

ATV Safety

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It's summer, which means kids are out of school and enjoying outdoor activities. One activity that can be concerning is off road vehicle operation by kids. From May through September, an increase of All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) injuries and fatalities is seen especially in youth under the age of 16.

As a parent, it is up to you to set a good example for ATV safety. Only you can help your child ride sensibly and safely by setting some ground rules and reinforcing the serious nature and responsibility that comes with ATV riding.

Here are some safety tips to keep in mind while riding an ATV to prevent unintentional accidents and injuries:

- Check the state or local laws and regulations where you ride.

- Always wear a helmet that is certified by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and/or Snell Memorial Foundation. A helmet can prevent severe head injury and death.

- Wear snug-fitting goggles or a helmet with a face shield to keep debris out of your eyes.

- Wear over-the-ankle boots, gloves, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt or jacket.

- Never ride on paved roads except to cross a roadway safely. ATVs are designed to be operated off-highway.

- Never ride under the influence of alcohol or drugs and no cell phone use while driving.

- Never ride with more passengers than there are seats. Most ATVs are designed for only one person on them – the driver. Riding with a passenger increases the risk of rolling over and getting in an accident.

Children should ride an ATV that is right for their size and age. ATV models for adults can weigh hundreds of pounds and travel at high speeds. Handling them requires considerable strength and reflexes that children are not mature enough to handle.

Children younger than 6 years of age should never be on any ATV-either as a driver or passenger.

- Riders younger than 16 should be supervised; ATVs are not toys.

- Do a pre-ride inspection of your ATV. Checking the tires and wheels, controls, lights and switches, oil and fuel, chain, drive shaft and chassis, and have a tool kit.

- Always ride at a safe speed.

- Ride during daylight hours and be aware of your surroundings.

- Avoid driving when you are tired.

- Know basic first aid to treat minor injuries and be able to get help if in an emergency.

- Never use a three-wheeler. They are unsafe and no longer manufactured.

- Safety should be emphasized at all times. Don't ride beyond your ability and try to perform stunts or tricks that will get you injured. Showing off isn't a good idea.

The ATV Safety Institute offers a free online training called E-Course at ATVsafety.org You can also take a hands-on ATV RiderCourse drivers training. Visit ATVsafety.org for more information.

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