



# MAFES Dawg Tracks

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Practice Safe  
Driving



## Did you know that?

- ✓ Every 12 minutes someone dies in a motor vehicle crash.
- ✓ Every 10 seconds an injury occurs.
- ✓ Every 5 seconds a crash occurs.

Many of these accidents happen during the work day or going to and from work. Employers bear the cost of all jobs directly related to on-the-job accidents and off-the-job as well. Increased traffic and congestion on our country's highways waste significant amounts of time and money in the form of lost productivity on the farm and also promotes risky driving behavior. According to the Safety Exchange, traffic deaths are falling and seatbelt use is climbing. Following are some statistics that I believe are worth sharing. These are through 2008:

- 37,313 – The number of people killed in motor vehicle accidents – the lowest since 1961 (36,285) and a 9% decline since 2007 (41,059)
- 1.28 – The number of fatalities per 100 million miles traveled, the lowest since 2007 (1.36).

We must continually educate ourselves and new employees about the dangers that are lurking out there. As we have all seen, a split second can cause serious physical harm.

## Employees Should-

- **Use Your Seatbelts-** In most cases this is the law for highway vehicles. Statistics have proven that injuries and lives can be saved when they are used on the farm and on utility vehicles. The National Safety Council (NSC) has figures that state that each year approximately 1000 lives are saved and 325,000 serious injuries are prevented by using seatbelts.
- **Don't Drive Distracted-** 25 to 30% of all traffic accidents are caused by driving distractions. Busy schedules and roadway delays make it hard to spend time at home. More time on the road means less time at home; it should behoove us to watch and drive carefully.
- **Don't Drive under the Influence of Alcohol-** Alcohol is involved in 40% of fatal vehicle crashes. This equates to 1 alcohol-related accident every 30 minutes. Alcohol, prescription drugs, and illegal drugs can affect a person's ability to drive safely. It causes decreased concentration, coordination and reaction time. Alcohol is a contributing factor in 39% of all work-related vehicle crashes.
- **Don't Drive Aggressively-** Heavy traffic while traveling to and from work is very frustrating. Aggressive driving comes in a variety of ways, some of which we are all familiar with.

If we don't remain focused on our driving and the other person as well, a serious accident could occur. I know that it's hard, but if this occurs we should "lay-back" and let the "joker" in, no matter how hard it is to do this.

- **Don't Drive When tired-** Fatigued or drowsiness driving may be involved in more than 100,000 crashes each year, resulting in 40,000 injuries and 1,550 deaths. These statistics are a tip of the iceberg, as so many of these incidents aren't reported. It is so important to be well rested, sober, alert and focused on the road so that we can defend ourselves and against those who aren't prepared.
- **Train Young Drivers-** 16 to 20 year olds are presenting a significant highway safety problem. Traffic crashes are the leading cause of fatalities for teens. Historically, this is the age group that has the lowest seatbelt use rate and is the most likely to engage in risky driving with behavior that includes alcohol, speeding, drug-impaired and drowsiness. It is most important for employees with young drivers to actively promote safe driving practices.

## Tips for Safe Driving-

- **Drive the speed limit-** Don't drive too fast or too slow. It's dangerous to drive too fast.
- **Be alert!** Pay attention to traffic at all times.
- **Keep enough distance between you and the car in front of you.** The old adage was 1 car length for each 10 miles per hour. At traffic lights, allow enough room between you and the vehicle in front of you that you can see the back tires of that vehicle.
- **Check your blind spot when changing lanes.** A hint that I use is 2 small convex adhesive mirrors that stick on your rear view mirrors. I stick them on the bottom, right inside corner of each mirror. The cost is about \$3.75 for the two. They turn 360° so they are fully adjustable.

## Car Care Tips-

- Keep plenty of gas in the tank (for continuous use and security).
- Keep windshield clean and clear.
- Keep tissues in the car for window cleaning (when necessary).

Motor vehicle crashes costs employers \$60 billion annually in medical care, legal expenses, property damages and lost productivity. These crashes also drive up the cost of workers' compensation, social security, and health insurance. All of these factors above make it imperative that employers should know these traits and publicize it daily to all their employees, young and experienced alike.

**WORKING SAFELY MAY GET OLD-  
BUT SO DO THOSE  
WHO PRACTICE IT!!**