

DATE: March 15, 2006

TO: All Boards of Education

Directors of Education and Senior Superintendents

FROM: Dave Jackson, Director, Insurance and Risk Management

RE: Use of 15 Passenger Vans

This memorandum is in response to the considerable public attention received by 15 passenger vans in transporting students. A number of school boards have elected to discontinue the use of 15 passenger vans for transporting students because of the increased risk associated with the use of these vehicles.

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association maintains the position that 15 passenger vans are a higher risk vehicle because of difficulty with handling at highway speeds, weight and balance problems, lack of proper driver instruction, and an increased propensity for roll over accidents. Our recommendations when using 15 passenger vans are as follows:

- Driver shall be adults who have driving experience or licensing for large vans;
- Always travel at slower speeds;
- Load to 10 passengers or less ahead of rear wheels;
- Use seat belts at all seating positions;
- Secure luggage.
- Ensure that all of the weight is not in the back.

We have also recommended that transportation policies be created enabling the principal to give approval on behalf of the Board for the teachers, employees and volunteer drivers to transport students within a 15 passenger van. With this approval the driver will be covered under the school board's general liability insurance. Criteria for approval shall include:

- Accordingly, students should not be driving other students.
- Drivers shall have the experience and skills to handle a large van in all expected and unexpected road and weather conditions.
- Verify that the driver has a valid driver's license and has not had serious traffic offences.
- Police criminal record search.
- Student accident insurance shall be in place for all occupants of the vehicle
- Cell-phone or other communication device is required in the vehicle

Ultimately the use of 15 passenger vans is left to the discretion of the school boards. Attached to this document is a number of research papers and articles addressing the risks and problems associated with the use of 15 passenger vans. I trust you will find this information of value to you.

If you have any questions related to the above information please don't hesitate to call.

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