

Federal Van & Bus Transportation Requirements

15 - Passenger Vans

The FMCSA requires motor carriers operating Commercial Motor Vehicles designed or used to transport between 9 and 15 passengers (including the driver) for compensation to file a motor carrier identification report, mark their CMVs with a USDOT identification number, and maintain an accident register. The agency established these requirements to monitor the operational safety of motor carriers operating small passenger-carrying vehicles for compensation. Insurance policy limits of \$1.5 million for vans used in interstate commerce are required. Some states adopt federal standards for commercial vehicles, so even if your vehicle is not crossing state lines, you should check on the state's requirements. Commercial driver's licenses (CDL's) are NOT required for 9 to 15 passenger vans unless required by state law, which is the case in California.

15 Passenger Vans Towing Trailers

Outfitters with fully-loaded 15 passenger vans towing trailers may find themselves subject to a higher level of regulation if the gross weight of the vehicle exceeds 10,000 pounds and they are traveling across state lines. In most cases, DOT officials automatically assumes the vehicle exceeds the 10,000 pound threshold.

Currently motor carriers using small commercial motor vehicles (9 to 15 passengers) providing interstate transportation for direct compensation are subject to [new rules](#) including:

- Driver qualifications contained in 49 CFR part 391 (21 years or older, speak English, etc);
- Medical qualifications contained in 49 CFR Part 391, subpart E (medical and physical qualifications);
- Driving Motor Vehicles, Part 392 (prohibits driving under the influence, when sick or fatigued);
- Parts and Accessories Necessary for Safe Operation, Part 393;
- Hours of Service 49 CFR Part 395;
- Inspection Repair and Maintenance Part 396.

Most outfitters do not fall into the direct compensation category because their transportation is for indirect compensation (incidental to the trip). 15 passenger vans under the indirect compensation exemption that are under 10,000 pounds combined weight (van and trailer) and not involved in interstate commerce are still subject to the regulatory requirements of each state. So, you must know the prevailing law in each state in which you operate, which in some cases is equal to or stricter than the federal requirement.

Bus Regulations

Buses carrying more than 15 passengers across state lines are subject to Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations for motor coach carriers. Some states may adopt the federal requirements for intrastate travel. Generally, the following regulations apply to buses:

- Must carry \$5,000,000 in liability insurance coverage
- File a Motor Carrier Identification Form (MCS-150)
- Maintain a log book of trips
- Drivers must have a commercial drivers license (CDL)
- Are subject to inspection requirements for motor coaches.

FMCSA has a question and answers page on Rule for Small Passenger-Carrying Vehicles. Go to <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safetyprogs/camionetaqas.htm> Motor Coach Safety laws are likely to change in 2011 as a result of legislative action.