



Association for Commuter Transportation
Vanpool Council

PRESS RELEASE

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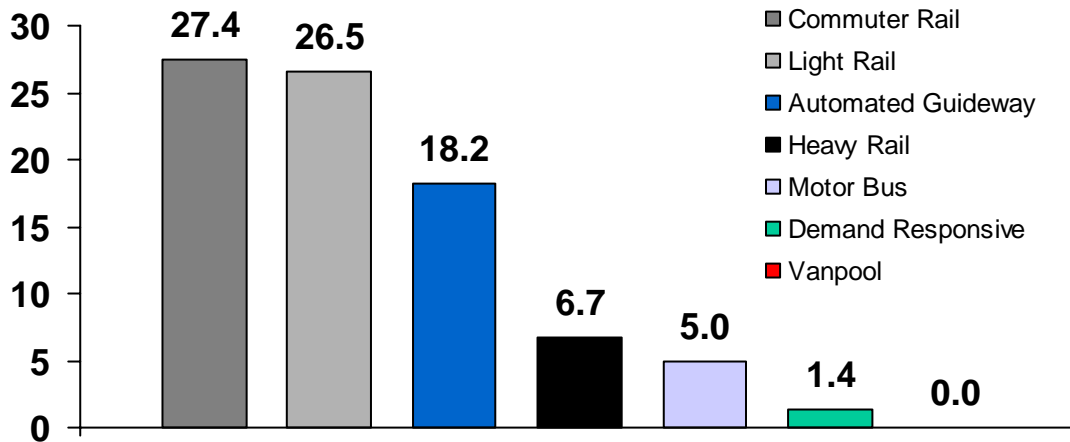
ACT RESPONDS TO NHTSA ROLLOVER WARNING RE: 15-PASSENGER VANS

In response to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) warning to users of 15-passenger vans (reissued on June 1, 2004), the Vanpool Council of the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) today re-emphasized its contention that commuter vanpools continue to be THE safest form of public transportation.

The USDOT Bureau of Transportation Statistics annually compiles Transit Safety Data by Mode and last reported this information to Congress in "National Transportation Statistics 2000."

- Since 1990, there have been no reported fatalities to passengers in commuter vanpools. The reported sample represents ~35% of national fleet of 8,000 vanpools.
- Since 1998, there have been no reported fatalities to passengers in commuter vanpools. This ACT-expanded sample represents ~80% of the national fleet of 8,000 vanpools.

When compared, mode by mode, to other types of public transportation (including bus and rail), commuter vanpooling is by far the safest form of public transportation.



Fatalities per 100 Million Vehicle Miles

Transit Safety Data by Mode for All Reported Accidents: 1990-1999
National Transportation Statistics 2000 - USDOT Bureau of Transportation Statistics

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The Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) is a national association composed of public, private and non-profit organizations devoted to smart choices and options to the solo commute resulting in decreased traffic congestion and improved air quality.

In their reissued warning, NHTSA warned users of 15-passenger vehicles of an increased rollover risk under certain conditions. NHTSA also offered the following safety recommendations:

- 15-passenger vans should be operated by trained, experienced drivers
- All occupants should wear safety belts at all times
- Passengers and cargo should be forward of the rear axle and avoid placing loads on the roof
- Tires should be properly maintained and inflated

In his statement Jeffrey W. Runge, head of NHTSA, made a point of stating, "...commuter vanpool drivers tend to have experience handling the vans." He followed by stating that infrequent drivers of 15-passenger vans are at the greatest risk.

Commuter vanpools typically operate 1) with experienced van drivers, 2) in urban traffic flow on multiple lane highways and 3) at average speeds of 35-40 miles per hour... conditions inconsistent with those listed by NHTSA for increased risk of rollover. As a rule, commuter vanpool passengers are required to wear safety belts and are prohibited from attaching cargo to the top of the van. For these and other reasons, commuter vanpools continue to have a great safety history.

It should also be noted that each vanpool takes an average of ten cars off of our highways, reducing auto emissions and helping to lessen our country's dependence on imported oil.

NHTSA is reissuing the advisory to specifically alert those who plan to use vans this summer for group road trips. The recent NHTSA report should not be interpreted as denigrating commuter vanpooling. To the contrary, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy continue to endorse and financially support commuter vanpooling as a viable alternative to single occupant commuting.

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