# ATV Safety and Gear Safety Talk



## WHAT'S AT STAKE?

ATVs were first introduced in the U.S. for agricultural use in the early 1980s. Over the past thirty years, ATVs have grown increasingly popular recreationally and more recently, have become a valuable asset at work. With more than 10 million in use, it is important to know the hazards associated with ATVs and how to operate them safely.

But what is an ATV or all-terrain vehicle?

An ATV, is any two, three or four wheeled motorized vehicle designed for off-road, rugged landscapes. By design, ATVs are "driver active" where the operator sits on a saddle-like seat, and steers with handlebars, similar to a motorcycle or snowmobile. On "driver active" vehicles, the operator´s body movements help control the steering and direction, requiring a strong combination of skill, good judgement, attention and physical strength.

## WHAT'S THE DANGER?

**But ATVs are NOT toys! As with all vehicles and farm equipment, they must be used safely.** Certain offences under the Criminal Code, such as dangerous driving and alcohol related offences, will apply to drivers of ATVs, as will offences under the Highway Traffic Act such as careless driving. Check your provincial legislation for the laws that apply in your area. Ask about the requirements for registration and insurance, legal age and/or licensing of driver, and the rules for public roads.

**Important Facts**

ATVs have unique features that enable them to operate in harsh work environments where larger, less mobile vehicles cannot safely be used. Their oversized, deep tread, and low-pressure tires (4-5 psi) and light weight (600-1000 pounds) – compared to other motorized vehicles – enhance their maneuverability but also present risks such as a rollover which may occur due to a high center of gravity and a relatively narrow wheelbase.

**What are Primary Reasons for Work-Related accidents involving ATV's?**

- Unbalance loads in excess of the ATV’s specified limits (especially overloading the rear cargo rack)
- Operating at excessive speeds for the terrain/operation
- Operating ATVs on paved roads
- Not wearing a protective helmet
- Insufficient or no training
- Carrying passengers

**Hi–lites Related to ATVs Crashes/Injuries**

- Males are at a much higher risk
- Workers 65 years of age or older are at higher risk than younger workers
- Rollovers are the most common cause of crashes
- Animal production workers have the highest risk for injury

### OVERVIEW

Injuries, deaths can happen at all points while operating an ATV: mounting and dismounting, transporting farm supplies, driving on slopes and performing maintenance. Rollovers, collisions, flying debris, pinch points, moving parts, uneven surfaces, burn hazards and noises are all things we have to be aware of when operating an ATV.

# HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

### RECOMMENDATIONS/PRECAUTIONS FOR THE SAFE USE OF ATVs AT WORK

**Employers Responsibility**

Recommended Practices for the Safe Use of ATVs at Work.

- Provide helmet and eye-protection for workers and encourage the use of other personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Identify and mark – and eliminate if possible – hazards such as excavations, trenches, and guy wires that might be present in specific work environments, so they are easily seen and avoided by workers on the job site.
- Establish operating and maintenance policies that follow manufacturer’s terrain guidelines, specified hauling and towing capacity, and passenger restrictions.
- Provide employees access to hands-on training by an ATV Safety Institute instructor or a similarly qualified instructor.
- Share responsibility with employees.

**Employees Responsibility**

- Wear PPE including a helmet, eye-protection, long pants, and sturdy boots.
- Participate in hands-on training in the safe handling and operation of an ATV.
- Conduct a pre-ride inspection of tires, brakes, headlights, etc., and follow employer’s maintenance polices for upkeep of the ATV.
- Understand how implements and attachments may affect the stability and handling of the ATV
- Never exceed the manufacturer’s specified hauling and towing capacity or

weight limits and ensure cargo is balanced, secured, and loaded on provided racks.
- Be aware of potential hazards such as trees, ruts, rocks, streams and gullies, and follow posted hazard warnings.
- Drive at speeds safe for weather and terrain and never operate ATVs on surfaces not designed for ATVs such as paved roads and highways.
- Never permit passengers on the ATV, unless the ATV has an additional seat specifically designed to carry them.
- Never operate an ATV while under the influence of drugs or alcohol or Employees.

### OPERATIONAL SAFETY

**Key Points**

- Review Standard Operating Practices for ATVs at least yearly. If you have questions, ask.

**Make A Pre-Ride Check**

- **Tires and wheels:** Make sure air pressure in tires is at recommended rate and check for cuts or gouges. Tighten axle nuts and secure with cotter pins.
- **Controls and cables:** Check controls and cable locations and make sure all work well, including throttle and brakes.
- **Lights and electrical system:** Ignition switch should stop the engine when in“off”position and when in“on”position, headlights and taillights should work.
- **Oil and fuel:** Check oil and fuel levels.
- **Chain and/or drive shaft chassis:** Inspect, adjust, and lubricate chain and/or drive shaft chassis. Check for nuts and bolts loosened by vibration.

**Start It Properly – BONEC**

**B**rakes – Always have parking brake on.

**O**n position – for fuel cap vent or valve and ignition.

**N**eutral – Ensure the transmission is in neutral position.

**E**ngine – The engine stop switch should be in the “run”or“start”position.

**C**hoke – For cold engines, turn choke to‘on’position and start according to the manual.

## FINAL WORD

No matter what job employees perform or what type of conditions they work in, training is the key to safety and accident prevention.