



Farm Bureau Safety Program

ATV SAFETY -All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) are a popular form of recreation and a useful tool on the farm. An ATV is a three- or four-wheeled vehicle with low-pressure tires, powered by a gasoline engine. As with any equipment, there are safety rules that should be followed.

It is important to make sure that the ATV fits the rider in both size and strength. Manufacturers recommend that no one under the age of 12 operate an ATV and children under the age of 16 should not drive an ATV over 90 cc. 12 to 15 year old drivers who are operating an adult-sized ATV have more than two times the average risk of injury.

Complete protection is not possible, but the appropriate protective clothing can reduce the chance of injury while riding an ATV. A helmet is the most important piece of safety gear, because it can prevent serious head injuries by resisting penetration and absorbing shock. When you buy a helmet you should look for a sticker from one or more of these agencies: Department of Transportation (DOT), Snell Memorial Foundation, or American National Standards Institute (ANSI). These groups have developed testing procedures to evaluate helmets for their protective qualities. Athletic headgear is not adequate for ATV riding.

Other types of safety gear can offer extra protection while you are riding an ATV. Eye protection, such as goggles or a face shield, can prevent you from getting hit in the eyes and being blinded. Off-road style gloves offer your hands more comfort and can keep

them from getting sore or cold. Boots should be low-heeled to prevent your feet from slipping off the footrests and over-the-calf for extra protection. Long sleeved shirts and long pants can protect your skin from scratches while riding an ATV.

You can ride further in one hour on an ATV than you can walk in a day, so a pre-ride inspection will reduce your chance of being stranded. The most common checks include tires, wheels, controls, lights, switches, oil, fuel, chain/drive shaft, and chassis.

ATVs are designed to be used off-road only. Many accidents occur because of collisions with other vehicles due to riding on or crossing a road illegally or improperly. Make sure you use extra caution near roads and yield the right of way to oncoming traffic.

A hands-on training course can improve any driver's skills. However, ATVs are only designed for one rider - the operator. A passenger can impair the driver's ability to shift weight to steer and control the ATV. Riding double can be hazardous.

If you practice safety, riding can be a real ATVenture.