

# MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Safety Tips: Winter Driving Care



General Motors Acceptance Corporation (GMAC) and Road Safe America recently revealed their results of an extended survey on their initiative to make America's road safer. Some of their findings are listed below:

- Many American drivers are unsure of proper operating procedures while driving in freezing temperatures.
- This survey performed in all 50 states and the District of Columbia also revealed that more than one-third of these drivers cannot correctly identify the use of cruise control and 36% of these licensed drivers (approx. 72 million folks) thought that it was safe to have their cruise control activated in sub-freezing temperatures. The two companies assert that driving in sub-freezing temperatures and wet road from rain should be totally avoided.
- Two-thirds of the survey participants underestimate how full they should keep their gas tanks. This survey revealed that:
  - ~31% said that it doesn't matter.
  - ~4% said that 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a tank are sufficient.
  - ~28% said that 1/4 of a tank is sufficient.
  - ~37% said that 1/2 of a tank is sufficient.

GMAC and Road Safe America recommend keeping the tank as full as possible (at least 1/2 tank). This level will maximize the length of time vehicle occupants can run the engine as a source of heat in an emergency. Gary Kusumi, President and CEO of GMAC, makes a point that even though all Americans do not live in areas with freezing temperatures, it is still important for everyone to understand proper vehicle operational procedures.

## 5 STEPS TO PREPARE FOR WINTER DRIVING -

The two principals compiled the following checklist to help people stay safe and prepare for driving in freezing temperatures:

- **Create a Safety Kit** – Be prepared with safety essentials in your car. This should include extra windshield washer fluid, hat and warm gloves, flashlight and extra batteries, jumper cables, a couple of bottles of water, and a blanket.

- **Do a pre-trip Vehicle Check** – Avoid an unnecessary downtime problem or possible accident by doing first echelon maintenance checks before you leave.
  - ~ Check the tires as cold weather tends to make them lose air pressure.
  - ~ Check the lighting system and horn.
- **Play It Safe in the Dark** – Watch the weather forecasts closely and try to avoid getting caught away too far when the chance of driving in any type of inclement weather. When driving at night:
  - ~ Avoid using the interior lights or auxiliary light inside the vehicle.
  - ~ Use the “edge” lines and “center” lines to guide you while you're driving.
  - ~ Sometimes street lights can blind you or cause glare; if so, dim your dash lights and lower your sun visor.
- **Prevent Glare** – Snowfall and other precipitation can cause serious road glare, so:
  - ~ Be prepared with sunglasses.
  - ~ Avoid foggy blotches in the inside of the window by cleaning them regularly.
  - ~ You might want to consider changing wiper blades to the heavy duty type, which will give you more help with the heavier debris generated by the winter weather.
- **Buckle your Bundles** – Loose packages can be a dangerous distraction in any vehicle, especially in vans with openings in the second seat. According to the survey, less than 1/2 of the licensed drivers secure their packages in their vehicles.

As I'm writing now, it is beginning to sleet, so the references to icing and slick conditions may not be a figment of our imagination. Most of the things that we mentioned suffice for our rainy day conditions in Mississippi as well as ice, so drive carefully and defensively. The life you save may be your own.

*DANGER NEVER TAKES A  
VACATION!*

*BE ALERT!*

*BE AWARE!*

*BE ALIVE!!*

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