



# MAFES Dawg Tracks

November 18, 2013



Safe Driving Practices



MAFES staff and employees as a rule do not travel as many highway miles as do our extension staff and employees. None the less, we need to be just as careful on farm roads, county roads and the state highways that we do travel. We could have an accident in any of these avenues, if we aren't careful.

Following are some facts that "drive home" the need to remain focused on our own driving habits and a concentrated effort to watch out for the "other fellow" that might not be watching as closely as he or she should be doing:

- ✓ Obey all speed limits, signs and safety regulations.
- ✓ Be attentive - drive responsibly.
- ✓ Do not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- ✓ Always wear your seat belts.
- ✓ Before starting to drive your car - make it a habit to check the lights, brakes, directional signals. Also adjust your rear view mirrors so that you can see approaching vehicles from the left or right rear view mirror. Adjust your seat before you leave your parking area.
- ✓ Always drive with your headlights on - a car is approximately 4 times more visible from a distance with the headlights on.
- ✓ Pay attention to signs and always use your parking signals.
- ✓ When you stop at a stop sign - **spell s-t-o-p in your mind**, look left, look right, look straight ahead and then look to your left again before proceeding ahead.
- ✓ When you're at a traffic light and it turns green, before you advance, look left and right, straight ahead and left again. You can never tell if that other "joker" might run the light or if they plan to stop or not.
- ✓ As you are driving, keep your eyes moving, checking the sides of the road and behind you. We're in Mississippi where the deer roam the shoulders and can dart across the road at any time. Also, checking behind you will help to watch vehicles that might be running too close.
- ✓ When you re-fuel, you should check your oil levels and other fluids. Look for possible leaks through the engine compartment.
- ✓ If your car should stall on the road, do not leave it. Put your hazard lights on for others to see you better, call 9-1-1 for assistance and wait inside the car with the doors locked for help to arrive.
- ✓ When driving- following another vehicle, allow 4 seconds between you and the vehicle in front of you. Accomplish this time element by checking the time it takes you to pass a stationary object on the side of the road. If you are too fast, adjust your speed accordingly. In inclement weather, this time should be doubled.

- ✓ Refrain from talking or texting on your cell phone. If you have to make a call or take a call, find a wide shoulder or driveway to pull off and "take care of your business" the safe way. Don't jeopardize your safety or the safety of passengers, assuming you might have some in the vehicle with you. Cell phones detract from your ability to concentrate on the road and increase your chance of a collision by nearly 400%.
- ✓ If you do a lot of traveling, it is a good idea to leave your itinerary with the destination and approximate time of arrival with your spouse, neighbor or significant other so that others know where you are. It is also a good idea to check periodically with them to let them know where you are and if any unforeseen events have happened that you might need to know about.
- ✓ When you're being approached by emergency vehicles, pull off the side of the road to allow it to pass unobstructed.
- ✓ Prepare a card to keep in your vehicle (maybe in the glove box with emergency contact information, personal pertinent information and notes with personal or special needs that you might require.
- ✓ Trip plans - Leave early- allowing time enough to arrive early. Also leaving early allows you time for an intermittent stop without having to speed. Speeding does not increase your ability to arrive on time; but a possibility of not arriving at all.
- ✓ When driving on 4-lane highways, always stay in the right hand lane, using the left lane for passing only.
- ✓ Trucks - avoid the "No Zone areas" - if you can't see the rear view mirrors of the truck that you are following then they can't see you. Remember that trucks make wide turns.
- ✓ An old trucker's proverb - If the roads are wet- drive like it is snowing.  
If the roads are snow-covered- drive like it is icy.  
If the roads are icy- don't drive. Stay at home.
- ✓ In inclement weather- remember to depress your brakes slowly, with no sudden moves. Breaking fast and making sudden changes increases your potential for losing control of the vehicle.
- ✓ Speed increases your braking distance. A good "rule of thumb" to remember- double your speed- quadruple your braking distance. Double your vehicle weight- double your stopping distance.

- ***Don't text & Drive! -Pull off the road or get the free AT&T app that receives incoming messages while you are driving.***
- ***Buckle Up! - Seatbelts save over 13,000 lives each year! Refrain from "tailgating!"***

**THE BEST CAR SAFETY DEVICE:  
A TROOPER IN YOUR REAR-VIEW MIRROR!**

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**BE ALERT!!**

**ACCIDENTS HURT!!**