

A white van is parked on a paved surface in front of a brick building. The van is viewed from a front-quarter angle. The text "Van Certification Training Manual" is overlaid in large, bold, green letters across the center of the image.

# Van Certification Training Manual

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHARLOTTE**  
**ORIENTATION AND GUIDELINES FOR VAN DRIVERS**



**Becoming an “Approved” Van Driver:**

- You must have a valid driver’s license. Make a copy of your license on the Van Driver Authorization Form. Complete the information on the form and turn it into the approved tester. This form will be kept on file with your supervisor and UNC Charlotte Safety Office.
- Only paid University employees may operate vehicles.
- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Use of state owned vehicles by student employees requires authorization by the appropriate Vice Chancellor, Dean, Department Chair or Director (See University Policy Statement #74).
- Read and become familiar with the UNC Charlotte “Van Certification Driving Manual”.
- Successfully pass a written exam on van driving procedures at the Safety Office in the King Building. To pass a written exam you must have no more than four (4) incorrect answers. An approved tester will review the incorrect answers making sure you understand the correct one.
- For those planning to drive a Venture vehicle with a trailer, a practice drive with the vehicle and trailer will be made prior to driving the vehicle loaded with passengers while pulling a trailer.
- Drivers will complete the National Safety Council’s “Coaching the Vehicle Driver II” defensive driving course video.
- Complete a driving practice test on campus with an approved tester. The tester will ask that the driver go through all the procedures for preparation and explain safety tips during the drive.
- After completing all the steps above, you will be issued a [VAN DRIVER AUTHORIZATION](#) card by the Safety Office.
- **Driving record requirements to obtain or maintain approval.** License record checks will be conducted annually.
  - No more than 1 conviction for a moving violation or of a moving violation that was the proximate cause of an accident within past 12 months.
  - No convictions of reckless driving or of speeding in excess of 15 mph above the posted limit within past 12 months.
  - No suspension of driving privileges in the last 2 years due to a moving violation (a suspension for failure to appear does not count).
  - No convictions of DWI in the last 5 years.

- Shall have a driving record that in its overall character arouses no serious question about the reliability, judgment, or emotional stability of the applicant.
- The Venture Director may make exceptions to this policy based on individual’s driving history or special needs.

## POLICIES FOR DRIVING VENTURE VEHICLES

The Venture vehicles are only to be used for official University business. The primary usage is to support the Venture program; however, when available, vehicles may be used for Cone Center business as well. Other usage would require special permission of the Venture Director or Associate Director. Operation of these vehicles must be made in full compliance with applicable campus ordinances and state laws. The Venture Director is responsible for ensuring that any group planning to use the Venture vehicles understands that only those individuals who have become an “approved” University vehicle driver may operate the vehicles.

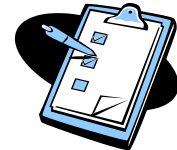


### To Obtain Van Keys:

- You must have a Van Driver Authorization card and a valid driver’s license to drive a University vehicle.
- You must have on file with University Safety Office a completed and approved Van Driver Authorization form and Testing Record.

### Getting Familiar with the Van

Properly fill out the “Van Safety Check Sheet” for each trip. This sheet should be in all the van books. Make sure that the credit cards are in the van book.



- You must have your driver’s license with you at all times when driving.  
No License – No Driving
- Walk around the van and do a quick visual inspection of the *exterior* of the van looking for any dents, checking tires, lights, etc
- ***(NOTE): Properly inflated tires and tire tread are very important for the safe handling of the vehicle. Please check out the tires thoroughly and bring any concerns to the attention of the Motor Fleet Representative or appropriate department staff before proceeding.***
- Visually check to be sure that all seats are locked to their floor brackets, and that there are enough functioning seat belts for all passengers. Each person is required to wear a seat belt.
- Adjust the seat, mirrors, and tilt steering wheel to your comfort before driving. Do not adjust the tilt steering or the seat position while the van is moving.
- Most UNC Charlotte vans use 87 octane unleaded gas. Check the gas or diesel fuel (in both tanks if van is so equipped). There are three places to verify what type of fuel is needed:



1. Instrument Panel
2. Fuel Tank Opening
3. Van Manual



- Make sure the van is in proper running condition. Test the efficiency of the vehicle equipment to ensure it works, i.e., the horn, windshield wipers, headlights, brake lights, reverse lights, emergency flashers, turn signals, doors, brakes, instrument panel, etc. Report any problems to the Venture Assistant Director in writing immediately after return from trip. If the van is not in proper running condition, it may be not used.
- Record the starting and ending mileage on the Van Safety Check Sheet or Trip Tickets for Motor Fleet customers.
- All UNC Charlotte vehicles must be used for business purposes only. Any personal or unauthorized use of UNC Charlotte vehicles is prohibited. For those campus vehicles which are supplied a credit card any use other than the intended purpose of fueling the van is against UNC Charlotte policy.



