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FM COMNAVSAFECEN NORFOLK VA//42//  
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MSGID/GENADMIN/COMNAVSAFECEN/42-101/MAY//  
SUBJ/HAZARD ALERT - 15 PASSENGER VAN//  
RMKS/1. THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION (NHTSA)  
RECENTLY ANNOUNCED A CAUTIONARY WARNING TO OPERATORS OF 15 PASSENGER  
VANS. NHTSA'S ANALYSIS REVEALED THAT 15 PASSENGER VANS HAVE A  
ROLLOVER RISK SIMILAR TO OTHER LIGHT TRUCKS AND VANS WHEN CARRYING  
A SMALL NUMBER OF PASSENGERS. IN 15 PASSENGER VANS, HOWEVER, THE  
RISK OF ROLLOVER INCREASES DRAMATICALLY AS THE NUMBER OF OCCUPANTS  
IS INCREASED FROM FEWER THAN FIVE TO MORE THAN TEN. LOADING THE 15  
PASSENGER VAN CAUSES THE CENTER OF GRAVITY TO SHIFT REARWARD AND  
UPWARD, INCREASING THE LIKELIHOOD OF ROLLOVER. THE SHIFT IN THE  
CENTER OF GRAVITY ADDITIONALLY INCREASES THE POTENTIAL FOR LOSS OF  
CONTROL IN PANIC MANEUVERS.  
2. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THESE VANS BE OPERATED BY EXPERIENCED  
DRIVERS. OPERATORS OF THESE VEHICLES ARE NOT REQUIRED TO POSSESS  
A COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE. IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED, HOWEVER,  
THAT DRIVERS ATTEND THE AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE (AAA) DRIVER IMPROVEMENT  
PROGRAM PRIOR TO OPERATION. DRIVERS SHOULD UNDERSTAND AND BE  
FAMILIAR WITH THE HANDLING CHARACTERISTICS OF THESE VANS, ESPECIALLY  
WHEN FULLY LOADED. WEARING SAFETY BELTS DRAMATICALLY INCREASES THE  
CHANCES OF SURVIVAL DURING A ROLLOVER. INDIVIDUALS RIDING AS  
PASSENGERS IN THESE VANS, AS WELL AS DRIVERS, ARE REQUIRED TO WEAR A  
SAFETY BELT AT ALL TIMES.  
3. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE CRASH CHARACTERISTICS  
OF 15 PASSENGER VEHICLES, CONTACT NHTSA. CALL THE AUTO  
SAFETY HOTLINE AT 1-888-327-4236 OR GO TO THE NHTSA WEBSITE,  
HTTP:(DOUBLE SLASH)WWW.NHTSA.DOT.GOV/PEOPLE/NCSA/REPORTS.HTML FOR A  
COPY OF THE NHTSA ANALYSIS OF ROLLOVER CHARACTERISTICS OF 15  
PASSENGER VANS.//

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