning to the right lane. If the other vehicle can be seen clearly in the rear-view mirror (not the right-side mirror), enough room has been given. 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 involve going into a lane used by oncoming traffic. If a very slow-moving vehicle (such as farm machinery, etc.) is in front, do not try to pass until certain that enough room and sight distance is available to do so safely. Promptly return to the right lane as soon as it is safe.
- Avoid driving in the left lane for extended periods. Faster vehicles will begin to pass on the right, creating difficulties since that side cannot be seen well.

D. Intersections

- When approaching an intersection, always be prepared to stop. If the light is already green, it may change before being able to go through the intersection safely. Slow down; cover the brake to 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 that other drivers in front and behind will know what the intentions are.
- Check the mirrors while turning to check traffic that may have turned as well or may try to merge into a blind spot.

E. Backing

- Always **back in first** upon arriving to a parking spot. There will be a better view of the area that is being backed into. If the van is pulled into the parking spot, backing up would include backing into a blind spot and possibly hitting something.
- When backing or maneuvering out of a tight spot:
 - Walk completely around the van to inspect and ensure that the path is clear, and objects will not be hit.
 - Use the horn to give a short warning honk before beginning to back up.
 - After backing up has begun, stop a few feet into the maneuver to take one more look into the mirrors again, just in case someone or a vehicle has started to go behind the van.
 - If there is someone else in the van, have them to step out acting as a spotter to help direct around posts, cars, or other objects in the path. Be sure to roll down the window so that the spotter can be heard. Make sure the spotter stays safely away from the vehicle and is clearly visible at all times.

- Be sure the spotter does not walk behind the vehicle so that they can be seen at all times. Make sure to communicate clearly with the spotter and that both parties 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 them.
- 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.

F. Pedestrian Safety

- Pedestrians always have the right of way! When spotting pedestrians walking along the street, curb, or getting ready to cross the road, begin slowing down by removing the foot from the accelerator.
- It is a requirement to stop for pedestrians who are in the crosswalk or 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 the van 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 the horn to get the attention of pedestrians who are horse-playing near the path of travel and are not aware of the vehicle or other traffic. However, if the horn is used, do so early enough so that they are not startled.

G. Changing Lanes

- Changing lanes can take a lot of distance. Be constantly aware of traffic and road conditions behind, ahead of, and around the vehicle.
- Check the mirrors frequently to:
 - See where other vehicles are. Has another car moved into the blind spot? Is there a spot to go to if lanes have to be changed quickly?

- Know what is going on around the van; 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.

H. Driving with Passengers

- The **DRIVER** is responsible for the safety of all passengers in the van.
- Every person in the vehicle is required to wear their seatbelt.
- UNC Charlotte vans are **not** allowed to transport more than 15 people. Therefore, **DO NOT ALLOW MORE THAN 14 PASSENGERS** in the vehicle. The driver will make 15.
 - **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 the rear door open.
- Always shut the engine off while passengers are exiting or entering the vehicle.

I. Driving on Long Trips, and Especially Long Nights

- **NOTE: IF PLANNING A LONG TRIP WITH THE CAMPUS VEHICLE, IT IS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO HAVE ANOTHER CERTIFIED VAN DRIVER 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**.

- **DO NOT DRIVE IF 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.

J. Cruise Control

- Some vans are equipped with cruise control. If unfamiliar with cruise control, read the owner's manual before attempting to use it. It is imperative to 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.**

K. 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 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 the 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. It may be necessary to back up to a wider part of the road – use a spotter and unload passengers if deemed it will be safer.
- Consider using the horn on blind curves. At night, the headlights of oncoming vehicles may be seen before meeting them. Proceed with caution by reducing the speed.
- Make U-turns only at safe turnarounds, not in the middle of a narrow road.
- If the transmission can be heard constantly switching in and out of overdrive while driving on hilly terrain, turn the overdrive function **OFF**.

- Turn the overdrive **OFF** if downshifting to control the speed.

L. Use of Roof Racks

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

M. 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 the lights do not 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 the vehicle when pulling a trailer. Allow extra room for changing lanes and turning. Also, allow 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.

N. In Emergencies

- 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 the emergency flashers to alert other drivers.**
- In the event of an accident
 - Contact the nearest law enforcement agency
 - Stay on the scene

- If possible, move vehicles from the road and stay in a safe location
- Offer assistance to the injured
- Exchange information with all involved parties. Be sure to provide name, address, driver license number, registration number and vehicle insurance to local law enforcement agency.
- If possible, take a photo of the accident scene and get contact information of witnesses.
- Contact your department supervisor and UNC Charlotte Police and Public Safety at 704-687-2200 to notify them of the accident.
- Follow any other accident reporting procedures that may be located in the van.

V. 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

VI. Vehicle Comparisons



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

4'6"

15'

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

9'



20'



Shaded Circles 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 the 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: Male 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, I certify that I 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 tasks 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, speed, and general awareness).

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

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