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**EXPANDED SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR PASSENGER VEHICLES**

To enhance road safety and ensure consistent application of safety requirements to vehicles of a similar size and function, Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation (MIT) is putting *Highway Traffic Act* (HTA) amendments in place that will expand the Safety Fitness Certificate (SFC) program. This expansion includes additional passenger vehicles that are designed with seating for 11 or more, including the driver. A vehicle used exclusively for personal purposes is not included in the SFC program, regardless of its seating capacity.

Accessible vehicles are included in the expansion. To determine the seating capacity of an accessible vehicle, regulations require each mobility aid occupant position to be considered equal to four conventional seating positions. However, the SFC program is not intended to regulate light vehicle safety. The four to one ratio rule applies only to passenger vehicles that were designed to seat 11 or more, including the driver. For example, an eight-person minivan with one conventional seating position removed to accommodate a wheelchair occupant, is not considered to have 11 seats. However, a 15-passenger van that has been modified to accommodate wheelchair occupants is considered to seat 11 or more and must meet SFC program requirements.

Currently, operators of passenger vehicles that are registered as public service vehicles (PSV), (ex: being used to provide a for-hire passenger transportation service) must hold the SFC and meet SFC program requirements. Beginning September 1, 2015, heavy passenger vehicles that are not registered as a PSV, not used exclusively for personal purposes, or not regulated under *The Taxicab Act* will require a valid SFC and must meet applicable program requirements. This includes school buses, transit buses and other heavy passenger vehicles used to provide a not-for-profit transportation service. Examples of such vehicles might include a bus operated by summer camp to provide transportation for campers or a 15-passenger van used by a church to transport members.

A new vehicle registration class called *regulated passenger vehicle* (RPV) has been created to identify such vehicles. Beginning September 1, 2015, Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) will require all heavy passenger vehicle operators renewing their registrations to visit an MPI Service Centre or a broker and determine their vehicle registration and plate requirements. Registration fees will not increase for heavy passenger vehicles transitioning to the RPV class.

Operators of vehicles that require registration as RPV, will have 30 days after their vehicle registration renewal or reassessment to obtain a SFC at no charge from the MIT Motor Carrier Division and to meet specific requirements.

For further details about the SFC program and the requirements for heavy passenger vehicles, call 204-945-7571; toll free 1-877-340-9068 or visit <http://www.gov.mb.ca/mit/mcd/mcs/hvsi/index.html>.

For clarity, vehicles designed to seat 10 or less are not included in the SFC program and are not impacted by the legislative changes noted above. There will be no changes for light passenger vehicles.