

# MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND  
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

Chainsaw Safety

Because chainsaws are made to easily cut down trees, of course flesh and bone are no problem for it to easily cut through as well. Each year in the United States there are over 30,000 injuries in chainsaw-related incidents. Most of these injuries can be prevented by wearing the proper personal protective equipment, but there is also no substitute for a careful, safe way of working. Always read through your owner's manual for tips specific to the equipment you are using.

Before starting work check that your protective clothing is complete and worn correctly. Your protective clothing should be suitable for the purpose, it should not impede movement and it should fit snugly.

- Clothing must be sturdy and snug-fitting, but allow complete freedom of movement. Avoid loose-fitting jackets, scarfs, neckties, jewelry, flared or cuffed pants, unconfined long hair or anything that could become entangled with the saw or brush. Wear overalls or jeans with a reinforced cut retardant insert or cut retardant chaps.
- Protect your hands with gloves when handling saw and saw chain. Heavy-duty, nonslip gloves improve your grip and protect your hands.
- Good footing is most important in chainsaw work. Wear sturdy boots with nonslip soles. Steel-toed safety boots are recommended.
- To reduce the risk of injury to your eyes never operate a chainsaw unless wearing goggles or properly fitted safety glasses with adequate top and side protection.

Do not operate a chainsaw when you are fatigued. Be alert – If you get tired while operating your chainsaw, take a break. Tiredness may result in loss of control.

For more info contact – Leslie Woolington  
**MAFES /MSU-EXTENSION**  
**Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control**  
(662) 325-3204

## General Chainsaw Safety Tips:

- ✓ Understand your limits. Sometimes it's better to call a professional if your project is beyond your abilities and comfort level. It's okay, don't let your ego get in the way of your safety.
- ✓ If you're a beginner start simple with your projects. Cutting logs for firewood or branches is a great place to start but don't start with felling a large tree – start with a small tree. Practice, practice, practice. Start small.
- ✓ Do not cut alone. Always have someone nearby – but not close to you – just in case something goes wrong. Always have a good first aid kit nearby.
- ✓ When starting your chainsaw make sure the chain brake is engaged.
- ✓ Always hold your running chainsaw with two hands. Never use one hand. If you need to use your hand for something make sure you turn off your chainsaw first.
- ✓ Inspect your chainsaw before starting to ensure that all the safety features are working and the chain is tight on the guide bar.
- ✓ Never cut with the nose or tip of your chainsaw. This will cause kickback and is a leading cause of injury.
- ✓ Never use a chainsaw to cut above your head. Don't use a chainsaw on a ladder.
- ✓ When moving from tree to tree either turn off your chainsaw or engage the chain brake before walking.
- ✓ Use a scabbard when transporting your chainsaw.

Sources:

<https://www.stihl.com>  
<https://www.chainsawjournal.com/chainsaw-safety-tips/>  
<https://www.safetytalkideas.com/safetytalks/chainsaw-safety/>