



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY  
EXPERIMENT STATION

# MAFES DAWG TRACKS

There is usually one of two reactions when you get a new or “new to you” gadget, tool, or piece of equipment – excitement or anxiety. Excitement makes you automatically intrigued by how every aspect works and how all the functions operate. Excitement helps you want to learn. But if you are anxious about this new item, you may experience worry, unease, or nervousness. Fear of the unknown is what stems a lot of these feelings. Nobody enjoys being anxious, so our natural reaction is to lay the item aside. We have no curiosity about it and therefore little desire to learn more about how it works, regardless of if required to use it or not.

Both of these reactions are directly tied to how safely you work with gadgets, tools, and equipment.

**The more you learn about an item,  
the easier it becomes to  
recognize the associated hazards.**

As a result, you can take steps to work in a safe manner and decrease your risk of exposure to injury. Contrarily, if you don't know very much about an item you may be setting yourself up for an accident.

So, whether you are the one who wanted the item initially and welcome it with excitement, or it was assigned for your use and anxiety is high; these guidelines can help you learn about the unknowns, regarding both use and hazards, of gadgets, tools, or equipment.

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- ✓ Read the manual, technical sheets and watch You Tube videos produced by the manufacturer.
- ✓ Ask the vendor/supplier for a demonstration of proper use.
- ✓ Search for reviews and articles from subject matter experts about that specific item.
- ✓ Read through existing standard operating procedures (SOP) that another colleague at a similar business or department is willing to share.
- ✓ Use it before putting into necessary service. Get comfortable with all aspects of the functions. No amount of reading or watching videos can be substituted for hands-on use.
- ✓ Create your own site-specific SOP, verbal or written for complex items. This is also a good time to think about if there are any limitations on how new items will be used.

Communicate what you learned through this process with other users & co-workers. Explain the who, what, when & how, differences in past models, new features, and maintenance schedules.

Educating yourself about new & “new to you” items can help reduce the anxiety, avoid safety incidents, and help ensure efficient use.

*How much better to get wisdom than gold,  
to get insight rather than silver!*

*Proverbs 16:16*