

ATV SAFETY



At Home, At Work, At Play

Introduction

Riding all terrain vehicles (ATVs) like 4-wheelers for recreation can be a lot of fun. Also, they are great tools to use while working and hunting. It is important to respect the machine and use it properly, whatever your reason is for riding.

Many people ride their whole lives without having an incident, but ATV accidents are on the rise nationwide. Here are some important things to remember to keep you and your family safe when operating ATVs.



Wear Safe Riding Gear

It is important to wear appropriate protective gear when riding ATVs. Each piece serves a purpose to keep you safe.



The most critical piece is a helmet. **Always wear a helmet**, because it may save your life in an accident. Also wear a helmet to protect your head from things on the trail, such as tree limbs and flying debris. Special helmets are made for you to wear while riding your ATV. This helmet is different from the one you use while riding your bicycle.



Wear eye protection like goggles or a face shield to keep dust and other debris out of your eyes while you ride. It is very important to always be able to see the trail clearly.

Wear boots to protect your feet and ankles from injury and to give better grip on the footrests. You can buy special boots for riding ATVs, but if you already have hiking boots or work boots, those will work just as well.



Wear a chest protector to help absorb shock and protect from injury in case of a spill or crash.



Wear gloves to protect hands from debris on the trail and to give your hands better grip on the handlebars. Any kind of leather or nylon glove will work.

Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants to protect your arms and legs from things that might hurt you on the trail. Some things to watch out for are sticks, tree limbs, rocks, thorns, and other debris. Also, by covering your arms and legs, you will not have to worry about sunburn. Long pants also offer another type of protection; they keep your legs safe from the engine heat!

Ride the Correct Size ATV

You should always make sure your ATV fits you properly. By using the right size ATV, you can be sure you can easily reach and operate all the controls, such as the throttle (gas) and brake. It is hard to control an ATV that is too big. Stay safe by using the right size ATV for your age:

- 6 to 11 years old: 70cc or less is a great fit for your age.
- 12 to 15 years old: 70cc to 90cc is a great fit for your age.
- 16 years and older: 90cc or above is a great fit for your age.



It is a good idea to go through a checklist before riding your ATV to make sure you have everything you might need during the ride and to make sure the ATV will run properly.



Controls

- Make sure the brakes are easy to reach and operate smoothly. Refer to the owner's manual for instructions on adjusting brakes.
- Check the throttle (gas) by engaging it while turning the steering wheel from side to side. The throttle should push smoothly and always snap back to a position even with the handlebars.

- Check throttle cables and the control for foreign objects that could restrict movement and for damage from spills.
- If your ATV uses a foot shifter, make sure it is tightly attached and in a safe position. The foot shifter should be easy to reach. It is too low if you have to point your toes downward to reach it.



Chain or driveshaft and chassis

- Some ATVs are powered by chains and others by driveshaft. Your owner's manual will tell you which one operates your ATV.
- Look closely at the chain to

check for proper tension and lubrication. Also make sure the chain is not worn.

- Check for oil leaks on the driveshaft.
- Even with normal use the parts can loosen on the chassis of your ATV. Look and feel for loose parts before you start the engine so as not to burn your hands. Also, shake the handlebars, footrests and other parts before you ride. From time to time you may need to use a wrench to tighten loose parts.



Fuel and oil

- It is a good idea to start your ride with a full tank of gas, just in case a problem arises.
- Check the oil before cranking the engine. Your ATV will not run without the proper amount of oil.

Change the oil regularly. Check your owner's manual to see how often your ATV should be maintained.

- Always look under your ATV to make sure there is not a fuel or oil leak.



Lights and switches

- Make sure all lights (front and rear) are working.
- Check the ignition switch by switching it on and off during your pre-ride check.
- Be sure the engine stop switch turns off the engine.



Tires and wheels

- Use a low pressure gauge to make sure all tires are inflated evenly. Unequal pressure can make the ATV pull to one direction.
- Inflate the tires to the specifications in the owner's manual.

Under or over inflation can cause damage to the tire as well as affect the way your ATV steers and handles.

- Look carefully for cuts or gouges that can cause air leaks.
 - Grasp each tire and try to rock it on its axle to determine if there are loose nuts or worn out bearings in the wheel. The tire should not slip or wiggle.
 - Make sure axle nuts are tight and secured by pins.
- Also make sure the wheel nuts are tightened.



A safe ATV rider always goes on the trail well prepared. Make sure you carry a strong rope for towing, a spare headlight bulb, tire pressure gauge, spark plugs, wire, tape, and a simple first aid kit.

Follow the Safety Rules

- Never ride under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
- Always wear a helmet and other protective gear.
- Never ride on public roads – another vehicle could hit you.
- Never carry a passenger on a single-rider vehicle.
- Supervise riders younger than 16; ATVs are not toys.
- Ride only on designated trails at a safe speed.
- Ride an ATV that's right for your age.
The guidelines are as follows:
 - Age 6 and older – Under 70cc,
 - Age 12 and older – 70cc to 90cc,
 - Age 16 and older – Over 90cc



Test Your Knowledge

After reading this handout you should be able to pass this quiz. Give it a try

1. What safety gear is this rider missing?

- Boots and gloves
- Long-sleeved shirt and boots
- Goggle and long-sleeved shirt



2. Which size ATV is right for you?

70cc or less

70cc to 90cc

90cc or above



Test Your Knowledge

3. These pictures show steps of the pre-ride checkup. Match the picture to the step.



- Make sure the brakes are easy to reach.
- Make sure all lights (front and rear) are working.
- Check the oil before cranking the engine.

4. What is wrong with this picture?



- They have no safety gear.
- They are riding on a public road.
- There are two riders on a single rider ATV.

5. These pictures show riders breaking rules. Match the picture to the rule that is being broken.



- Always wear protective gear.
- Ride an ATV that is right for your age.
- Never ride on public roads.



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