

# ATV Safety

## What are ATVs?...

ATVs are 3 or 4 wheeled motorized vehicles. Originally they were used for farming, forestry, natural resource exploration and law enforcement.

They are now popular for tourism, recreation, trail riding and camping.

ATVs look sturdy, with their big tires and wide stance; however, they can weigh up to 275 kg (600 lbs.) and travel up to 125 km/hr.

## Did you know?...

- Almost 5% of ALL serious injuries to children & teens involve ATVs.
- Most serious ATV-related injuries to children & teens involve male drivers and occur in rural areas.
- In 5 years, serious ATV-related injuries involving children & teens have increased by almost 275%.

## How to prevent ATV-related injuries...

- ATVs should only be operated by drivers 16 years of age or older.
- All drivers should take an approved training course.
- ATVs should be registered and licensed.
- Do not carry a passenger on an ATV unless the

manufacturer specifies a passenger is allowed.

- Children should never ride as passengers on ATVs.
- Wear an approved ATV or motorcycle helmet, eye protection, and appropriate clothing.
- Never use alcohol or drugs while operating an ATV.
- Drive the ATV at a safe, controlled speed.
- Parents **MUST** be involved when their teen begins driving an ATV. This includes: controlling access to the ATV, teaching safe driving habits, providing opportunity for practice, and setting and enforcing rules.

## Why do ATV injuries occur?...

- Most often, children are injured using an adult sized ATV, which are inappropriate for their size and weight.
- Young drivers lack driving experience and tend to take more risks when driving.
- Young drivers overestimate their own physical and driving abilities and underestimate the dangers of operating a motorized vehicle.

## Ride Safe This Summer

The Great Outdoors is calling, but check out these tips before you go:

- Use your head and protect it too. Always wear an appropriate helmet and encourage your friends to do the same.

- ATVs and alcohol don't mix! ATVs are like any other motor vehicle; don't ride while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Be prepared. Ensure that ALL equipment is functioning properly. Pack an emergency kit and tell someone where you're going and when you expect to return. Dress appropriately for the weather and bush conditions.
- Size does matter. Younger children are too small to properly control a large ATV and can be seriously injured or even killed in ATV accidents.
- Adult-sized ATVs are powerful machines that should not be operated by anyone younger than sixteen. Don't overload your vehicle with items OR people.
- Responsible riding rocks! Coexist, and share the outdoors with other riders, campers, and hikers.
- Respect the land and its animals, so future generations can ride too.

## Think And Drive

- Make sure your registration and insurance are up to date. Properly attach your license plate and carry proof of your insurance.
- Check your helmet. Invest in a new one if it's damaged by any dents or cracks.
- Give your ATV a twice-over. Check that all equipment, including brakes, lights,

engine, and tires are in good condition and functioning properly.

- Familiarize yourself with local regulations and bylaws regarding ATV usage.
- Get your emergency kit ready to go, including any or all of the following: blanket, snacks / food, waterproof matches, a whistle, insect repellent and sunblock, a flashlight, spare fuel, tea or coffee, water/water purification tablets, duct tape, signal mirror, tool kit, first aid supplies, rope, flares, spare keys, a sharp knife, and/or compass.
- If your children want to ride, consider an ATV safety course. If you haven't ridden before or could just use a refresher, do the same. Don't let your children use adult-sized ATVs.
- Consider taking a first aid course. It doesn't hurt to be prepared.
- Get yourself in the mindset for a great riding season. Have fun!

### Respect the Outdoors

Awareness of environmental concerns has been growing for decades. It has affected how we relate to the outdoors.

It affects those of us who use off-road vehicles, and it affects those of us who manufacture and sell off-road vehicles. We all have a stake in safe, responsible riding and land use.

To keep riding areas open requires good relationships between public land managers, private land owners and others who share the land such as riders, campers and hikers. In most cases common courtesy and consideration of their interests is all that is necessary to ensure that

everyone can enjoy the area. Here are a few tips to consider when you ride:

Learn about the area you will ride in. Contact the public land manager or private property owner to ensure that you understand area restrictions and have permission to ride there. Get maps of the area, and stay on trails if they are provided.

Keep your ATV quiet. ATVs are designed to be relatively quiet while still delivering maximum performance, smooth engine torque and spark suppression. Excessive noise stresses wildlife, and annoys property owners and other recreation users. It also contributes to your own riding fatigue. Less noise means you can ride farther more comfortably.

Obey trail markers and closure signs. There are many reasons why an area may be closed to ATVs including the existence of fire hazard, refuge to wildlife or plant life and safety hazards for ATV riders. The reasons may not be obvious. If it is posted as closed, stay out.

Always leave gates and fences the way you found them. This is especially important on private lands where livestock may be kept.

Leave the area as clean as you found it. If you see litter, pick it up and carry it out on your ATV.

Carry a rolled up plastic trash bag and a couple of bungee cords on your ATV. Why not leave the area cleaner than you found it?

Be courteous to others you may meet on the trail. Always give right-of-way to hikers and horseback riders. Pull off the trail and stop your engine for horses. In most areas, horses are not permitted on trails unless they are accustomed to vehicles, but don't take a

chance. The rider will likely talk soothingly to the horse. It doesn't hurt for you to do the same to assure the horse you are no threat. Horses respond very positively to a calm, human voice.

Approach livestock or wildlife on the trail slowly. In some parts of the country, range cattle pass the afternoon under shade trees along a trail. If you startle them, they may run directly into your path. Give them time to react and give them as wide a berth as possible.

Whenever you talk to a landowner, take your helmet off. The helmet can make you appear to be intimidating and unfriendly.

Be friendly and honest in all your discussions with the landowner & you are there as their guest.