

15-Passenger Econoline Vans Are Safe Vehicles

Sept. 6, 2002--At Ford Motor Company, the safety of our customers is our number one priority. Regarding concerns about the safety of the 15-passenger Econoline passenger wagon, we remain confident that this is a very safe vehicle. In April, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration issued a Consumer Advisory to users of 15-passenger vans. NHTSA recommended that these vans be operated by experienced drivers who are familiar with the handling characteristics of their vehicles, and that safety belts be worn by all passengers at all times. We agree with NHTSA on this recommendation.

The single most effective safety item in any vehicle is the safety belt. In a rollover, seat belt use significantly reduces the risk of ejection, serious injury or death. According to government statistics, 80 percent of people killed in single vehicle rollovers are not wearing their safety belts. Safety belts are provided at all seating positions in Ford 15-passenger Econoline vans, and Ford urges all passengers to use their safety belts. Moreover, it is important that 15-passenger vans be operated by trained, experienced drivers. Driver's training is available from a variety of licensed training institutions.

We encourage drivers of 15-passenger Econoline vans to review the Econoline Owner's Guide, and understand that vehicles with higher centers of gravity handle differently than vehicles with low centers of gravity. We recommend that drivers of 15-passenger Econoline vans avoid sharp turns, excessive speeds and abrupt maneuvers. Drivers must understand that loaded vehicles may handle differently than unloaded vehicles and extra precautions should be taken.

In the case of 15-passenger vans being used for church transportation and other types of transportation, we recommend that specifically designated drivers be trained in proper operation of these vehicles, and these drivers act as the official transportation provider. It is important to remember that the 15-passenger van is not a car and does not handle like a car, therefore, drivers of these vans should have ample experience in operating them.

SOURCE: Ford Motor Company