- It is the personal responsibility of all drivers to report in writing all convictions for moving traffic violations in writing within 48 hours to the Departmental Van Administrator whether conviction resulted from driving a van or any other public or private vehicle. Conviction may result in suspension of UNC Charlotte van driving privileges.
- Keep the van locked when no one is with it to avoid having the credit cards or other items stolen. In addition to locking all doors, it is essential that all window latches are secured.
- Clean trash from the van at the beginning and end of each trip. Keep the van in clean condition to eliminate any trash that may roll up under your feet while driving.
- Make sure that the first aid kit, tool kit, jumper cables and backboard are in the vehicle.
- Remember, YOU are responsible for returning this vehicle back in the condition it was in when you checked it out. This includes any damage to the van, any trash, or any item that is kept with vehicle.
- During the initial driving test each driver will be shown the important items under the hood of the vehicle, e.g., oil, battery, radiator reservoir, hoses, etc.
- UNC Charlotte vans use 10W-30 weight oil. Check the oil level at every gas stop, when the pressure gauge indicates low pressure, or when the oil warning light comes on. Do not continue to drive if the oil light comes on, stop immediately and check the oil.
- Check the water level in the radiator reservoir and add water and/or anti-freeze if low. CAUTION - Do not attempt to open the cap of the radiator if the engine is hot. Steam release can cause serious burns.
- Consistently check the vehicle's instrument panel and observe how the vehicle handles while driving. If anything out of the ordinary like noises, odors, brakes, or if you suspect that the vehicle is not handling properly, stop as soon as possible and investigate.
- Motor Fleet van customers should contact the Motor Fleet Representative (704 687-2639) if any mechanical issues arise with your van during the trip. You will be instructed as to what to do. For all other vans, maintenance and mechanical issues need to be directed to the Automotive Supervisor at the Physical Plant through the Venture Assistant Director.

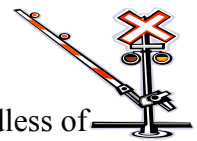


- The questions addressing claims arising from accidents involving all vehicles operated on University business please refer to the following policy - <http://www.legal.uncc.edu/mvins.pdf>.

## SAFE DRIVING GUIDELINES

### Basic Safety

- Drive Defensively - others may not! This includes being constantly alert to possible dangers. Be constantly vigilant! If you see flashing lights, vehicles ahead with brake lights on, children or animals near the roadway, cars getting ready to pull out of side streets or driveways, or traffic lights that may be about to change, prepare to brake by removing your foot from the accelerator and be prepared to stop. Anticipate other driver's actions, even if they are inappropriate.
- Learn to COVER THE BRAKE. Move your foot from the accelerator and hold it above the brake pedal. The van will begin to slow even before you decide that you really do need to apply the brakes. Your braking distance and time will be shortened because you are anticipating the need to stop
- Do not leave the driver's seat while the engine is running. The emergency brake should always be set when leaving the vehicle.
- Drive with both hands on the wheel. This is especially important in heavy traffic, bad weather or winding roads.
- Do not rush! Do not drive while distracted. Accidents are more likely when the driver is rushing to meet a schedule, or the driver's attention is focused on things other than the road. (For example: changing the radio station, trying to eat, reading a map, or looking back at the passengers adjusting). It is a good idea to have the person riding shotgun assist in navigating, adjust the radio, etc. It is more important to arrive safely that to be there on time. Driving safely take priority over schedule problems at all times.
- Do not exceed posted speed limits. Drive slower and more carefully than you would in your in own vehicle. Adjust your speed for changes in traffic, weather, pedestrians, intersections, or darkness. Always be prepared to stop! You have passengers who are depending on you.
- Obey all state Motor Vehicle and other applicable laws.
- You are required to **stop** at all railroad crossings and look both ways regardless of whether the arm is down or the signals are flashing. It is against the law to go around any railroad crossing arm gate or any other activated warning device.
- If you have consumed *any* alcohol in the previous **8** hours, do not drive the van. This does not simply mean you must be below the legal blood alcohol limit. This means *any* amount of alcohol. The same is also true for any drugs, prescription or non-prescription that can affect one's driving ability. You are not allowed to transport any intoxicating beverages, drugs or substances in a state-owned vehicle.
- Do not fill the gas tank while the engine is running.



