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**Bacon's**

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COMMERCIAL AUTO CRISIS DEEPENS WITH VAN COVER CUTBACK

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Commercial auto faces another major setback as sources of cover for 15-passenger vans pull back on protection. Reinsurers are a major force behind this shift, as they have increased their costs for business covering these vans. Many fear the rollover potential of vans. These vans are often covered as part of larger accounts or programs.

The Colorado School Districts Self-Insurance Pool, the biggest insurer of public schools in Colorado, stops writing cover for new vans that carry passengers. **GuideOne**, a leading national insurer of churches and their vehicles, stops selling new policies for 15-person vans. Existing GuideOne policies face price hikes. GuideOne points out that more than 400 people have lost their lives in van rollover accidents since 1990 and many more have been injured. There are more than 500,000 vans on the road. These vehicles are not required to pass the same government safety tests that other passenger vehicles or buses must pass. GuideOne continues cover on the 10,000 vans it already insures, but it raises rates by as much as 25 percent and is trying to persuade van owners to replace their vehicles with small school buses.

The Colorado School District Self-Insurance Pool will write these vans only if they are used for non-passenger transport such as maintenance, equipment hauling and related non-person transport tasks. The pool phases out existing passenger vans in its book, imposing a \$500 surcharge for customers with up to 0 vans. This is on top of the premium cost of \$750 a vehicle. The pool provides property and casualty for 154 of the 178 school districts in Colorado, but so far none have dropped cover due to the van rule changes.

GuideOne said that of the crashes in which it paid out more than \$100,000 in claims for injuries in the last five years, the cost for those involving 15-passenger vans averaged \$492,000, compared with \$350,000 for other vehicles. For van accounts that remain on GuideOne's books, drivers will be required to have one of the following: A commercial driver's license, a chauffeur's 1 License or proof that they have passed a defensive driving course to operate 15-passenger vans.

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