Topics to be Discussed

- University of Maine System Motor Vehicle Policy
- Passenger Van Safety
- Seat Belt Use
- Aggressive Driving
- Cell Phone Use
- Fatigue
- Crash/Near Hit
- Backing
Recognizes that passenger vans and similar type vehicles despite being constructed using sedan or truck type frames, are typically less stable and more difficult to operate in certain conditions.
Definition

- Full-size vans are those designed and manufactured for 10 or more occupants including the driver.
Important Information on the Use of University Vehicles

- University System vehicle use policy applies to all owned, leased, or rented vehicles.
- Refresher training must be completed 3 years after initial.
- No one under 18 years of age is permitted to drive a University vehicle.
- Drivers under the age of 21 are not permitted to drive vehicles that are transporting more than 5 passenger, unless approved to do so.
- University vans are to be used with restrictions, which includes limiting occupants (9 or less), and having all occupants wear seatbelts, and limiting cargo.
Important Information on the Use of University Vehicles

- No animals are allowed in University vehicles, with an exception to service dogs (such as for the visually impaired or hearing impaired).

- No hazardous chemicals, weapons, hazardous waste, or illegal drugs may be transported in University vehicles.

- No driver shall transport a load heavier than the vehicle is designed or rated to carry.
Important Information on the Use of University Vehicles

- All occupants must wear seat belts.
- It is the driver’s responsibility to make sure all passengers wear seat belts.
- The driver should refuse to take any passenger that refuses to wear a seatbelt and may not operate the vehicle if seat belts are not properly fastened by all occupants.
- Passengers should refuse to ride in a vehicle if the driver is not wearing a seat belt.
Important Information on the Use of University Vehicles

- Remember, drivers are personally responsible for fines or citations resulting from their actions.
- For more information, and to view the entire University of Maine System Motor Vehicle Use Policy, please go to: www.maine.edu/system/facMan/vehicleadmin.php
- Or, www.maine.edu/pdf/Revised1-10-08-II-BMotorVehicleAdminin.pdf
Passenger Van Characteristics

- Substantially longer and wider than a car.
- Requires more space and additional reliance on the side mirrors for changing lanes.
- Does not respond as safely to abrupt steering maneuvers.
Passenger Van Characteristics

- Requires additional braking time
  - The more weight you have, the longer it takes to stop
  - The higher the speed you are traveling at, the longer it takes to stop
Following Distance

- Maintain a cushion of safety around the vehicle (no traffic on all sides).
- Drive in the right-hand lane whenever possible.
- Recommended safe following distance is as follows:
  - When weather, road and visibility conditions are good, maintain 4 seconds behind other traffic
  - When weather, road and visibility conditions are bad, maintain at least 6 seconds behind other traffic
Following Distance

- When the vehicle in front of you passes a fixed object (for example, a telephone pole or mailbox), count one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, etc. and you should not pass that same fixed object before the designated count.
Following Distance

- Stay well behind larger commercial vehicles so you can see around them for potential hazards.
- When following in traffic, if you cannot see the other vehicle’s mirrors, you may be in their blind spot; avoid doing so.
Know the “No-Zones”
Wide Right-Hand Turns

Do not get caught in wide right-hand turns!
Mirrors

- Adjust mirrors so that you can barely see the edge of the van in the mirror.
- When changing lanes, always check for blind spots by first leaning forward in your seat to change your sight angle, and then by turning your head.
- Scan mirrors every 3-5 seconds.
- The biggest blind spot is directly behind the vehicle. Avoid backing whenever possible.
Mirrors

RIGHT !!  WRONG !!
Scanning

- Scan ahead 12-15 seconds or 1-2 city blocks.
- Before entering an intersection, scan all directions and cover the brake.
  - Traffic – changing traffic signals, vehicles running red lights or making a right turn on red
  - Pedestrians, bicyclists and animals
  - Trains, school buses
Maneuvering around other vehicles can be dangerous, so ALWAYS leave plenty of space behind the vehicle ahead.

Stop far enough behind the vehicle so that you can see their rear tires and pavement behind the vehicle.
Turn Signals

- Always communicate your intentions by using your turn signals.
- A turn signal must be given continuously during at least the last 100 feet traveled before turning.
 Rotary Driving

- When entering a rotary, remember you have less visibility and less maneuverability.
- Maintain a cushion of safety around the vehicle.
Minimizing Roll Overs

- Slow down and drive cautiously, especially on rural roads.
- Shoulders, ditches and embankments, as well as on and off ramps, create the potential for vehicle roll over.
Reducing the Risk of a Roll Over

- Do not load items on top of the vehicle or tow a trailer.
- Do not overload the vehicle with passengers and/or equipment.
- Passengers should be distributed evenly from side to side for balance and sit towards the front of the vehicle.
Reduce your speed BELOW the speed limit posted for all turns and poor road conditions.

The posted speed limit is safe for cars, NOT passenger vans.

Keep speeds at or below the speed limit.

Do not exceed 60 mph.
If the van’s wheels drop off the roadway, gradually reduce speed and steer back onto the roadway when it is safe to do so. Avoid panic-like steering and hard braking.
The Vehicle

- Always drive with your headlights on to be seen by other traffic.
- Perform pre-trip inspections and notify appropriate person of any vehicle defects.
Van Safety

- Always clean snow, ice and frost from all windows.

- Secure any loose items within the vehicle so they do not cause injuries in a crash. This includes trash that can interfere with the pedals or the operation of the vehicle.