- In adverse weather conditions, turn your headlights on. State law requires that if your wipers are operating, then your headlights must be on.
- Do not pick up any hitchhikers.
- The van is **wide**. On narrow roads, or where construction barriers create narrow lanes, you will need to slow down, drive in the wider lane if possible, and use extra caution.
- The van is also **longer** than your car. It is necessary to make wider turns than you would in a car. Because the van is so long, the rear wheels tend to track further inside the turn than your front tires. Be careful not to side-swipe objects on the inside of the turn! If you have to swing a little wide to avoid hitting an object, be very cautious because oncoming traffic may not see your maneuver in time.
- Use your mirrors as you turn to help you see where you are relative to the boundaries of your lane and how close you are to objects alongside the van. Checking the mirrors also helps you to see other drivers who may mistake your maneuver and try to pass you. It is also important to use your turn signals.
- Realize that the mirrors on the passenger side distort distances. Compare where the end of the vehicle appears to be with other vehicles when deciding whether to change lanes, etc. It is usually a good idea to turn your head, to look for other vehicles directly.
- The van is also **heavier** than your car! It will take more time and distance to stop the van. Vans respond differently from regular passenger vehicles in the sense that they do not accelerate as rapidly or stop as rapidly. You will need to slow down gradually before you stop and be very aware of hazards that will require you to stop. This is extremely important when the van is fully loaded with passengers, carrying cargo on the roof rack, or pulling a trailer. Don't tailgate; allow extra stopping space.
- The van is **taller** than your car! Remember this when driving under low underpasses or overhanging roofs (like parking decks, gas stations, carports, signs, tree limbs, etc.) If you are unsure whether the van will fit under an underpass or overhang, do not take a chance. Go around the obstacle or take another route. The van's height also causes it to sway from side to side more than a car, especially when there's a load and/or a strong crosswind. You can verify the height of the vehicle by looking inside the driver's door at the latch or door post.
- Be aware of the blind spots associated with driving a larger vehicle. That is why constantly using the mirrors is important. Take note of the insert on **page 19**. The diagram depicts some of the blind spots associated with driving the van.



### **Braking and Stopping Distances**

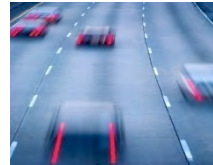
- Use a light foot on the gas. Accelerate slowly and evenly to your desired speed. Accelerating too quickly will require braking to keep your speed under control.
- Maintain at least a 4 second following distance at all speeds. Don't tailgate! Double this distance in poor conditions. In rain and fog, drive at a speed that will allow you to stop well within the distance you can see ahead.

- Use the road to help control your speed. Anticipate that an uphill stretch will slow the van and going downhill will add speed so you need to let up on the gas before you come over the top and start to descend.
- Generally look and plan ahead. Start braking earlier than you think you need to.
- Constant braking can lead to brake failure. Do not ride your brakes. Use the transmission to help hold your speed down on a long or steep downhill. Slow down and downshift to a lower gear before you begin to descend. You should be able feel the braking effects. Turn off Overdrive Button (to the left of the steering wheel in the Dodge van) so the OFF light is lit when using a lower gear to reduce your speed.
- During severe braking conditions, particularly with changing road surfaces, such as ice to concrete, a slight drop or minor pulsation may be felt in the brake pedal. This is the Anti-Lock Brake System (ABS) functioning properly. Continue to apply constant pressure.



### Passing

- Use extreme caution when passing other vehicles.
- On the interstate or other four lanes roads:



Before pulling out to pass, check your mirrors and turn your head and look into the van's blind spot on the left side. Signal your intention well in advance. North Carolina's law allows you to honk as you begin to pass. This obligates the other driver to help you pass safely.

- Maintain a steady speed while passing, and stay in the center of your lane.
- After you have passed the other vehicle, signal early before returning to the right lane. You will know you have given the other vehicle enough room when you can see him clearly in your rear view mirror (not the right side mirror). You may ask for a visual check by a passenger before pulling back to the right lane. More room will be needed if you are pulling a trailer.
- Try to avoid passing on two lane roads, or any time passing will take you into a lane used by oncoming traffic. If you find yourself behind a very slow moving vehicle (such as farm machinery, etc.), do not try to pass until you are certain you have enough room and sight distance to do so safely. Of course you should promptly return to the right lane as soon as you can do so safely.
- Avoid driving in the left lane for extended periods. Faster vehicles will begin to pass you on the right, creating difficulties for you since you cannot see well on that side. Traveling alongside another vehicle reduces your ability to maneuver – you will have no where to go if you need to change lanes quickly.



## Intersections

- When approaching an intersection always be prepared to stop. If the light is already green, it may change before you can safely go through the intersection. Slow down; cover your brake so you can come to a slow, gradual stop if the light does change.
- If the light is still green look **Left – Right** and then **Left** again to ensure all traffic has stopped. Proceed with caution!
- Never change lanes in or around an intersection.
- Watch for pedestrians in or about to enter the crosswalk. When stopping at an intersection, stay stopped behind the crosswalk.
- When turning left or right at an intersection, give the appropriate turn signal early enough so other drivers in front and behind you know what your intentions are.
- Check your mirrors while you turn to check traffic that may have turned with you or may try to merge into your blind spot.

