

# MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Harvest Safety



Harvest time and planting time are the critical periods for the agriculture industry. Harvest time is rapidly approaching us. As it approaches, we need to take heed of all safety alternatives to help us avoid personal injury, valuable downtime for equipment breakdowns, and other problems that might hinder our crop gathering.

Harvest time is the “Revenue Time” for many farms, but also is the peak period for farm injuries and sometimes death. Many of these farm accidents and injuries can be avoided with proper farm management.

## SAFE TIPS FOR PERSONNEL SAFETY:

- Develop a “safety first” attitude. Follow safe work practices all the time and set good examples for others to follow.
- Maintain good physical and mental fitness before operating equipment. Fatigue, stress, and worry can distract you from operating equipment safely. Try not to avoid taking breaks.
- Be attentive to all safety information by reading the owner’s manuals and the warning labels.
- Inspect the equipment before each use, check for items of repair and possible hazards as they arise. Stay away from moving parts, beware of pinch points, shear points, wrap points, pull-in areas, crush points, stored energy hazards, and freewheeling parts.
- Make sure that all persons operating the equipment have been trained in the proper operation and safety points.
- Before dismounting the equipment, make sure that the engine is turned off; the key removed, and all moving parts have stopped.
- Keep bystanders and other unauthorized persons away from the equipment operating area.
- Choose close-fitting clothes for comfort and safety. Use the proper PPE for the work that you are doing.
- Refrain from using alcohol or drugs, which we know affects your stability.

## ITEMS TO INCLUDE IN PRE-OPERATION INSPECTION:

- Are all the guards and shields in place?
- Are the PTO shields in tact?
- Are safety locks functioning proper? (We had an accident a couple of years ago where the ladder lock on a combine was worn and the operator leaned against it. The ladder released and threw him over the ladder. He hit the ground, injuring a knee rather seriously).
- Are the lights working properly and reflectors in place?
- Is the “Slow Moving Vehicle” sign in place and legible?
- Is there a 20 lb “Type ABC” fire extinguisher mounted on the equipment, tagged, and charged?
- Are all hydraulic lines and other lines in good repair?

## CORN PICKERS:

- The picker’s snapping rolls are the most common culprits for farmer injury because they frequently plug if ground speed is too fast or slow. When plugged, the rollers still travel freely, but stalks bunched around the rolls prevent stalks from entering.
- In hopes of clearing the plug quickly, farmers may be tempted to unplug the rollers without stopping the picker and shutting off the tractor. As the farmer frees the stalk that caused the plug, it rapidly moves into the roller, sometimes taking the farmer’s hand with it.
- Always stop the machine and shut off the tractor before attempting to unplug the picker.

## COMBINES:

- Like corn pickers, combines have numerous areas where individuals can be injured if they fail to follow safe operating procedures. These areas, which must remain open for the crop to enter the machine, must be avoided while the machine is operating.
- Never attempt to dislodge stalks or grain sheaves with your feet while the combine is running.
- Always shut down the combine and turn off the ignition before removing plugged or lodged material.
- Most combine adjustments should be made with the machine shut off to avoid injury to the operator.

There are certain adjustments that have to be made while the engine is running, such as adjusting the variable speed cylinder or fan. These procedures are outlined in the owners’ manual, and shielding usually provides protection so adjustments can be made without risk to the operator.

- Don’t rely on hydraulic cylinders to hold up the header. Use locks or solid blocks to stabilize the header while working beneath it.
- Properly preparing the combine for transport can reduce the risk of a combine/vehicle accident. This is done by:
  - ~Emptying the grain tank to reduce the weight and lower the center of gravity. Move the unloading auger to the transport position.
  - ~When practical, remove the header to reduce width and transport it on a truck or other implement carrier.
- Make sure that the SMV (Slow Moving Vehicle) sign, lights, and reflectors are in good condition.
- Check to see that the combine is not wider than any bridges or culverts that must be crossed to reach the field.

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**SAFETY DOESN'T HAPPEN BY  
ACCIDENT!  
YOU CAN'T GET “HOME” UNLESS  
YOU'RE SAFE~ !**