

# 10 Passenger Vans

## Quick Reference Guide

### 1. Are 12-15 passenger vans allowable? **No**

#### **Why?**

- On August 10, 2005, President Bush signed into law the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), Pub. Law 109-59. <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/summary.htm>
- Section 10309, 15-passenger van is defined as: “a vehicle that seats 10 to 14 passengers, *not including the driver.*” *This means that a school district would be prohibited from purchasing a new 12-passenger van for school transportation purposes.*

### 2. What can I purchase?

**New Van:** 10 passenger van (includes the driver) with a vehicle rating of Multi-Purpose Vehicle (MPV)

- A van can only be upfitted by a federally approved final stage manufacturer. New 12-passenger vans will be upfitted to a seating configuration of ten total passengers including the driver, which is nine passengers plus the driver for a total of 10 passengers. The vehicle rating will also be updated with a certification as Multi-Purpose Vehicle (MPV) in compliance with Federal Regulations.
- The final stage manufacturer will update the Tire and Loading Information sticker to read Seating Capacity Total 10, and a new sticker will be added stating the vehicle has been altered by the final stage manufacturer to a vehicle rating of Multi-Purpose Vehicle (MPV).
- Schools must be certain the chassis is not a 15-passenger chassis.
- Federal Code of Definitions: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/subtitle-B/chapter-V/part-571/subpart-A/section-571.3>
  - **Bus** means a motor vehicle with motive power, except a trailer, designed for carrying more than 10 persons.
  - **Multipurpose passenger vehicle** means a motor vehicle with motive power, except a low-speed vehicle or trailer, designed to carry 10 persons or less which is constructed either on a truck chassis or with special features for occasional off-road operation.

**Used Van:** A used van can be modified under the following conditions.

- Modifying the seating of a used 12 passenger van to decrease the capacity to ten total passengers, which includes the driver is acceptable, if performed by a federally approved final stage manufacturer.

- The vehicle rating must also be updated to read Multi-Purpose Vehicle (MPV)
- The vehicle can only be modified by a federally approved final stage manufacturer.

### 3. What is a Final Stage Manufacturer?

- The definition of a final stage manufacturer can be found in the code of federal regulations 49 CFR Part 567 and 568. Part 595 for disability Modifications <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/subtitle-B/chapter-V/part-568>

§ 568.1 Purpose and scope. The purpose of this part is to prescribe the method by which manufacturers of vehicles manufactured in two or more stages shall ensure conformity of those vehicles with the Federal motor vehicle safety standards (“standards”) and other regulations issued under the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act, as amended ([49 U.S.C. § 30115](#)) and the Motor Vehicle Information and Cost Savings Act, as amended ([49 U.S.C. 32504](#) and [33108\(c\)](#)).

- Part 595 for disability Modifications which a lot of second stage manufacturers fall under also. <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/subtitle-B/chapter-V/part-595?toc=1>
- NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) also has a database where you can look these up.  
**Search by state:** <https://vpic.nhtsa.dot.gov/mid/home/ModifierSearch> Note their disclaimer: NHTSA does not assess the abilities of any of the listed modifiers to perform any requested or represented modification services.

### 4. Will this law change?

- In May 2025 National Congress met to discuss the revision of multiple federal laws. Based upon the data received, the National Congress voted to approve the following:
  - <https://www.nasdpts.org/resources/NCST/2025NSTSPDecemberUpdated.pdf>
  - *Multipurpose passenger vehicle* means a motor vehicle with motive power, except a low-speed vehicle or trailer, designed to carry 10 persons or less which is constructed either on a truck chassis or with special features for occasional off-road operation.
  - VEHICLE DESIGN/EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS
    - A. Vehicles used for alternative transportation shall be restricted to vehicles with the maximum seating capacity of 10 or less, including the driver, and with an original manufacture classification type of “multipurpose passenger vehicle” or “passenger car” as defined in FMVSS 571.3. 1. Any vehicle manufactured with a designed seating capacity of more than 10

passengers, including the driver, shall meet all school bus specification requirements (reference NCST Bus Body and Chassis Specification section).

- Rule 91 and Rule 92 are in the process of being updated to match federal law, and the expected completion is 2026.