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TO: Agency Administrative Officers
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FROM: Rollie Boeding, Director 
Bureau of State Risk Management

RE: Training Requirements for Dodge Sprinter Passenger Van

It has come to our attention that the procurement of the Dodge Sprinter Passenger van, for the purpose of transporting passengers, will become an option for agencies in the near future.

As you know, there are specific training requirements for 12/15 passenger vans prior to becoming an authorized driver. **Please note that the same training requirements and courses will be applicable to the Dodge Sprinter Passenger vans regardless of passenger capacity.**

The Dodge Sprinter is a new vehicle for which safety statistics are not yet available, but the length, width and height of these vehicles would appear to present a risk exposure similar to 12/15 passenger vans. So until such time that it can be determined that special training is not essential, it is mandatory that all authorized drivers comply with the 12/15 passenger driver training requirements. The training course must be completed prior to being designated as an authorized driver of the Dodge Sprinter Passenger Van. Although highly recommended, the Sprinter Cargo van does not require this training.

Attached are the specifics on the basic classroom training and behind the wheel training. Online registration is available on the Department of Administration's website, www.doa.state.wi.us; choose training from the navigation bar.

Any questions regarding this matter should be directed to John Vick, Property and Liability Manager, at (608) 266-0168 or John.Vick@Wisconsin.Gov.

Basic Classroom Training

Minimum of 100 minutes, with a classroom test at the end that must be passed before the student can participate in behind-the-wheel training. Class size should be six to eight students.

The classroom curriculum should include the following, many of which are addressed in the owner's manual for a 15-passenger van:

- Defensive driving skills
- Speed management – 3 second rule
- Speed illusion
- Extreme driving conditions – ice/snow/rain/wind
- Center of gravity – weight distribution
- Space management
- Turning radius
- Lane changes
- Parking
- Backing
- Loading/unloading – seating of passengers – mandatory seatbelt use for all occupants at all times
- Hazard perception
- Emergency maneuvers
- Animal hazards
- Over steering
- Braking – ABS or not – distance needed to stop
- Off-road recovery
- Skid control & recovery
- Pre-trip checks, including tire maintenance guidelines, lights, horn, windshield wipers & washer fluid, oil, mirrors, seatbelts
- Passenger safety/protection – flares, fire extinguisher
- Driver/passenger relationships – driver distractions
- Roadside maintenance
- Night operations
- Blind spots - visibility – using mirrors
- Railroad crossings
- Lights on for safety
- Statistics (NHTSA 'Characteristics of Fatal Rollover Crashes' Technical Report)
- NHTSA's 'Reducing the Risk of Rollover Crashes in 15-Passenger Vans'

Behind-the-wheel Training

BTW class size should be six to eight students. Minimum of 30 minutes driving time behind the wheel for each student in varied traffic situations in a group setting. Each student should exhibit competency in van driving skills, including the following:

- Highway speeds
- Emergency braking
- Tracking differences – turning/backing
- Parking – backing
- Lack of visibility – lane change, turns
- Height of vehicle – speed sense
- On/off ramps (including a 180 degree ramp)

Understanding the handling dynamics of a 12/15 passenger van is an important aspect of becoming a certified van driver. Being a passenger in the back of the van will provide the trainees a better understanding of the handling dynamics. Therefore, all but the driver and instructor will be seated in the rearmost seats of the van during behind-the-wheel training while on the road.