

MONTHLY SAFETY BLAST

ATV SAFETY



Monthly Safety Blast written by Ashton Williams, 2012 Agricultural Safety Intern

Each year, thousands of people are admitted to emergency rooms with injuries from riding ATVs (all-terrain vehicles) and hundreds don't survive. In 2010 there were more than 115,000 injuries requiring emergency room visits from ATV incidents, and in 2009 the United States grieved 649 deaths. The "lucky" ones that lived frequently faced thousands of dollars in medical bills and suffered life-altering physical and mental disabilities.

Although ATVs can be deadly, they are also helpful tools for agricultural work. When used cautiously and correctly, they can be both productive and fun. The main reason injuries and fatalities are so prevalent is because people do not use the off road vehicles the way manufacturers designed them to be used. Below are some important considerations to safe ATV operation.

Correct Sizing

- Children should not ride adult sized ATVs.
 - ⇒ Manufacturers produce various sizes for a reason.
 - ⇒ In a wreck, a 40lb child does not stand much of a chance of survival with a 700lb ATV coming down on top of them.
- Almost 90% of children under age 16 who suffered ATV-related injuries were riding adult ATVs (90cc or bigger).

Know the Machine and How to Ride It

- Know how to shift gears appropriately.
- Understand which set of brakes each lever engages.
- ATVs flip easily, so ride cautiously.
- Always be aware of your terrain and surroundings.

No Passengers/Heavy Loads

- Most ATVs are designed for one rider only.
 - ⇒ The long seat is designed so the rider can shift their weight to prevent the machine from flipping. Adding passengers or heavy loads unbalances the ATV making it much easier to lose control or turn over. In most accidents involving multiple riders, the passengers are the ones seriously injured or killed, not the operator.

Wear Protective Gear

- DOT approved helmet
 - ⇒ Head injuries are the most common cause of death from ATVs.
 - ⇒ Almost all accidents where the person was wearing a helmet (correctly) did not end in death.
- Goggles
- Long sleeved shirt
- Gloves
- Pants
- Over the ankle boots

Take an ATV Safety Training Course

- Many are offered for free. Call your manufacturer, local 4 H chapter, cooperative extension agent, or go to www.atvsafety.org.

Southwest Center for Agricultural
Health, Injury Prevention & Education
11937 US Hwy 271
Tyler, TX 75708-3154

Phone: 903-877-5998
Fax: 903-877-7014
E-mail: agcenter@uthct.edu
www.swagcenter.org

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Resources

Garland, Sarah. United States. U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. *2010 Annual Report of ATV-Related Deaths and Injuries*. Bethesda: , 2011. Web. <<http://www.cpsc.gov/library/foia/foia12/os/atv2010.pdf>>.

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United States. U.S. Census Bureau. *Table 1103. Motor Vehicle Accidents—Number and Deaths: 1990 to 2009*. 2012. Web. <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/cats/transportation/motor_vehicle_accidents_and_fatalities.html>.

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