



# MAFES Dawg Tracks

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*Safety Tips:*  
**Improve Driver Safety**



Improving driver safety is critical to reducing collisions and deaths on our country's roads. One of the most effective ways to improve driver safety is to improve driver behavior. Video monitoring has allowed researchers to determine what is happening behind the wheel. Because of this monitoring immediate and ongoing changes can be made that will have lasting effects on driver safety.

Some facts listed below substantiate the reason from more emphasis on driver safety:

- In 2008, 5,870 people lost their lives and an estimated 15,000 people were injured in crashes in which at least one form of driver distraction occurred.
- On any given day last year, 800,000 vehicles were driven by someone using a hand-held cell phone during the day.
- During the Naturalist Driving Study conducted by Virginia Tech Transportation Institute for the National Highway Transportation Safety Association (NHTSA), driver involvement in secondary tasks contributed to over 22% of all crashes and near-crashes.

**SAFETY TIPS FOR IMPROVED DRIVER SAFETY-**

- ✓ **Don't Drive Drunk-** Over 30% of all driving accidents occurring in the USA involve drivers impaired by alcohol. Even low-blood alcohol levels reduce reaction time, coordination and reduces inhibitions, which causes drivers to make bad decisions. Obviously, higher levels cause blurred or double vision and even loss of consciousness. Getting behind the wheel of a vehicle with a blood alcohol level of .08 or higher will probably get you a trip to the "crossbar hotel." **"DON'T DRIVE DRUNK!!"**
- ✓ **Don't Speed** – An earlier public service campaign slogan was advertised as "Speed Kills." Research has proven that for every mile per hour you drive, the likelihood of you being in an accident increases by 4 or 5% (ERSO). At higher speeds the risk increases even more. The NHTSA states that the consequences of fast driving is one of the most prevalent factors contributing to vehicle crashes. The economic cost to society for vehicle crashes is estimated at \$40.4 billion dollars per year. **"TAKE YOUR TIME- OBEY POSTED SPEED LIMITS!!"**
- ✓ **Avoid Distractions** – Many states have passed laws banning the use of cell phones while driving. The obvious reason is the number of deaths attributed to their use. Some estimates pace 2,600 deaths each year. Researchers tell us that this figure may be too low, due to the rapid increase of people using the cell phones. Another fact is that working a cell phone while driving can delay reaction times by as much as 20%. Other distractions one can add to the danger list are eating while driving, radio/CD adjusting, applying makeup, fiddling in the glove box, and many others. So - **"KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE ROAD -YOUR HANDS ON THE WHEEL!!"**

- ✓ **Don't Drive Drowsy** – A study conducted by Virginia Tech concluded that 20% of vehicle accidents have sleepiness as a contributing factor. If a driver is sleepy enough to fall asleep, the results are predictable. Even on a straight highway a sleepy driver will eventually leave the road and will be facing trees, power poles, deep embankments, sloughs, or maybe a bridge abutment or other cars if it remains on the road. All of these situations can cause a serious injury or even death.

**"DON 'T DRIVE SLEEPY-PULL OFF THE ROAD**

- = **TAKE A NAPII!"**
- ✓ **Wear your Seatbelt** – **Seatbelts save lives!** Wearing the seat belt properly can save you from being thrown out of the car (and maybe the car rolling over you) or being thrown through the windshield. NHTSA revealed that over half of vehicle fatalities were from people not using their seat belts. A staggering 70% of kids 13 through 15 in fatal crashes weren't wearing their seatbelts. Speed of the vehicle isn't the only factor: Low speeds hitting stationary obstacles are just as dangerous. **"BUCKLE UP FOR SAFETY!!"**
- ✓ **Be extra careful in bad weather** – If you're driving through rain, snow or heavy fog - be extra cautious! Decrease your speed and maintain extra distance between your vehicle and the one ahead. If the conditions warrant it - pull off the road and turn off your lights. Another vehicle may see your lights and drive toward the lights and **BAM!** You both may be in trouble.
- ✓ **Don't follow too close** – Safe driving guidelines advise drivers to maintain a safe distance. At one time the rule was 1 car length for each 10 miles per hour (ex. – 40 mph = 4 car lengths). Now the three-second rule is in effect. Find a stationary object on the side of the road. When a vehicle passes it start counting, and when your car passes it the three seconds normally will lapse. At night or in inclement weather, double that time to 6 seconds.
- ✓ **Watch the other guy** – In many cases, it doesn't matter how safely you drive, it's the fellow you are meeting that you need to watch out for. A rule of thumb is **"an assumption is that everyone else is crazy, so I'll watch out for all of them."** Defensive driving generally follows this same train thought with the idea of maintaining your "cool" when a dude commits acts that are frustrating and on the dangerous side. Maintain your composure, even though other actions or gestures to "get even" are what you would really like to do.
- ✓ **Keep your vehicle safe** – As we all know, keeping your vehicle in good repair is imperative to having it perform as it is supposed to. Engine maintenance on a regular basis is most important along with tire pressure. Unbalanced tire pressure can cause a number of problems - all of them bad. Brakes

**LEAVE SOONER**  
**DRIVE SLOWER LIVE LONGER**  
**STOP ACCIDENTS BEFORE THEY STOP**  
**YOU!!!**