



# MAFES Dawg Tracks

September 28, 2015



*Safety Tips - Safe Driving Practices  
Employees Must Know*

Motor vehicle incidents are the leading cause of work fatalities. In 2010, more than 1,500 private industry employees were killed in vehicular accidents. Crashes in cars and other vehicles accounted for 33% of these work place fatalities. It matters less whether employees are driving company owned or leased vehicles or personal vehicles for work purposes - they are at risk of being involved in a roadway accident.

Obviously, employers cannot control roadway or weather conditions, but they can protect their most valuable asset - their employees - by promoting safe driving practices.

**Following are some tips that can greatly reduce the potential risks for accidents when driving on the job or off the job as well:**

**VEHICLE INSPECTION-**

Driver safety begins before you turn the ignition key! Employees should be trained to do a “first echelon” daily inspection before leaving each day. This includes checking tires for pressure, tire conditions and rim and wheel conditions, fuel and lubricant levels, controls, gauges, lighting and electronics.

If the trip involves out of town travel, it’s a very good idea to have an emergency preparedness kit in the vehicle, which should include a flashlight with extra batteries, a blanket, water, emergency phone numbers, first aid kit and other items that would aid you in case of you get stranded.

**SECURE YOUR LOAD-**

A sudden crash, stop or swerving on the road can cause loose items to move around or even become airborne in the vehicle, possibly injuring you or a passenger, causing an accident with the vehicle or an approaching vehicle. With these thoughts in mind, employers should train their employees to make sure that contents of the vehicle are secured to prevent this from happening.

**USE A SEATBELT-**

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), seatbelts are the single most effective means of reducing deaths and serious injuries in traffic crashes. The risk of death is cut by 45% when wearing a seatbelt in a car. In a light truck the risk is reduced by 60%. Yet 16% of Americans still fail to buckle up. Employers must urge and enforce the wearing of seatbelts when they are driving.

**DRIVE DEFENSIVELY-**

Each time employees get behind the wheel, they should have a defense driving mind-set. Employers should train their employees to follow these rules until they become rote. This means that employers should train their employees to:

- ✓ Check driving conditions before leaving out.
- ✓ Avoid driving in inclement weather.
- ✓ Clear snow and ice from the vehicle, including the lights and windows
- ✓ Activate the low-beam headlights during the day.
- ✓ Keep a safe following distance.
- ✓ Don’t speed and slow down in poor conditions.
- ✓ Use caution at intersections and interchanges.
- ✓ Look ahead in traffic for situations that require quick action.

**AVOID DISTRACTIONS-**

According to police-reported data, about 17% of all crashes involve some type of distraction. Cell phone use and texting have garnered much attention lately, but the NHTSA databases report that talking with passengers, dropping objects, adjusting the radio or electric controls, eating, drinking or smoking, daydreaming or looking at events

on the roadside are harmful distractions as well. OSHA says that employers should prohibit employees from texting while driving. Actually many states have laws prohibiting texting while driving in effect now. Mississippi has passed the law against texting effective, I believe, in July. Employers should train their employees that, along with texting and calling, driving must command their full attention, and to avoid all these distractions.

**AVOID IMPAIRMENT-**

✓ Unquestionable, alcohol, certain prescriptions and over-the-counter medications can affect an employee’s ability to drive safely. They decrease alertness, concentration, coordination, and reaction time.

A driver will make many decisions per mile while driving, so it is critical that he is totally alert before getting behind the wheel.

Therefore, employers should instruct and follow-up with employees the importance of not driving impaired.

**AVOID DROWSY DRIVING-**

Drowsy driving can affect anyone. The government reports that approximately 83,000 crashes yearly are the result of drowsy driving. Many adults, according to the National Sleep Foundation, have reported falling asleep while driving. Employers should encourage their employees to:

- Get a full night’s rest before driving.
- Stop every 2 hours to stretch – or take a short nap when tired.
- Set realistic goals for daily distances.
- Switch drivers if possible.
- Avoid medications that cause drowsiness.

**AVOID AGGRESSIVE DRIVING-**

According to the Department of Transportation (DOT), the number of drivers has increased by 87.5% since 1970; the roadway system has increased by 9.5%. It’s no wonder that millions of crashes each year are pinned on aggressive driving. Employers should encourage and train their employees to avoid aggressive driving by:

- Being patient with other drivers.
- Planning routes to avoid construction and congested areas.
- Allowing plenty of time to reach your destination.
- Accepting lateness, especially when it is beyond the driver’s control.
- Avoiding aggressive behavior.
- Moving out of an aggressive driver’s way.

**TAKE SECURITY MEASURES-**

Security in transit is important to ensure the physical safety of the driver and to reduce and prevent vehicle car theft and damage. Employers should consider training or orienting their employees with the following precautions:

- Locking the vehicle doors and keeping windows rolled up.
- Avoid secluded, darkly lit parking lots.
- Staying alert when walking to your vehicle.
- Applying cargo seals or locks.
- Carrying vehicle information at all times.

**PROPERLY HANDLING HAZARDOUS MATERIALS-**

DOT – “Any material capable of posing unreasonable risk to health, safety and property when transported in commerce” must be properly packaged, labeled, placarded, and marked according to Hazardous Materials Regulations (Hazmat). Materials include solvents, some paints, adhesives and fuel, with some exceptions. Some paperwork will need to accompany the material to verify its identity.

**DRIVE OUT THERE LIKE PEOPLE ARE TRYING  
TO KILL YOU – BECAUSE THEY ARE!!  
DRIVE WITH REASON THIS COMING SEASON!**