

## **GUIDELINES FOR USE OF 15 PASSENGER VANS TO TRANSPORT YOUTH OR ADULTS DURING EXTENSION PROGRAM DELIVERY**

In the interest of safety for youth and adult participants in Extension programs, the evaluation and regulation of the use of 15-passenger vans is critical. Federal law prohibits the sale of 15-passenger vans for school related transport of high school and younger students. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has issued warnings to users of 15-passenger vans due to increased roll over risks under certain conditions.

Recognizing that vehicles intended for transportation of children and adults participating in county 4-H programs are typically provided by the County or the County Board of Education, the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension recommends the purchase of mini-buses specifically designed to transport young people. The purchase of 15 passenger vans for this purpose is not recommended.

It has been determined that risks increase significantly when vans carry more than 10 passengers. Because of risks involved, it is important that 15-passenger vans are operated by experienced drivers who are familiar with the handling characteristics of these vehicles. Participation in defensive driving courses is recommended where such courses are available.

When a 15-passenger van is used in the delivery of Extension programming, the following guidelines must be followed:

1. Occupancy of 15-passenger vans must be limited to 10 people including the driver.
2. Seatbelts must be worn by all occupants at all times. The number of passengers in the van cannot exceed the number of seat belts available.
3. 15-passenger vans must not be driven over 65 miles per hour.
4. Roof type luggage carriers are not to be added to a 15 passenger van.
5. 15 passenger vans may not be used to tow any type of trailer while transporting minors in the vehicle.
6. Vans are to be driven exclusively by experienced drivers who are licensed according to state law and have in their possession a current and valid driver's license.
7. No alcoholic beverages may be consumed in a van used for University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service program delivery.

These guidelines will apply to all operators (volunteers, county and state employees) of vans carrying participants in Extension programs regardless of the ownership of the vehicle.

If you have questions, please call your District Extension Director.