## Backing

- Always **back in first** when you arrive at your parking spot. You will have a better view of the area you are backing into. If you nose into a spot and have to back out, then you will be backing into your blind spot and may hit something.
- If you have to back or maneuver out of a tight spot:
  - Walk completely around the van to inspect and ensure that everything is clear in your path and you are certain that you will not hit anything.
  - Use your horn to give a short warning honk before you begin to back up.
  - After you begin your backing, stop a few feet into your maneuver to take one more look in the mirrors again, just in case someone or some vehicle has started to go behind you.
  - If there is someone else in the van with you, have them get out acting as a spotter to direct you around posts, cars, or other objects in your path. Be sure to roll down your window so that you can hear the spotter. Make sure the spotter stays safely away from the vehicle and is clearly visible to you at all times.
  - Be sure the spotter does not walk behind the vehicle so that you see them at all times. Make sure you and the spotter communicate clearly and you both understand the hand signals for stop, slow, and turn. Make sure the spotter is aware of the hazards and does not lose sight of the possible dangers of surrounding traffic that may involve him/her.
  - Remember, the van is longer than most cars and may extend beyond the rear wheels, so the bumper may make contact with an object before the rear tires stop against the curb.





## Pedestrian Safety

- Pedestrians always have the right of way! As you spot pedestrians walking along the street, curb or getting ready to cross the road, begin slowing down by taking your foot off the accelerator.
- You are required to stop for pedestrians who are in the crosswalk or are about to enter the crosswalk.
- Be on the alert for pedestrian traffic and activity around parking lots, restaurants, college campuses and events. Pedestrians can be hidden behind cars, trucks, and buildings. Small children can dart out in front of you suddenly.
- Do not expect pedestrians to always use a designated crosswalk.
- Always stop behind the crosswalk, clearly designated as such, or imaginary. Do not proceed until each person has cleared the crosswalk. Look in both directions before proceeding.
- Do not hesitate to blow your horn to get the attention of pedestrians who are horse-playing near your path of travel and are not aware of your vehicle or other traffic. However, if you do use your horn, do so early enough that you do not startle them.

## Changing Lanes

- Changing lanes can take a lot of distance. You will need to be constantly aware of traffic and road conditions behind, ahead of, and around your vehicle.
- Check your mirrors frequently to:
  - See where other vehicles are. Has another car moved into your blind spot?
  - Do you know where you can go if you have to change lanes quickly?
  - Know what is going on around you, and look far enough ahead (12 to 15 seconds, or ¼ mile at 60 mph) to be ready to deal with up coming road or traffic problems.

## Driving With Passengers



- **Smoking and/or consumption of alcohol is prohibited in all UNC Charlotte vehicles.**



- YOU, the driver, are responsible for the safety of all passengers in the van.
- Every person in the vehicle is required to wear their seat belt.
- It is expected that all drivers and passengers obey all applicable state and motor vehicle laws. North Carolina State law requires that all passengers must wear seatbelts in state owned vehicles.
- Generally, Venture vans are equipped to transport only 11 people, including the driver. The suburban can carry 9 total people. Do not allow more than this number to travel in the vehicle. With approval of the Venture Director, a van can be used to carry 15 passengers if the rear seat is installed.
- Vehicles are less likely to roll over if most of the weight is towards the front. If you are going to have a full vehicle, ask larger/heavier people to sit closer to the front. If the

vehicle is not full, ask people to sit towards the front and especially in front of the rear axle.

- It is expected that all drivers and passengers obey all applicable state and motor vehicle laws.
- Drive in such a way to help instill confidence in your passengers. Especially on curvy roads, the back of the vehicle can feel like a roller coaster. Slow down and try to take curves as smoothly as possible. Try not to do lots of accelerating and then braking, especially on hilly or curvy roads, but rather use a more mellow style.
- The driver should not allow any horseplay that might lead to an injury or distract the driver.
- Never drive with rear door windows open, since exhaust fumes will be drawn into the van.
- Always shut the engine off while passengers are exiting or entering the vehicle.

### **Driving on Long Trips and Especially Long Nights**

- Venture requires that there be at least two certified drivers on a trip and at least three certified drivers if two vehicles are on that trip. For trip longer than 4 hours (200 miles), additional drivers should be available.
- Safe driving requires concentration and can be tiring. Change drivers every 3-4 hours to avoid driver fatigue. If the current driver is having trouble keeping their eyes open, or is feeling particularly tired, they should pull over at the first safe spot and change drivers. If all approved drivers in the van are too tired to continue driving, then **STOP** and **REST**.
- **DON'T DRIVE WHEN YOU SUSPECT YOU MAY BE TOO TIRED TO DO SO SAFELY. Remember that driving while drowsy is as dangerous as driving while impaired.**
- On long trips, especially when driving at night, the front seat passenger must stay awake to help keep the driver alert and to assist the driver with navigation and passing and to help the driver stay alert with lively conversation.

