

Passenger Van Safety



Graphics from the Denver Post

Managing the Risks

Passenger Van Safety Concerns

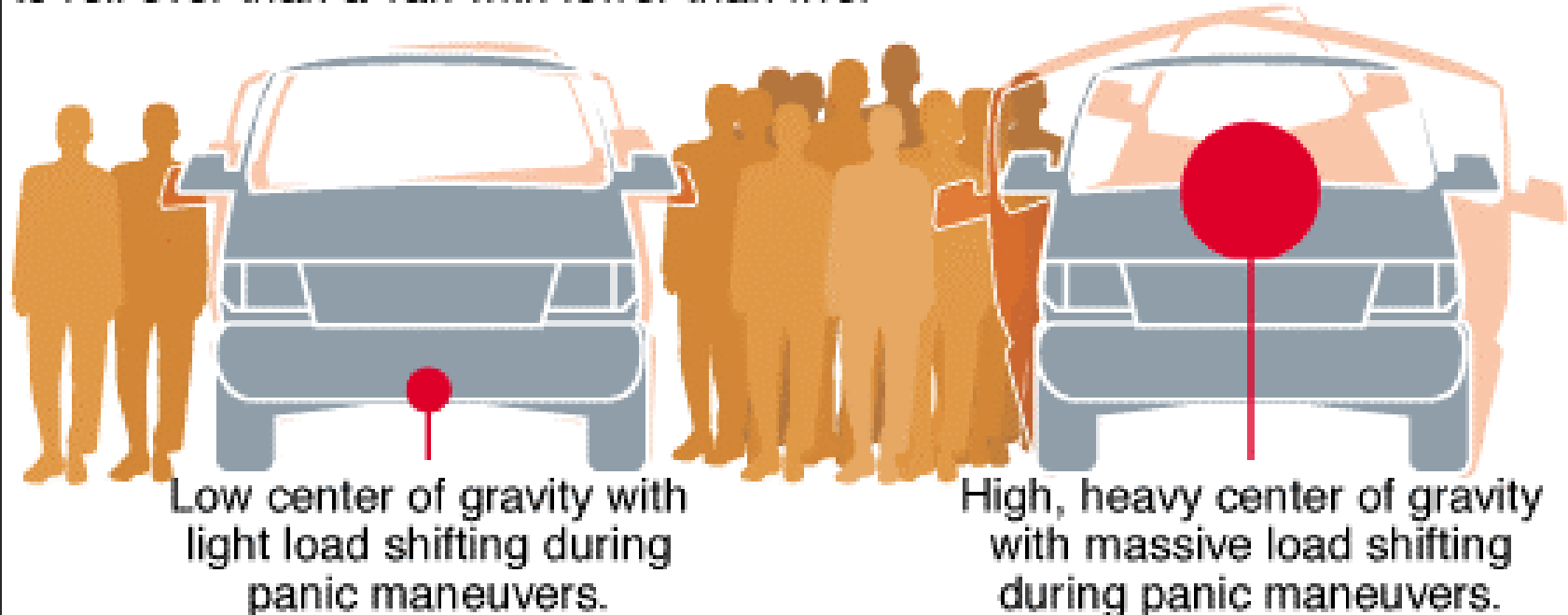
- High center of gravity
- Inferior rollover and side impact protection
- Boxy shape difficult to control during moderate to high winds
- In most states, driver needs no special training or drivers' license to operate
- Rollover potential triples when van carries 10 or more passengers, per NHTSA testing in 2001

Managing the Risks

Van Rollover Potential

What causes rollover

A 15-passenger van that has 10 to 15 occupants is three times more likely to roll over than a van with fewer than five.



Source: Idaho State Police, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

The Denver Post

Managing the Risks

How To Manage the Risks?

- Select the right vehicle for the needs
- Select the best available drivers
- Train drivers in van safety
- Institute pre-trip inspections
- Keep tires in good operating condition
- Have a plan to evacuate passengers safely

Managing the Risks

Select the Right Vehicle

- Minivan
- Full size van
- School Vans
("Activities Buses" have the same safety features as the school van pictured here, but are painted white, not "School Bus Yellow").

Comparing safety features

Safety officials say school buses are the safest way to travel. But schools often opt for large passenger vans because they cost less to buy and operate.

The diagram shows a yellow school bus and a white minivan. The school bus is labeled with various safety features: Steel beam construction, High back, padded seats; wheelchair restraint systems, Several emergency exits, Seat belts not required, Lights indicate passenger loading and unloading, Special mirrors allow driver better visibility, and Protected fuel tanks guard against spills in a crash. The minivan is labeled with: Rear doors can be blocked by back seat, Seat belts for all passengers, No warning signals for loading / unloading, and Unprotected gas tank.

Yellow School Bus Features:

- Capacity: 10 to 30
- Crashworthiness: meets federal standards
- Commercial driver's license required for drivers of buses holding more than 16 people
- Cost: \$35,000-\$45,000

White Minivan Features:

- Capacity: 15
- Crashworthiness: does not meet federal standards
- Regular driver's license required
- Cost: \$25,000-\$30,000

Select the Best Available Driver

- “Acceptable” MVR - apply written criteria
- Set minimum experience levels
- Road evaluations
- Apply on-going training, evaluations



Managing the Risks

Train Drivers in Van Safety

- Classroom training
- Road Evaluations
- Pass/fail criteria
- Pre-trip inspections
- Emergency procedures

(“Coaching the Van Driver II” by FLI is an excellent classroom training program and is available via the National Safety Council)



Managing the Risks

Institute Pre-Trip Inspections

- Exterior Items
- Interior Items
- Under the Hood
- Safety Equipment
- Written, dated report - defects reported to management for corrective action



Managing the Risks

Keep Tires in Good Condition

- Tread separation and other tire defects can contribute to rollover (e.g. - Ford Explorer & Firestone Tires)
- Proper inflation, balancing and wear patterns are also important to monitor
- Record results on pre-trip form



Managing the Risks

Emergency Evacuation Plans

- Drivers and attendants need emergency evacuation training
- Evacuation is a last resort, used only when the vehicle is in danger of fire, explosion, or impact and can't be moved to safety
- Plan should include passengers with special needs



Managing the Risks