

# MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND  
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

*Safety Tips:  
Harvest Safety*

Harvest time is “just around the corner.” Many hours will be spent with combines, tractors, wagons and trucks hustling all over the state on the roads and in the fields. It is imperative that all this equipment has been inspected, repaired and is ready for the harvest to commence. Along with all the aspects of harvest time, we shouldn’t forget the safety factor and also to make sure that new employees are oriented in all phases of safety and total operation of the equipment. With this in mind, it would be a wise idea to take a little time and meet with all your employees to re-familiarize new and old employees with all the aspects of safety and rules of operation. Today we shall review some points of safety and the operation of combines in general;

### Harvest Risks-

Identifying the risk involved and the precautions needed to reduce the risk. Supervisors should ensure precautions are taken, have needed personal protective equipment available, and guards installed on all machinery.

**SAFE STOP** is the most important safety action of all precautions:

~**Handbrake on**

~**Controls in neutral**

~**Stop engine**

~**Remove the ignition key before entering the grain tank or working behind, under or inside the combine.**

### Combine Safety Hazards-

Many fatal injuries occur when operators are pulled into the machine’s reel/header unit. The greatest risk of injury comes from contact with the machine’s moving parts including:

- Being pulled into the cutting mechanism.
- Contact with the knife, reel or stripper.
- Being injured by the drive mechanisms or trapped when automatic sensors operate.
- Becoming entangled with the leveling or discharge augers in the grain tank.
- Contacting the straw chopper or spreader mechanism at the rear of the combine.

### Other Risks Created by Working with a Combine-

- ✓ Contacting overhead power lines.
- ✓ Being run over, trapped under the header or injured when the automatic sensors operate.
- ✓ Falling off the combine, especially during pre/post cleaning, maintenance, or refueling.
- ✓ Fires
- ✓ Noise

### Safe Working Tips-

- ✓ Check to see that all guards and shields are in place and are functional. Do not remove any of these.
- ✓ Make sure that all employees involved with combine operations are properly trained in all areas of use.
- ✓ “One Seat-One Rider” is always in effect, unless a “buddy” seat is provided by the manufacturer.
- ✓ Make sure the reversing mirrors are clean & adjusted.

- ✓ Do not attempt to dismount the combine while it is moving. Minors (under the age of 13) should never be allowed on the combine.
- ✓ Combines, being large, bulky machines, make rear vision hard. The driver should take extra precaution when reversing. Sound your horn repeatedly to alert bystanders or employees that you’re reversing.
- ✓ Keep in mind the hazards caused by straw choppers and spreaders – remember to allow the engine to run down before approaching the rear of the combine.
- ✓ Make sure that there are no bystanders around before you start the descent with the combine.
- ✓ Be sure to plan and consider your move and movement to implement a safe transport of the machine or loading and unloading the header.
- ✓ Make sure that the operators are aware of the potential risks, safe operating procedures, and that they have a copy of the owner’s manual on the combine.
- ✓ Use any grain sampling mechanism provided.
- ✓ Be careful on slopes, avoid sudden changes in direction and always park on flat ground when possible.

### Clearing Blockages-

- ✓ Do not attempt to reach into the header with an arm or leg, attempt to clear a blockage, climb or reach into the grain tank unless you use **the SAFE STOP** procedure.
- ✓ Develop a safe system for doing any type of work on the combine. A good idea is to write down these tips and use them as part of your employer safety policy.
- ✓ Follow the procedures listed in the owner’s manual for safe operation, maintenance, and dealing with blockages and other problems.
- ✓ Use your instruments – watch and listen for potential blockages. Avoiding blockages is easier than contending with them. Also avoiding them allows more productive time use of harvesting (reduces down time).
- ✓ Be patient when working with difficult crop conditions such as unfamiliar crops or fibrous crops, like linseed.
- ✓ Reversing drive mechanisms, when fitted can wind out blockages. In other words – Don’t overload the combine.

### Quick Reminders for Safety Equipment-

In addition to checking and maintaining the combine for ready use in the field:

- ✓ Be sure that the SMV is in place on the back of the machine and is clear and legible to the sight.
- ✓ Be sure that there is at least a 10 lb., Type ABC, fire extinguisher mounted on the machine (A 20 lb. ABC) would be better and a large water extinguisher would be a great help in case of a debris fire.
- ✓ A first aid kit in the cab is needed as well.

Following these tips will greatly enhance your harvest experience, reducing the potential for injury, and improve the overall harvest expense.

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**IF YOU HAVE DOUBTS-CHECK IT OUT!  
TO  
AVOID A SCENE-KEEP YOUR COMBINE  
CLEAN**