

ATV and Me

ATVs, like other heavy machinery, have a lot of power and the potential for high speeds. To keep yourself and others safe, use common sense and follow these helpful safety guidelines:

- Get trained
- Wear a helmet
- Don't ride tandem
- Don't ride on pavement
- Don't allow children to ride on adult ATVs
- Don't ride under the influence

Get trained

A course on safety training teaches basic skills for driving and maneuvering an ATV as well as important information on how to keep safe. ATV drivers who have taken an interactive safety course have a lower risk of injury than those with no formal training.

Wear protective gear when riding ATVs

In case of an accident it's crucial to wear protective gear to lessen the severity of injuries. A helmet is the most important piece of equipment and should be a motorcycle or motorized sports helmet certified by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) or the Snell Memorial Foundation (certification can be found near the back of the helmet). To protect the rest of the body from injuries due to rocks, debris, and brush, other protective items should include: ankle-covering boots, goggles, gloves, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt.

Don't ride tandem

Never drive with a passenger or ride as a passenger on an ATV. The driver must be able to maneuver his body in order to properly control the vehicle. Passengers can make it very difficult to do so, putting the safety of the driver and passenger in jeopardy.

Avoid pavement when driving an ATV

Never drive an ATV on paved roads or areas. ATVs are meant to be driven on rough terrain and are difficult to control on paved roads. In addition, collisions with other larger vehicles (even small cars) can be deadly. Many ATV fatalities happen on paved roads.

Don't allow children on adult ATVs

About 1/3 of all deaths and injuries with ATVs involve children and most of these occur when a child is riding or driving an adult ATV. No children under the age of 16 should be allowed on adult ATVs.

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Don't ride under the influence

Never drive an ATV under the influence of any amount of alcohol or drugs, including prescription and over-the-counter drugs. Reaction time and judgement are essential skills for the safe use of an ATV and these skills are impaired by alcohol and drugs.

This message is brought to you by the Center for Rural Health and Farm Safety at Carle Foundation Hospital. For more information, please visit us at carle.org/farmsafety, email farmsafety@carle.com or call (217) 902-5204.