

DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON 10- TO 15-PASSENGER VAN POLICY

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, in conjunction with the Catholic Umbrella Pool and the National Transportation Safety Board, has adopted this policy, effective July 1, 2002.

New, used, and currently-owned 10- to 15-passenger vans will not be used, purchased, or leased (including short-term leases such as one or two weeks) for the transportation of school-aged children (to age 18) to or from any school or parish function. A "school or parish function" is defined as any function related in any way to school or parish operations (including religious education and youth programs).

10- to 15-passenger vans may be used for non-passenger purposes, for hauling equipment or other cargo, and for transportation of passengers over the age of 18, such as senior citizens. Seats may not be removed from vans to reduce capacity and therefore to transport school-aged passengers.

Nine-passenger vans (or smaller) may continue to be used for parish and school functions. A nine-passenger van is defined as a van designed to transport nine passengers, plus the driver, for a total of ten people.

This policy is not intended to be compromised by a less restrictive state law. Presently, West Virginia state law does **not** allow the use of 11- to 15-passenger vans for school transportation purposes (WV Code 18-5-13).

The National Transportation Safety Board prohibits the sale of ten- to fifteen-passenger vans for the purpose of transporting school-aged children.