



OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMANDER
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CIVIL AIR PATROL
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA 36112-6332

10 June 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR REGION AND WING COMMANDERS

SUBJECT: Reconfiguration of CAP 15-Passenger Vans

1. During the recent National Executive Committee meeting, members approved a proposal to remove rear seats from all 15-passenger vans. This decision was made subsequent to discussions concerning load distribution and handling characteristics of these vans. This memo will serve as interim guidance until CAPR 77-1, *Operation and Maintenance of CAP Vehicles*, and associated publications can be updated to reflect this change.
2. Under stable driving conditions 15-passenger vans are safe and handle well. However, they have a higher center of gravity and can be slightly more difficult to handle than sedans and smaller vans, especially when fully loaded. With four passengers in the rear seat the van is back-end heavy. In the event of an abrupt turn or sharp avoidance maneuver, the rear of the van tends to swing outward. The combination of high center of gravity and loads aft of the rear axle make 15-passenger vans more vulnerable to rollover, during emergency maneuvering situations, than other passenger vehicles.
3. The Committee's decision to remove the rear seat from 15-passenger vans is the first step toward improving operational safety. Removing the rear seat creates a large area in the rear of the van which can be used for luggage and support equipment. Limit the weight of cargo in this area to 300 pounds, and do not stack items above the top of the rear seat. The Committee directed CAP Fleet Management to procure cargo netting to secure items stowed in this area. Nets are currently being evaluated and will soon be ordered and shipped to wing transportation officers.
4. Operators play the most important role in vehicle safety. They must thoroughly inspect their vehicle before each use and ensure that damage or defects are repaired immediately. Since tire failure is a major contributor to vehicle rollover, operators must ensure that all tires are in good condition, tire pressures are checked weekly and tires are inflated to manufacturer's recommended pressures. They must ensure that passengers are seated as far forward as possible and that all are wearing seat belts. Cargo must be properly loaded and secured.
5. The 15-passenger van has been a valuable resource for CAP and has contributed substantially to meeting our transportation objectives. We must now ensure the highest degree of safety for cadets, senior members, and property when using these vehicles. When followed, this guidance will certainly add an additional margin of safety for 15-passenger van operation.
6. It will be the responsibility of units to which these vans are assigned to store the rear seat. Seats must not be disposed of as their reinstallation will be required when a van is disposed of.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy S. Courter".

AMY S. COURTER
Brigadier General, CAP
Interim National Commander