ATV Safety Tips

ATV stands for All Terrain Vehicle. ATVs are continually growing in popularity for work and recreation use on many farms and ranches. Unfortunately, cases of serious injury and death have increased directly with increased ATV use. Most ATV injuries can be attributed to improper use, not faulty equipment. Because of this, we should make ATV safety a priority!

One of the growing areas of concern is child-use of ATVs. An ATV is not a toy. Children should only be permitted to operate an ATV after receiving specialized training and even then, they should only be allowed to operate an ATV of an appropriate size.

What is an appropriate size?

- ATVs with an engine size of 70cc to 90 cc should be operated by people at least 12 years of age.
- ATVs of an engine size greater than 90cc should only be operated by people at least 16 years of age.

Where can I take an ATV safety course? Contact the ATV Safety Institute to find out how and where you can enroll in a course. While there is a cost, you will find it is substantially less than the medical bills and loss of productivity that can result from improper training.

What other steps can I take to protect myself while using an ATV?

- Wear appropriate riding gear: DOT- or Snell ANSI-approved helmet, goggles, gloves, over-the-ankle boots, long-sleeve shirt, and long pants.
- Read the owner's manual carefully.
- Never carry a passenger. ATVs are not made for multiple riders.
- Be extra cautious when using attachments. Just because an attachment is available doesn't mean that it can be used without increasing your risk of being injured. Any added attachments affect the stability, operating, and braking ability of the ATV.
- Do not operate the ATV on streets, highways, or paved roads.
- Always inspect your ATV before use.

Off-roading puts a strain on your ATV, so it's important to perform the scheduled maintenance recommended in your owner's manual. You can avoid a breakdown and a possible injury.

In addition to routine maintenance, you should inspect your ATV prior to every use. A pre-ride inspection should become automatic before each outing or use.
Steps to inspecting an ATV: Follow the CHEC FIRST Inspection. Before you perform the pre-ride check, be sure to set the parking brake.

C: Chain/Drive Shaft
- Check for damage or tightness
- Add lubrication as needed

H: Handlebars
- Move left and right to check ease of steering
- Check all controls on handlebars
- Make sure throttle, clutch, and brake move easy and snap back
- Turn light switch on and check headlight, taillight, and brake light
- Make sure cables are not damaged or kinked

E: Exhaust
- Spark arrestor must be U.S. Forest Service-approved
- Muffler should not be damaged, rusty, or leaking
- Adding a loud aftermarket exhaust system is illegal

C: Chassis/Transmission
- Check for loose or worn parts
- Check shifter for smoothness
- Check for leaks or noise

F: Fuel/Fluids/Filter
- Make sure all are full: gas, oil, coolant, and brake fluid
- Check fuel lines for leaks and air filter debris

I: Ignition and Engine Stop Switch
- Check ignition switch and test engine stop switch
- Make sure battery is properly charged and not damaged

R: Registration
- Check registration decal or trail pass for expiration and easy visibility
- Carry registration paperwork or registration certificate and ATV Safety Certificate as required

S: Spare Parts/Tool Kit
- Carry spare parts such as spark plugs, tire repair kit, duct tape, etc.
- Check tool kit and owner’s manual

T: Tires and Wheels
- Check for proper air pressure
- Inspect tires for wear and damage
- Check lug nuts and wheel bearings

For more information
Wyoming AgrAbility
(866) 395-4986
(307) 766-3052
www.uwyo.edu/agrability
agrability@uwyo.edu

This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under Agreement No: 2010-41590-20741

The University of Wyoming is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.

**Information compiled by National Safety Council’s Agricultural Division, the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS) and Wisconsin ATV Safety