

## **Special Olympics Montana 15-Passenger Van Transportation Policy**

**Special Olympics Programs are prohibited from using 15-passenger vans to transport athletes or other individuals to and from Special Olympics events, and Special Olympics strongly discourages other organizations from using 15-passenger vans to transport people to or from Special Olympics events.**

Special Olympics recognizes that it is up to each non-Special Olympics organization to determine whether to use 15-passenger vans. By using 15-passenger vans, a non-Special Olympics organization understands that:

1. Anyone operating a 15-passenger van owned by a non-Special Olympics organization for the purpose of transporting Special Olympics athletes or other persons to or from Special Olympics activities is acting as the employee or volunteer of the organization and not on behalf of Special Olympics.
2. The driver's operation of the 15-passenger van will be considered to be in the course and scope of the driver's employment for or volunteer responsibilities for the non-Special Olympics organization, and not for or on behalf of Special Olympics.
3. Non-Special Olympics organizations that operate 15-passenger vans should comply with the applicable safety standards promulgated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

**Adopted by  
Special Olympics Montana  
Board of Directors on:**

**March 2, 2004**

This 15-passenger van policy supersedes the policy adopted in December, 2002.

## SPECIAL OLYMPICS MONTANA

### USE OF 15-PASSENGER VANS

- **Background.** In April 2001, distributed a memorandum to all U.S. Programs warning about the increased risk of rollovers posed by 15-passenger vans. The memo was triggered by a consumer advisory issued that month by the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and several serious accidents involving 15-passenger vans. In April 2002, the NHTSA issued a second consumer advisory, and the Spring 2002 Special Olympics Risk Management newsletter again warned Programs of the dangers associated with these vans. This information was communicated to SOMT programs.

In November 2002, Special Olympics, Inc. strongly recommended that U S Programs refrain from using 15-passenger van for transporting people. SOI took the position that Special Olympics could not require other agencies to abandon the use of the vehicles, but strongly encouraged other agencies transporting Special Olympics athletes or volunteers to limit the use and provide specially trained drivers.

In December 2002, Special Olympics Montana adopted as policy the recommendation of the Special Olympics, Inc., U.S. Risk Management and Insurance Task Force.

- ~~➤ **Recommendation. Thus, the U.S. Risk Management and Insurance Task Force strongly urge all U.S. Programs to discontinue use of 15-passenger vans for the transportation of athletes, volunteers, or staff. Programs should no longer rent or lease 15-passenger vans, and Programs that own 15-passenger vans should discontinue use of the vans to transport people. This policy excludes the use of 15-passenger vans driven by specially trained drivers to transport equipment.**~~

Approved Board of Directors – December 3, 2002

- **In 2003, Special Olympics, Inc. instituted the following policy:**

Special Olympics Programs must stop using 15-passenger vans to transport athletes, volunteers, staff and others to and from Special Olympics events by December 31, 2003.

With this revised recommendation, it is critical that no Special Olympics Program assign a registered volunteer to drive a 15-passenger van. Therefore, if a county, recreation center, group home or other similar facility offers to lend use of a 15-passenger van to the Program at no charge to the Program, the Program should make it clear to the other party that the Program cannot use or accept possession of or responsibility for the van and will not provide the driver. If the non-Special Olympics organization chooses to transport its clients (who are also Special Olympics athletes) to Special Olympics events in a 15-passenger van as part of the services provided by that agency, the Program does not have control over the non-Special Olympics organization's decision and can not require the non-Special Olympics organization to discontinue the use of 15-passenger vans to transport Special Olympics athletes.

Special Olympics, Inc. has provided the following language as proper notice to all Special Olympics programs and agencies transporting Special Olympics athletes and volunteers.