### **Overdrive**

- In most cases you will drive with overdrive on (button is to the left of the steering wheel in the Dodge van). The "OFF" light should not be lit.
- You would want overdrive button OFF if the vehicle were constantly switching into overdrive (you can hear the engine switching back and forth), which can happen in mountainous areas, at high elevations or with heavy loads. Generally you shouldn't use overdrive whenever you're pulling a loaded trailer in hilly terrain or on any uphill slopes.
- Do not use Overdrive (turn it OFF) when using the transmission to hold down speeds when coming down hills.

## **Cruise Control**

- The Venture vehicles are equipped with cruise control. If you are not familiar with cruise control, read the owner's manual before attempting to use it. It is imperative that you pay full attention to the road when the cruise control is on. Cruise Control is **not** an auto pilot!
- **Do Not Use Cruise Control on Slippery Roads, Winding or Unpaved Roads, in Heavy Traffic, on City Streets, when you see potential problems on the roadway ahead, or if you are sleepy.**

## **Driving on Unpaved Roads**

- Do not exceed 20-25 mph, or less if the conditions warrant it, on narrow unpaved roads. Use 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> gear, as needed.
- Braking is tricky on gravel and dirt since the van can skid easily. Consider using a lower gear to reduce your speed and save the brakes.
- Lookout for washboards (tightly spaced ripples) in the road surface. These can cause the van to “float” off the road.
- It is best to drive in the center of an unpaved road when visibility is adequate, except when entering a sharp turn or being approached by another vehicle; shoulders can be very unstable and may give way under your van.
- When being approached by another vehicle on a narrow dirt road, move slightly to the right and stop. Give the other driver a chance to decide what to do. Do not hurry! Be careful not to pull off onto an unstable shoulder, especially near a steep drop-off. You may need to back up to a wider part of the road – use a spotter and unload passengers if you feel this will be safer.
- Consider using the horn on blind curves. At night, you may see the headlights of oncoming vehicles before you meet them. Flash your own lights on high, then back to low quickly, before you enter the sharp curve. This will let them know you are in the curve. Proceed with caution by reducing your speed.
- Make U-turns only at safe turnarounds, not in the middle of a narrow road.
- Avoid impassable jeep trails. The vehicles are not designed for them.
- If you can hear the transmission constantly switching in and out of overdrive while driving on hilly terrain, turn the overdrive function OFF.
- Turn the Overdrive OFF if you downshift to control your speed.



## **Driving on Icy or Snowy Roads** *(added 9/08)*

- Break and change speeds and make turns slowly.
- Keep a much long traveling distance from the vehicle in front of you.
- Pump brakes slowly and GENTLY
- If you skid turn in the direction of the skid.

- Install chains if will be on snowy, icy roads for any significant period of time.
- See page 17 of this manual for directions on installing chains.

### **Loading Vehicles**

- The driver is responsible for the security of the load in or on the vehicle. This means that while you are driving, if any item should come loose and cause damage or injury to individuals in the vehicle or to other vehicles or people, you are responsible.
- It is best to arrange gear in the vehicle in such a way that it cannot easily slide around or slide forward if you were to suddenly stop.
- The vehicle should never be loaded whether with passengers and or equipment such that the Vehicle Capacity Weight (VCW) is exceeded.
- Try to avoid standing on the vehicle roof because it can dent the roof.

### **Use of Roof Racks (for transporting stove fuel or the Nootka Outfitter Sea Kayak)**

- The driver is responsible for the security of the load on the roof. This means that if any items should come loose and cause damage or injury to other vehicles or people while you are driving, you can be cited.
- Gain access to the rack by using the ladder on the rear of the vehicle. Do not climb on doors, windows or front hood.
- For the kayak, there should be at least three racks (one in the front, middle and back of the vehicles roof), with mini cell foam padding and sea kayak foam blocks attached.
- For transporting stove fuel, only the rear rack is needed. After placing the fuel in the tool box that has ventilation holes in it, strap the box to the rack. *(Added 9/08)*
- Falling off the vehicle while trying to load the rack is a major concern. It is safest to stand on the rack, and bend at the knees to reach down to get the bow grab loop. The easiest method for loading this boat is to back the vehicle up to the loading dock. Have two staff on the roof rack and have at least four people on the dock to lift the boat up to the rack. Once the bow of the boat is on the back rack, the two staff on the rack can then pull the boat forward along the other racks.
- Do not stand on the vehicle roof it causes dents. Stand on the rack.
- Use either rope or boat tie-down straps to secure the boat to the roof rack. Rope and tie-down straps should be placed as close to the bulkheads as possible. **Use caution** when tightening straps because the boat can crack under too much pressure. In addition to straps across the boat, bow and stern lines need to be used.
- Check for loose ropes/straps at each major stop and secure them.
- When the rack is unloaded, remove all straps and ropes.
- Obviously, do not drive with people on the rack, roof or ladder.

