Overcrowded Van Crashes; Three Farmworkers Die



Overcrowding of passenger vans is a common problem in agricultural areas where large numbers of workers need to be transported quickly to worksites. Top-heavy passenger vans are vulnerable to rolling over when overcrowded.

A passenger van carrying 16 farmworkers and a driver rolled in British Columbia’s Fraser Valley recently. Three workers were killed and 13 others suffered serious injuries. A preliminary investigation revealed that the workers were not wearing seatbelts and that seats had been removed from the van and replaced by wooden benches. Several of the victims were ejected from the van, which was designed for a maximum of 10 passengers.

According to WorkSafeBC, the employer involved in the crash had received a vehicle safety briefing, including the need for seatbelts for each passenger, just two weeks before the crash. But the van that rolled was not inspected.