

Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

Transportation Best Practices, Defensive Driving, and 11-15 (including driver) Passenger Van, Bus, and Shuttle Use

Q – *Can employee or volunteer drivers be used in our school or church programs?*

A – When appropriate, employees and volunteers can be asked to drive on Church business. Often, employee and volunteer drivers are important in allowing the Church to fulfill its ministries.

Q – *What resources are available to help in determining when employee or volunteer drivers should be used?*

A – Catholic Mutual has developed an online training, *Church Transportation: Is It Necessary And Ministry-Based?* that should be viewed by all Church and school personnel involved in the arrangement of transportation. This training can be accessed under the *Driving Administrator* Curriculum on www.CMGconnect.org.

Q – *What can we do to make sure our employee and volunteer drivers are properly trained?*

A – Employee and volunteer drivers should take Catholic Mutual's defensive driving course, *Be Smart – Drive Safe*. This 18 minute training program educates drivers to avoid the seven most common causes of accidents. In addition, each driver completes a short questionnaire to verify they have a valid driver's license and an acceptable driving record. Attached is instructions to access the *Be Smart – Drive Safe* program.

Q - *Is it acceptable to use an 11 – 15 (including driver) passenger van to transport passengers?*

A – No. As early as 2001, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration issued warnings on the serious rollover potential of these types of vans. This led to the federal prohibition of the sale or leasing of these vans to schools by authorized dealerships.

So what should be used?

- A school bus or a Multifunction School Activity Bus (MFSAB).
- A mini-van or a SUV that has a total capacity of no more than 8 people.
- Vehicles that have a rated capacity of 16 or more passengers, such as shuttle buses, must comply with the same safety standards as a multifunction school activity bus.
- Simply removing the seats to reduce the occupant capacity of the vans is not allowed.
- An 11-15 passenger van can be converted for use as a maintenance or cargo van by permanent removal of the seats.

To verify that locations are not utilizing a non-conforming 11 – 15 (including driver) passenger van, bus, or shuttle, Catholic Mutual Group has a short “read only” training, which can be taken at [CMG Connect](http://www.CMGconnect.org) under the *Driving Administrator* Curriculum.