## Towing a Trailer

- **Motor Fleet leased vans** are not allowed to have any towing devices attached, nor are the seats to be removed. (this does NOT pertain to Venture vehicles)
- When hooking the trailer to the van, make sure the ball makes a good connection with the trailer hitch, lock the hitch down, secure the hitch with the safety pin or bolt, and connect the safety chains. The safety chains should be crossed, passing under the tongue, so that if the ball becomes disengaged, the trailer will be supported by the chains. *(Added 9/08)*
- Check the trailer light to see that turn signals, flashers, brake lights and running lights function properly. If they do not work, try cleaning and repositioning the plug. Notify the appropriate departmental staff if you cannot get the lights to work.
- Make sure all items on the trailer are secure.
- When pulling a trailer, it is even more important to take wide turns to avoid sideswiping things on the inside of the turn.
- At every gas stop, meal stop and change of drivers, check the trailer hitch, lighting connection and security of items on the trailer. Also check the wheel hubs by wiggling the wheel. If the wheel moves from side to side easily you may need to find a mechanic to get the hub replaced.
- Remember to allow for the added length of your vehicle when pulling a trailer. Allow extra room for changing lanes and turning. You should also allow yourself more following distance, since the van is now heavier and longer, and will need more room to stop.
- Backing a trailer takes practice. Improper backing can push the trailer tongue against the bumper and damage the hitch and the bumper. If you don't have experience and confidence in your ability to back the trailer, you should consider disconnecting the trailer, maneuvering it into the desired position using passengers, and then reconnect it to the van. Be very careful when unhooking the trailer if you are on a hill/slope.



## In Emergencies

Follow instructions on *UNC Charlotte Accident Reporting*.  
*Notify the appropriate departmental staff.*

- Do not continue to operate a vehicle that is unsafe.
- Use initiative to correct safety hazards in safe locations **off the highway or at a service station if at all possible**. *Use your emergency flashers to alert other drivers.*
- If the brakes do not seem to be working well, refer to your van operation manual. Some vans have self adjusting brakes. Check fluid and pump brakes. If they are still not safe, find a safe area to pull off the road and make alternate arrangements for passenger transport.
- In case of an accident, stay on the scene until the local authority arrives (police). Get the names of all people involved in the accident. Get names, addresses, phone numbers, driver's license and insurance information from the other driver(s) and provide this

information about you to them. Get names and phone numbers of witnesses. Draw a diagram of the accident scene and what was happening just before and at the moment of the accident.

- If you have a flat tire, it is strongly suggested that you refer to the vehicle manual as to best jacking locations, etc. Get well off the road, engage the parking brakes, chock the wheels, and do not climb under the vehicle when it is on the jack. In other words - BE CAREFUL. If you can do so safely, remove passengers from the vehicle to a safe location away from traffic.
- If the vehicle goes off the road, do not endanger passengers by trying to push a vehicle back on the road.
- In any accident or mishap that will require repairs to the van, a police report must be done by the local police or campus police. Obtain a copy of the police report and submit it immediately to the appropriate departmental staff for insurance purposes.
- In an accident or mishap that involves personal injury you must:
  - Call the Local Police or Authority (911)
  - Call Campus Police at (704) 687 -2200 as soon as possible and inform them of details. Make sure you give them complete and accurate information and a phone where you can be reached in case additional information is needed.
  - Contact the appropriate departmental staff yourself or through Campus information is needed. Police. Activate “Venture Emergency Procedures.”
  - Follow accident reporting procedures located in the van clipboard.
- Do not attempt to assess blame.
- Do not make statements to the press. Please refer them to the office of Public Relations at the University.
- Mechanical breakdowns:
  - It is best to avoid these. We schedule regular maintenance checks at the physical plant, we check fluids prior to trips, and we want you to report minor problems or strange sounds, etc. so they can be repaired before they become major.
  - When breakdowns happen you need to consider the safety of staff and participants, logistics for getting the participants to the trip site and back to campus, and logistics for getting the vehicle running again. Safety comes first.
  - For tire repairs and minor mechanical problems (probably less than \$100) it is okay to have the work done at a service station for which you can charge repairs to the Voyager Card.
  - For major mechanical failures (greater than \$100) or if vehicle will not run:
    - Call a Venture core staff or call campus police and ask them to contact one of the core staff.
    - You will need to provide to campus police:
      1. License number of vehicle.
      2. Apparent problem.



