

# MAFES Dawg Tracks

February 22, 2016



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND  
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

*Safety Tips: Staying  
Safe on Highways*

Each year between MAFES and Mississippi State University Extension Service we experience thousands of miles of travel throughout the state and the south as a whole. We have been fairly fortunate with a minimum of accidents occurring. In the endeavor of improving and maintaining our “track” record, I believe that a “heads-up” on traffic safety tips can serve as an aid to enhance driver safety, which we shall note below:

## HIGHWAY DRIVING FACTS-

- In 2013 alone, motor vehicle crashes claimed 35,000 lives; some of these deaths were by folks who drive for a living.
- The National Safety Council (NSC) reported that in 2015 in their annual report on unintentional injuries, the three biggest causes of fatalities on the road were:  
~ **Alcohol – 30.8%**  
~ **Speeding – 30%**  
~ **Distracted Driving – 26%**
- Car crashes are the No. 1 cause of death in teen age drivers - mostly due to inexperience.
- Graduated Driver Licensing systems have proven to reduce crashes involving teen drivers by 40%, minimizing common risks such as passenger distractions, night time driving and cell phone use.
- Off-the-job crashes account for 80% of employer crash-related health benefit costs, and one-half of crash-related injuries cause employees to miss work. The NSC study revealed that the average cost per traffic death was over \$1 million per death and more than \$78,000 per nonfatal disabling injury. Employers pay significant off-the-job costs associated with decreases in employee health, well-being and productivity, and increases in lost time workdays and insurance costs.

## TIPS THAT CAN AID EMPLOYERS TO HELP EMPLOYEES IN CRASH PREVENTION-

- ✓ Offer defensive driving courses to employees.
- ✓ Offer programs to employees experiencing alcohol and drug-related problems, legal and illegal.
- ✓ Enact a policy disallowing cellphone use at any time behind the wheel of a company vehicle and discouraging their use in their private vehicles.
- ✓ Enact a seat belt use policy for company driven vehicles and encourage their use in their private vehicles.

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Excerpts [www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/highway-safety](http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/highway-safety)  
[www.nsc.org/learn/Pages/nsc-on-the-road.aspx](http://www.nsc.org/learn/Pages/nsc-on-the-road.aspx)  
12/14/2015

## HIGHWAY TRAVEL SAFETY TIPS-

- ✓ Buckle up- slow down & don't drive impaired.
- ✓ Don't attempt to drive drowsy- be rested and alert.
- ✓ Obey and drive with caution in work zones.
- ✓ Give the road your full attention- avoid distractions such as cell phones, electronics adjusting in the vehicle, eating and/or drinking.
- ✓ Observe all speed limits- driving too fast or slow can increase your chances for a collision.
- ✓ On long trips- make frequent stops (I like to stop every 2 hours), alternate drivers when possible, and if you discover that you are too tired to drive stop and rest.
- ✓ Don't follow other vehicles too closely- a general rule of thumb is to allow “1 car length for each 10 mph of speed.”
- ✓ If you plan on having an “adult libation”, arrange to have a non-drinking driver.
- ✓ Keep your headlights, taillights and signal lights clean to help you see better, especially at night.
- ✓ Turn your headlights on at dusk and also in inclement weather, especially when you have your windshield wipers on.
- ✓ If you have car trouble, pull off the road as soon as possible.

## PRE-TRIP PREPAREDNESS TIPS-

- Carry a disaster supply kit in your trunk, consisting of a flashlight with extra batteries, high protein snacks, water, blanket, battery operated radio and an emergency contact card with all the pertinent phone numbers listed, in case of an accident.
- Always check out the weather at your destination to avoid an accident in the snow or heavy rains.
- Always remember to check your gas level to avoid running out of gas at an inconvenient location,
- Always leave a note at home or with relatives or friends with your destination, appropriate arrival, departure times, and temporary residence (if known).

**NORMAL SPEED MEETS EVERY  
NEED!**

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~ **LEAVE SOONER** ~

~ **DRIVE SLOWER** ~

~ **LIVE LONGER** ~