DRIVING A FULL-SIZE VAN

Vans are much larger than passenger vehicle, which makes for different driving characteristics. Planning is needed for driving a FULL-SIZE VAN. As well as being larger than passenger vehicles, vans are also taller and have different sightlines. Before leaving, check for proper tire tread and pressure, as well as the right amount of fluids and fuel. If the van is a rental, check over the vehicle for dents, dings, and scratches, and note them with the rental agency BEFORE the van is driven from the rental lot.

While sitting in the driver’s seat, imagine the vehicle filled with passengers and gear. The view from the inside rearview mirror will be impaired and possibly completely blocked. This means the driver will need to make sure the outside rearview mirrors are adjusted properly before beginning the trip. The driver will rely on the outside mirrors more than normal. When adjusting the mirrors, consider the following:

- Vans will have larger blind spots.
- Mirrors will need to be checked frequently.
- Outside mirrors will need to be adjusted for the driver to see the road, not the side of the van.

When the van is loaded, the characteristics are much different than a passenger car. For example, the van is heavier than a passenger car. When operating a van, consider the following:

- Drivers should always drive with two hands on the steering wheel.
- With the added weight, braking distances are longer than with passenger vehicles.
- Distances between the van and other vehicle need to be increased.
- The turning radius is longer and requires wider turns.
- Taller vans are less stable with quick turns.
- The driver and passengers should wear seatbelts.
- Windy conditions can blow and push vans outside of their lanes.

PLEASE NOTE: Effective September 1, 2015, the use of 15-passenger vans manufactured before 2005 will no longer be allowed in connection with Scouting programs and activities. Any 2005 or later 15-passenger vans may be used if equipped with electronic stability control and seat belts for all passengers as well as the driver. This applies to all vehicles, regardless of ownership, including but not limited to unit leaders and chartering organizations.

BE PREPARED. Always practice driving the van before it is loaded with passengers and cargo. Get used to the way the van drives, and keep in mind that it drives differently from passenger vehicles.