

ATV Safety

- Leadership and Safety Starts with You. Your words and actions set the tone for safety on your farm (for both agricultural and recreational use).
- At times, we become comfortable with potentially dangerous equipment and forget about the dangers. No matter if you are a beginner or a seasoned ATV rider, safety should always be a priority.

The intent of this handout is to provide information on ATV safety. Due to the number of deaths, permanent injuries, and hospital visits associated with ATVs, it is important to review and adopt safety rules on your farm.

ATV Safety - Reducing the Risk

Accidents and injuries involving All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) are often the result of one or more of the following conditions:

- Operating at unsafe speeds
- Operator/passenger not wearing a helmet or other safety equipment
- Operating on paved roads
- Failing to obey operating laws or regulations
- A child operating an ATV that is too large for him/her
- Young operator without adequate adult supervision
- Passengers carried on an ATV designed for a single rider
- Operating on trails that are above the operator's skill level
- Operating under the influence of drugs or alcohol

ATVs Can Be Dangerous

ATVs offer a level of simplicity, convenience, and versatility in the ag sector. However, there are dangers associated with operating an ATV. ATV accidents can result in permanent injuries or even death. Thousands of ATV-related injuries and hundreds of ATV-related deaths can be avoided with proper planning, safety equipment, and responsible behavior.

Are You Operating Safely?

ATVs have many uses in agriculture and sports recreation and are used by over 35 million riders in the United States.¹ In some situations, they have become a substitute for trucks, tractors, and walking. The list of uses continues to expand around the farm. A simple question to ask yourself and others when driving an ATV is: are you operating it safely?

Special safety considerations should be exercised for on-the-farm and off-the-farm use. The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates over 700 deaths and 100,000 injuries involving ATVs occur each year.² Between 1982 and 2014, an estimated 23 percent of ATV-related deaths involved children under 16 years old.³



Figure 1. ATV operators should always wear a DOT-approved helmet, goggles, long pants, over-the-ankle boots, and gloves.

Take time out to assess ATV safety on your farm. Often people fail to recognize the danger of their actions, disregard safety, do not consider consequences, or a combination of each. Most ATV operators don't think accidents will happen to them. Deaths and permanent spinal injuries change lives forever. Visit the Monsanto Off-the-Job Safety YouTube Channel growingsafely.net to learn how one ATV incident changed a teenager's life forever.

ATV Safety

ATV Safety Institute's Golden Rules⁴

1. Always wear a Department of Transportation (DOT)-compliant helmet, goggles, long pants, over-the-ankle boots, and gloves.
2. Never ride on paved roads except to safely cross roadways where permitted by law.
3. Never ride under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
4. Never carry a passenger on a single-rider ATV, and only carry the number of passengers an ATV is designed for.
 5. Ride an ATV that is appropriate for your age.
 6. Supervise young riders; ATVs are not toys.
 7. Ride only on designated trails and at a safe speed.
8. Take a hands-on ATV Rider Course and the free online E-Course. Visit the ATVsafety.org or call 800.887.2887.

ATV Safety Institutes Golden Rules Defined⁴

1. Always wear a DOT-compliant helmet, goggles, long pants, over-the-ankle boots, and gloves. Protect yourself from injuries. The single-most important piece of equipment you can wear for safe riding is a helmet. Head injuries are the most common causes of fatalities or permanent injury in ATV-related accidents.

2. Never ride on paved roads except to safely cross when permitted by law. ATVs handle much differently on pavement. ATVs are designed to be driven only on off-road terrain; they should not be driven on paved surfaces for several reasons. ATVs have solid rear axles and no rear differential, which makes turning on pavement difficult and dangerous. ATV tires are low pressure for crossing rough terrain and not designed for speed on hard surfaces. In addition, the ATV is “rider active” as the rider straddles the seat and uses their body to affect how the vehicle operates. The rider’s position on the ATV at high speed makes them extremely vulnerable to losing control, tipping over, and hitting stationary objects or another vehicle.

3. Never ride under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. The use of alcohol distorts a person’s perceptual skills, attention span, judgment, vision, balance, and reaction times, which all lead to dangerous conditions when operating an ATV. The added elements of wind, sun, and motion of ATV riding only increases the negative effects of drugs and alcohol. ATV riding and alcohol are a deadly combination.

4. Never carry a passenger on a single rider ATV and only carry the number of passengers the ATV is designed for. ATVs handle differently than any other vehicle. They are “rider active” – meaning the operator adjusts their body position while operating the ATV. Drivers must be able to shift their weight freely in all directions and need a full length seat. Passengers can affect the balance of the ATV and make it difficult for the drivers to control the ATV.

5. Ride an ATV that’s right for your age. Every ATV has a label indicating the minimum operator age required to handle the vehicle. Young drivers should be evaluated for both their

physical and mental capabilities to handle the ATV. Check local regulations on young ATV operators.

6. Supervise young riders; ATVs are not toys. It is the parent’s responsibility to ensure that their child has adequate training to handle an ATV properly and safely. Children often do not recognize hazardous situations and are more likely to take serious risks without realizing the danger associated with their actions.

7. Ride only on designated trails and at a safe speed.

8. Take a hands-on ATV RiderCourseSM and the free online E-Course. Visit ATVsafety.org or call 800.887.2887.

Sources

¹ About the ATV institute. ATV Safety Institute. <http://www.atvsafety.org>

² United States Consumer Product Safety Commission. 2014. Quick facts for a safer ride. <http://www.cpsc.gov>

³ Topping, J. 2015. 2014 Annual report of ATV related deaths and injuries. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

⁴ Before you ride: ATV safety institute golden rules. ATV Safety Institute. <http://www.atvsafety.org/asi.cfm>.

ATV safety information center. U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. <http://www.cpsc.gov/en/safety-education/safety-education-centers/atv-safety-information-center/> Official ATV safety certification. atvcourse.com Educating Riders Online. www.atvcourse.com/

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