Result of not removing snow and ice from the top of a van.
Positioning

- Recline seat back
- Move seat rearward
- Tilt steering wheel down
- 10 inches away from steering wheel
- ALWAYS wear seat belts
- Avoid panic-like steering by positioning both hands on the steering wheel at 9:00 and 3:00 or 8:00 and 4:00.
  - This also decreases arm fatigue and reduces injuries
- Keep two hands on the steering wheel at all times
Safety Belts

- Safety belts MUST be worn at all times.
- In fatal, single-vehicle roll-overs involving passenger vans over the past decade, 92% of belted occupants survived.
- THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR NOT BUCKLING UP!
Safety Belts

- Pull tightly on the shoulder belt strap so that the lap belt portion is snug over the pelvis and tops of thighs.
- NEVER place the shoulder belt strap behind you or under your arm as this causes traumatic injuries and makes the seat belt less effective.
- If children are to be transported in passenger vans, they should be restrained according to the seat belt law and best practices.
Passengers

- MUST wear seat belts at ALL times.
- Know the van evacuation policy.
- Adhere to the terms of the University Motor Vehicle Use Policies at all times.
- Should NOT use interior lighting when the van is in transit.
- Passengers should sit toward the front of the vehicle and be distributed evenly from side to side.
- Never more than 9 people in a 9-passenger van (Actual number based on available seatbelts).
Passenger Loading/Unloading

- Drivers should use good judgment to decide how, when and where to unload passengers safely.
- Always pick up and drop off passengers so that they do NOT have to cross traffic to get to their destination.
- Keep all passengers away from the front and rear of the vehicle when crossing.
Driver

- MUST wear seat belts at ALL times.
- Know van evacuation policy.
- Ensure all passengers adhere to the terms of the Passenger Van Policy at all times.
- Ensure all doors are locked and passengers are secured in the appropriate seating positions and seat belts.
Driver

- Cell phones are for emergencies only, and are to be used only when the van is safely parked.
- No food, drinks or smoking allowed.
- Reading while driving is prohibited.
- Read maps only when the van is safely parked.
Driver

- Be patient and courteous at all times.
- Road rage is strictly prohibited.
- Your passengers count on you to be cool and keep them safe.
Aggressive Driving

- Aggressive driving puts your life and those of your passengers in danger.
- It also endangers the lives of others on the road.
- Poor driving reflects badly on your organization.
- Aggressive driving is:
  - Passing on the right when it is unsafe / illegal to do so
  - Tailgating
  - Excessive lane changes
  - Blocking traffic so they cannot pass
  - Speeding and making unsafe passes
If Confronted by an Angry Driver

- Do not make eye contact.
- Do not engage in the confrontation.
- If they persist, have a passenger call for emergency help and drive to a police station.
Fatigue

- Drivers must be well rested.
- Signs of fatigue:
  - Excessive yawning and blinking
  - Difficulty focusing and keeping eyes open
  - Inattention and daydreaming
- Only cure for fatigue is to sleep.
  - Stop and rest for 15-30 minutes
  - Longer than 30 minutes is not advisable
Fatigue

- Drivers experience more fatigue between midnight and 6 a.m.
- Be aware that 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. is a time when fatigue is common.
- On long trips, schedule rest stops every two hours.
- Drive during the day, if possible.
- Have someone awake in the front passenger seat.
Weather Conditions

- Check weather conditions prior to any trip.
- Be prepared not to go if conditions are extreme.
- Leave early to avoid making mistakes or becoming anxious.
Crosswinds

- Because of the van’s size and shape, you must be especially mindful of crosswinds.
- Crosswinds can be created by open fields, overpasses and bridges as well as exiting tunnels.
- Crosswinds are also created by larger vehicles and buses.
70% of van crashes involve backing into a stationary object.

Consider alternatives to driving into a place in which you will need to back out. However, if not possible, backing should be done upon arrival at locations rather than when leaving.

Avoid backing as much as possible.
Back to the left for better visibility.

Use outside mirrors to direct you.

- Heads, seats, door posts, vehicle equipment, and greater distance all impede visibility.
- Whenever possible, back out to the left (the driver’s side) for better visibility.
- Use outside mirrors to direct you.
Avoid backing into traffic.

Get out and check the area behind the van before backing.

Turn on four-way flashers and back SLOWLY.

Have a spotter assist you to back ONLY when they understand what is expected of them.

There is a blind spot in front of the van which may prevent operators from seeing children and others of short stature walking in front of the van.

Be aware of van passenger walking in front of the van as they board or exit the vehicle.
Backing

- **Method #1**
  - Use a spotter
  - Coordinate hand signals with that person prior to backing

- **Method #2**
  - After pulling into a spot, place a traffic cone behind your vehicle.
  - When leaving retrieve the cone and look for any hazards or potential hazards prior to backing.
Animals present a hazard to any vehicle, but more so with a passenger van.

Swerving to avoid small animals is dangerous, as it will cause the vehicle to roll over.

Use high beams whenever possible.
Animals

- When you see a deer, there are usually many more to follow.
- Deer eyes reflect the light of oncoming headlights.
- Moose eyes do NOT reflect the light of oncoming headlights.
- Watch the lines on the road ahead of you for animals that may be there.
- Swerve to avoid large animals, but not into oncoming traffic.
Animals

- Crashes with deer can occur anywhere in Maine – even urban areas.
- More frequent in October, November and December.
- Dusk and dawn (4-7 am and 5-10 pm).
- Crashes with moose can occur anywhere in Maine – even urban areas.
- More frequent in May, June and July.
- Nighttime (8 - 11 pm).
Where in Maine are the Moose?
THANK YOU

Campus Environmental Safety & Health
Phone: 780-5406