

# MAFES Dawg Tracks

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Landscape Safety: String/Brush Trimmer



MISSISSIPPI STATE  
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String trimmers can and do save a lot of time in work around the house and in work environments as well. But like all types of equipment, it isn't any more efficient or effective than the person who is operating it, safety wise and maintenance wise.

Following are some tips that if put to use can make string trimming safer, more efficient and more useful.

- **Wear appropriate protective gear** - Wear a safety face shield, glasses or goggles, heavy duty gloves, muff type ear protection and a dust respirator, a long sleeve shirt and long pants.
- **Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully** - Take the time to read the manufacturer's instructions, especially if you have rented or borrowed a trimmer. It is also a good idea to have an experienced person to review the operating features with you.
- **Check out the Area** – Before starting a trimming project, check out the area for sticks, rocks, and other debris that could harm you or your trimmer.
- **Check the Trimmer** – Before you start, check the cap and spool to be sure that they are tight and secure. At the same time, check to make sure the spool and cap have no broken parts that could fly off and cause injury.
- **Allow the tip of the spinning line to do the work** – Position the cutting assembly so that the tip of the line is doing the trimming. If you push the blade into the grass deeply, it reduces the efficiency of the line and it tends to overload the motor.
- **String adjustment** – Most models have a “bump feed mechanism to refresh the line when needed. To refresh or replenish the line for better cutting ability, gently bump the spool on the ground. Centrifugal force will release more line and a small blade attached to the grass guard will automatically cut the line to the desired length.
- **Completing the cutting** – When you are finished or stopping for whatever reason, release the throttle or “on” switch. Make sure that the extension cords are unplugged when using electrical units. On gasoline powered models, stop the engine with the on/off switch and for extra security disconnect the spark plug wire.
- **When should you not use a string trimmer** - If you encounter brush, bushes, thick shrubbery, do not attempt to cut these items, the nylon line isn't strong enough to cut these items. Instead, get an axe, hand pruners, brush cutter, hand-held hedge trimmer or loppers. Do not use string trimmers in wet conditions.
- **User tips and precautions** - Most string trimmers spool their line counterclockwise, so it is natural to cut from right to left. You can do this by holding the throttle in the left hand thus allowing you to walk forward instead of walking sideways or backwards. It also reduces the chance for a slip or trip hazard. To make your trimming project more efficient and less time consuming, look over the area and map or plan the method or path to take to save time and energy in the trimming. Before you start a project, map out the route or path of the least walking to be sure to trim all the area without making back trips.

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