3. Location of disabled vehicle.
  4. Telephone number for a return call (if necessary)
- One option if fairly close to Charlotte, is to abandon the vehicle:
    1. Arrange for pick up of group.
    2. Afterwards we can arrange for the Facilities Management to deal with vehicle.
  - Second option, if far away is to have vehicle towed:
    1. Tow to the nearest dealership if possible.
    2. Request estimate for repairs.
    3. It may be best to make arrangements for the repair company to contact the university (during business hours at 704-687-2154 or 2122 or 2150) and let the Automotive Shop make decisions and handle Purchase Orders.
    4. For either towing or repair, if they will accept future payment by Purchase Order from the university; obtain necessary info and arrange for purchase order on next appropriate business day.
    5. If a purchase order will not work, pay with personal credit card, get receipt, and arrange for reimbursement on next appropriate business day.
  - Options on how to transport the participants if the vehicle is disabled:
    1. Arrange for someone from Venture to rendezvous with you with another vehicle to pick everyone up.
    2. Arrange for a rental vehicle from a local rental company. For payment see section above, #s 4 and 5. Rental companies will often deliver a rental vehicle to your location.
    3. Asking others for assistance may be an option but you need to consider the additional risks associated with this. In general, it is probably not a good idea to transport the entire group in strangers' vehicles. Stay in groups or at least pairs if accepting rides or walking along a roadway.
    4. Often it is best to stop and take time to consider the best options. The "down time" of waiting for alternative transportation can be used for team development. It may be appropriate to stay in a motel while waiting for a safe option. Be open to alternative activities for a day or two if necessary- urban adventure, explore the town you are stuck in, do team building activities, etc.

### **VEHICLE ORIENTATION:**

- **Starting vehicles**
  - When starting vehicles, transmission should be in Park, your foot should be on the brake, and the lights and other accessories should be turned off.
  - Turn the key to ON and make sure all the warning lights work.
  - To start vehicles: do not touch the accelerator since it is fuel injected, just turn the key. If after 2 or 3 tries if it doesn't start, turn key to OFF, wait 2 minutes, then push the accelerator to the floor and hold it there, turn the key to start. When it starts, release the key and then release the accelerator gradually as the engine speeds up. If still doesn't start, check owner's manual for checking the fuel pump shut off switch.

- Do not keep the key in START position for more than 15 seconds at a time.\
- Always have the relief driver carry a spare key.
- **Engine Compartment (raise hood)**
  - Oil Dipstick: Check at all fuel stops.
  - Brake fluid: Check before long trips.
  - Coolant tank: Check before long trips.
  - Transmission Fluid Dipstick: Check before long trips.
- **Rear Compartment**
  - Spare tire. See page 190 of the van manual for more details.
  - Jack and lug wrench.
  - Tire chains, if available.
  - Spare boat trailer hub (if taking trailer)
- **Tires**

Properly maintained tires improve the steering, stopping, traction, and load-carrying capability of your vehicle. Under inflated tires and overloaded vehicles are a major cause of tire failure.

  - Make sure tires have proper inflation (usually 60 lb. of air pressure.)
  - Check tire pressure regularly (at least once a month), including the spare.
  - Inspect tires for uneven wear patterns on the tread, cracks, foreign objects, or other signs of wear or trauma. Remove bits of glass and other foreign objects wedged in the tread.
  - Make sure your tire valves have valve caps.
  - Check tire pressure before going on any trip.
  - Do not overload the vehicle. Check the tire information placard or owner's manual for the maximum recommended load for the vehicle.
  - If you are towing a trailer, remember that some of the weight of the loaded trailer is transferred to the towing vehicle.
- **Inside Vehicle**
  - Backboard under seats for all Venture trips and programs at Team Challenge Course and High Team Challenge Course.
  - Toolbox. Jumper Cables. Oil.
  - Trauma first aid kit.
- **Dashboard**
  - Fuse panel under dash.
  - Moneybag containing credit cards, registration, vehicle manuals.
  - Ice scrapers, paper towels, and dry gas (in winter) in front door pockets.



- When using the air conditioner, it takes less energy on MAX than on Normal. The difference is MAX uses re-circulated air and Normal uses outside air.
- **Tire Chains *(added 9/08)***
  - Should be put on the rear tires if traveling on snow or ice. Driving speed must be decreased when traveling with chains.
  - To install chains:
    - a. Park vehicle in a safe location out of the way of traffic
    - b. Lay chains flat on ground of each side is parallel and no twists in the links
    - c. Drape the chain over the tire keeping the fixed (J) hook on the inside. The keeper link goes on outside.
    - d. Reach behind tire and attach J hooks. Pull the slack towards the outside. Depending on the fit, you may want to attach the J hooks into the 2, or 3 link from the end.
    - e. Drive about 2 feet forward and pull rest of slack towards outside. Insert lever fasteners on outside and pivot the fasteners back on themselves and fasten under keeper links.
    - f. Dive forward several feet, pull out any slack and refasten, tightening as much as possible. There should be about the same number of loose links on each side.
    - g. If available, add rubber tighteners to snug up the chains.

