

# MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND  
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

Hay

Round bales or square bales of hay can fall from stacks in storage barn or off trailers almost silently and have been known to seriously injure or even kill agriculture workers. Caution should be taken especially when performing ground work loading, unloading, and stacking hay onto trailers and into storage areas.

No matter what the situation and no matter what size the hay bales are ...

- Be alert at all times of where the bales overhead can fall from.
- Never turn your back to a loader machine when close to the truck or barn and in the line of a possible falling bale.
- Never walk under a working hay elevator without being totally alert of the bales on it.
- Avoid carrying passengers on trailers. Ensure no one rides on the drawbar of a trailer.
- Take care not to drop bales, but don't put yourself at risk trying to stop them from falling.
- Make regular checks on all bale stacks to ensure that the stack is in good condition and not in danger of collapse or bales coming loose.

Many times newer workers are given the task of hauling and storing hay. Like with any other new job task, be sure workers are ...

- Supervised by a person with the knowledge and experience, to ensure that the employees and others are not harmed.
- Have been properly trained in the operation and safe use of machinery.
- Aware of the dangers and precautions to be observed.
- Medically and physically fit for the type of work.

## Use the Proper Equipment:

- A loader, lift truck or rough terrain handler are equipped with proper handling attachment to ensure the bale is secure from movement during lifting. Ensure your machinery is properly maintained.
- Ensure tractor front-end loaders are counterbalanced. Don't exceed the rated capacity of lifting machinery.
- Use trailers which are designed or properly adapted for bale handling.
- Cover or make safe the spikes on bale handlers when not in use for handling bales. This is particularly important during transport, when the spikes should be covered or folded into a safe position.

## Transporting Bales:

- Do not move partly loaded trailers over slopes or areas of rough ground which could cause bales to be dislodged.
- When transporting bales by tractor attachment, carry the bale low to the ground. Tractor stability may be affected if carrying bales at raised heights over uneven terrain or turning too sharply.
- Plan road travel routes to avoid overhead obstructions, such as trees and low bridges.

## Safe Stacking/Destacking:

- Build stacks on firm, level ground away from fire hazards, sources of ignition, overhead power lines, dwellings, boundary fences and footpaths.
- Never stack higher than the lifting capabilities of the handling equipment.
- Take care not to dislodge other bales. Always use mechanical handling equipment for big bales, destacking from the top first. Never remove bales from the bottom of the stack to leave overhanging bales unsupported.

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Sources:  
<http://www.adenbrook.com/about/safety>  
<http://worksafe.govt.nz>