

# Choosing Safe Drivers for Your Ministry

An important part of your ministry is providing safe transportation—be it shuttling the disabled for Sunday morning services, driving the youth group to a retreat, or taking preschoolers on a field trip. Screening your drivers before they get behind the wheel is critical to ensuring that those in your care are in good hands.

Plan to select at least one primary qualified driver for each vehicle your ministry owns. Keep a list of all approved, trained drivers, and avoid situations where people not on the list are thrust into the driver's seat.

You can screen your drivers by using the following criteria:

## 1. Proper Licensing

Make sure your drivers are properly licensed for the vehicles they will operate. Most states require a commercial driver license (CDL) for driving buses and large vans. Generally, a commercial license is needed if the vehicle weighs more than 26,000 pounds or is designed to transport more than 16 people (including the driver). Check with your local Department of Motor Vehicles for the CDL requirements in your state.

## 2. Age

Carefully consider the age of potential drivers. Those under 21 or over 65 pose considerably greater risk for auto accidents, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. Young drivers, regardless of maturity, lack behind-the-wheel experience—particularly when it involves transporting others. Elderly drivers may have slower reaction times and physical or visual impairments.

## 3. Experience & Training

Identify drivers with as much experience as possible. Drivers of any age who haven't driven often are more likely to have accidents.

Choose drivers that are specially trained to handle a larger van or bus. The most severe accidents usually are caused by drivers' lack of understanding of the handling dynamics of longer vehicles, which are more prone to rollover than cars.

*Note:* You could offer a training program for handling vans. The National Safety Council offers a video presentation

course called "Coaching the Van Driver," designed to help van drivers read and respond safely to potential collision producing situations. )

## 4. Driving Record

Obtain candidates' driving records. Look for people without reckless driving citations or multiple moving violations. Your ministry may be judged negligent for allowing someone with a poor driving record to operate a vehicle. Your ministry may want to consider working with a background screening provider to obtain reliable driving records as well as other background checks such as criminal history reports and sex offender registry checks.



## Ministry Driver Screening

Driver's name (as shown on license): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security number: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please provide your SSN only if you've given your ministry leader permission to purchase a copy of your driving records.)

Driver's license state and number: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this a commercial driver license?  Yes  No

Which vehicle will you be driving? Make: \_\_\_\_\_ Model: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you the primary driver?  Yes  No

Primary driver = You drive the vehicle more than once per month or more than 12 times per year.

### In the past three years:

- |  |                              |                             |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Have you been at fault for any accidents?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. Have you had any moving traffic violations?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3. Have you had any insurance company cancel or refuse to provide you with auto insurance?                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4. Have you had your driver's license revoked, suspended, or restricted?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5. Have you had any physical impairments other than corrective glasses?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 6. Have you ever been charged with or convicted of "driving while intoxicated" or "driving under the influence"? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

If any question(s) 1-6 have been answered with "yes," please provide full details below: (dates, descriptions, amounts, or other explanation)