SUMMARY:

Pursuant to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issuance of a consumer advisory regarding the increased rollover risk associated with the use of 15-passenger vans, and the adoption of Jacobs Law by the State of South Carolina in July 2006 issuing certain mandatory requirements for the utilization of 15-passenger vans for secondary and primary school activities, the University has adopted safety regulations for the operation of these vehicles. While every effort is made to avoid lease of these vehicles, difficulty in finding 12-passenger vans and increases in University-sponsored student/faculty/staff travel have necessitated their use on occasion. This policy explains the guidelines which must be followed when driving a 15-passenger van provided by the University.

POLICY:

I. To ensure the safety of University drivers and passengers, as well as that of the public at large, the following rules have been established regarding the use of passenger vans.

   A. The Transportation Coordinator will secure 12-passenger vans for all University business when available.

   B. When 12-passenger vans are not available through the State contracting vendor, 15-passenger vans may be secured under the following conditions:

      1. All drivers of 15-passenger vans must be at least 25 years of age and have a valid and approved driver’s license.
      2. All drivers of 15-passenger vans must complete a 15-passenger van driver training course.
3. Students, whether employed by the University or not, are prohibited from driving 15-passenger vans. Only non-student employees meeting stipulations Number 1 and 2 above are allowed to operate 15-passenger vans.

4. All passengers must be at least 18 years of age, AND must be either enrolled as students, employed as faculty/staff, or attending University-sponsored events as guests. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL K-12 STUDENTS UNDER 18 BE TRANSPORTED IN A 15-PASSENGER VAN.

5. Safety belts must be worn by all passengers while riding in the van.

6. When traveling more than 60 miles one way, both 15- and 12-passenger vans may be loaded with no more than eleven (11) passengers, one (1) driver, and equipment.

7. Under no circumstances will 15-passenger vans be used to tow any equipment or a trailer.

8. When operating a 15-passenger van, passengers and cargo should be seated or placed forward of the rear axle whenever possible. When absolutely necessary to use or occupy the area behind the rear axle, care should be taken to keep the majority of the load weight in the middle of the van.

9. No equipment/luggage/packages, etc., should be carried on the roof of a 15-passenger van.

10. Upon request, Safety and Transportation will offer a driver service for all campus and departmental activities for an additional fee when a department cannot provide its own certified 12- or 15-passenger van driver.