## **Examples of Close Calls to Be Aware Of.....** *(So we can learn from our past mistakes)*

- Side Swipes:
  - Poles at loading docks
  - Poles in parking decks
  - Hard to see low-lying landscaping posts
  - Ticket machines at entrances of parking spaces
  - Other vehicles
- Top Swipes:
  - Signs hanging over parking areas
  - Low hanging wires
  - Carports
- Back Bumper:
  - Other vehicles while backing up
  - Low poles or posts
- Major:
  - Soft shoulder of road gives way
  - Other drivers not obeying traffic signs or signals
- Blind Spots:
  - Pole or object at the right front quarter panel of van
  - Anything behind the van
- With trailer:
  - Trailer hitch came loose.
  - A boat came loose at the rear and slid part way off and was dragged.
  - A wheel bearing on a trailer almost came apart.
  - Paddles have fallen and bounced out of the trailer.
  - Outward Bound has had a loaded trailer roll at high speed on interstates.
- Luggage rack:
  - Luggage has come loose and fallen off the rack onto the interstate.
- Narrow bridges:
  - When turning onto a narrow bridge, one of the wheels of a vehicle went off the edge and the vehicle fell on its axle.

### **Important Note:**

- The Federal Government in April 2001 provided warnings that loaded 15-passenger vans have been in a number of rollover accidents.
- 80% of people killed in rollover crashes were not wearing seat belts. Individuals are 75% less likely to die in a roll over if they are wearing a seatbelt.
- NHTSA found that the risk of a rollover crash is greatly increased when 10 or more people ride in a 15 – passenger van.

- In fact, their statistics indicate that a 15-passenger van with 10 or more occupants had a rollover rate in single vehicles accidents of nearly 3 times the rate for lightly loaded vans. Higher occupancy level of the 15 – passenger van caused crash severity to increase.
- This increased risk occurs because the passenger weight raises the vehicle’s center of gravity and causes it to shift rearward, increasing vertical load on the rear tires. As a result, the van has less resistance to rollover and handles differently.

**To help avoid the potential for rollovers, Venture has removed the rear seat from our 15-passenger vans so we only carry 11 passengers. Special permission is needed from the Venture Director to transport more than 11 passengers.**

Situations that contribute to a potential rollover are:

- The van goes off a rural road, striking a ditch or embankment or when it digs into soft soil.
- The driver is fatigued or driving too fast for conditions and loses control.
- The driver overcorrects the steering as a panic reaction to an emergency or to a wheel dropping off the pavement.

How can rollover crashes be prevented? :

- Avoid conditions that lead to a loss of control
- Drive cautiously on rural roads
- Know what to do if your wheels drop off the roadway.
- Make sure the tires are high quality and properly inflated and the tread is not worn. The manufacturer’s recommendation for correct tire pressure is located on the vehicle’s identification placard found usually on the driver’s doorsill or in the tire owner’s manual.
- Keep the gas tank as full as possible and drive conservatively.

# VEHICLE COMPARISONS

Vehicle Weight = approximately 3,800 lbs  
Est. Passenger Wt.= 600 lbs  
Total = 4,400 lbs



4'6"

15'

Van Vehicle Weight = 8,800 lbs  
Est. Passenger Wt. = 2,250 lbs  
Total = 11, 050 lbs

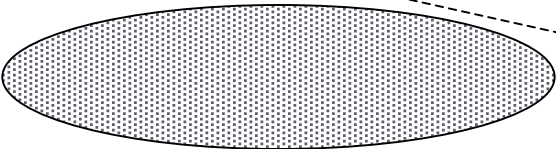
9'



20'



Shaded Circle Indicate Potential Blind Spots



Copy your valid Driver's License here



# VAN DRIVER AUTHORIZATION FORM

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE OR STUDENT UNC CHARLOTTE ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE CHECK:  UNC Charlotte Employee  UNC Charlotte Student Employee

DRIVING RECORD: Number of points on license \_\_\_\_\_

List each reason for points: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List motor vehicle accidents that you have been involved and explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

It is the personal responsibility of all drivers to report all convictions for moving traffic violations in writing within 48 hours to the Departmental Van Administrator whether conviction resulted from driving a van or any other public or private vehicle.

It is expected that all drivers and passengers obey all applicable motor vehicle and other state laws.

DRIVER'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Your signature certifies that this person is currently employed by your Department)*

**FOR STUDENT EMPLOYEE ONLY:**  
Authorizing Vice Chancellor, Athletic Director or designee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_