



## ATV Safety

**Safety Starts with You.** Your words and actions set the tone for safety on your farm (for both agricultural and recreational use). At times, we become comfortable with equipment and forget about the potential dangers. You are responsible for avoiding and helping others—your family, friends, and employees—avoid potentially dangerous behaviors and situations. No matter what your riding experience is, from beginner to seasoned rider, safety should always be a priority. Always read the owner’s manual before operating an ATV.



### ATV Safety Messages ... Reducing the Risk

Accidents and injuries involving All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) are often the result of one or more of the following conditions:

- Operating at unsafe speeds
- Operator/passenger not wearing a helmet or other safety equipment
- Operating on paved roads
- Failing to obey operating laws or regulations
- A child operating an ATV that is too large for him/her
- Young operator without adequate adult supervision
- Passengers carried on an ATV designed for a single rider
- Operating on trails that are above the operator’s skill level
- Operator under the influence of drugs or alcohol

### ATVs Can Be Dangerous

ATVs offer a level of simplicity, convenience, and versatility in the ag sector. However, there are dangers associated with operating an ATV. This includes hospital visits, permanent injuries and a number of deaths. It is reported that 90 percent of all ATV mishaps on and off the farm are avoidable with proper planning, safety equipment and responsible behavior.

### ATV Safety Institute’s Golden Rules\*

1. Always wear a DOT-compliant helmet, goggles, long pants, over the ankle boots, and gloves
2. Never ride on paved roads except to cross when done safely and permitted by law
3. Never ride under the influence of alcohol or other drugs
4. Never carry a passenger on a single-rider ATV, and no more than one passenger on an ATV specifically designed for two people
5. Ride an ATV that’s appropriate for your age
6. Supervise young riders; ATVs are not toys
7. Ride only on designated trails and at a safe speed
8. Take a hands-on ATV Rider Course and the free online E-Course. Visit the [ATVsafety.org](http://ATVsafety.org) or call 800-887-2887

\* The above information is from the ATV Safety Institute; [www.atvsafety.org](http://www.atvsafety.org)

## Are You Operating Safely?

ATVs on the farm have found many uses for agriculture and sports recreation. They have become a substitute for trucks, tractors and walking. The list of uses continues to expand around the farm. A simple question to ask yourself and others when driving an ATV is: are you operating it safely?

The intent of this handout is to provide access to information on ATV safety. Due to the number of deaths, permanent injuries and hospital visits associated with ATVs, it is important to review and adopt safety rules on your farm.

Special safety considerations should be exercised for on-the-farm and off-the-farm use. The Consumer Protection Safety Council estimates 800 deaths and 135,000 injuries related to ATVs occur each year. About 1/3 of ATV-related deaths and injuries involve children under 16 years old.

Take time out to assess ATV safety on your farm. Often people fail to consider potential dangers associated with their action.

Deaths and permanent spinal injuries change lives forever. Most ATV operators don't think accidents will happen to them. Check out the [Growing Safely ATV Safety Video on the Monsanto Off-the-Job Safety YouTube Channel](#) to learn how one ATV incident changed a teenager's life forever.

Accidents happen, but they can be prevented. Take time out to evaluate if you are operating your ATV safely.

**The information noted above is derived from the following sources:**

ATVSafety.gov  
 CPSC.gov Consumer Product Safety Commission  
 atvcourse.com Educating Riders Online

### 1. Always wear a DOT compliant helmet, goggles, long pants, over the ankle boots, and gloves

Protect yourself from injuries. The single-most important piece of equipment you can wear for safe riding is the helmet. Head injuries are the most common causes of fatalities or permanent injury in ATV related accidents. Other parts of your body may heal or can be repaired, however head and neck injuries are significant.



### 2. Never ride on paved roads except to cross when done safely and permitted by law

ATVs are designed to be driven only on off-road terrain; they should not be driven on paved surfaces for several reasons. ATVs have solid rear axles and no rear differential, which makes turning on pavement difficult and dangerous. Its tires are low pressure for crossing rough terrain and not designed for speed on hard surfaces. In addition, the ATV is "rider active" as the rider straddles the seat and uses their body to affect how the vehicle operates. Their position on the ATV at high speed makes them extremely vulnerable to losing control, tipping over and hitting stationary objects or another vehicle. ATVs handle much differently on pavement.

### 3. Never ride under the influence of alcohol or other drugs

The use of alcohol distorts a person's perceptual skills, attention span, judgment, vision, balance and reaction times, which all lead to dangerous conditions when operating an ATV. The added elements of wind, sun, and motion of ATV riding only increases the negative effects of drugs and alcohol. Speed and alcohol are a deadly combination.

### 4. Never carry a passenger on a single rider ATV and no more than one passenger on an ATV specifically designed for two

ATVs handle differently than any other vehicle. They are "rider active" – meaning the operator adjusts their body position while operating the ATV. Drivers must be able to shift their weight freely in all directions and need a full length seat. Passengers can make it difficult for the drivers to control the ATV. The passenger affects the balance of the ATV.

### 5. Ride an ATV that's right for your age

Every ATV has a label indicating the minimum operator age required to handle the vehicle. Young drivers should be evaluated for both their physical and mental capabilities to handle the ATV. Check local regulations on young ATV operators.

### 6. Supervise young riders; ATVs are not toys

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their child has adequate training to handle an ATV properly and safely. Children often do not recognize hazardous situations and are more likely to take serious risks without realizing the danger associated with their actions.

### 7. Ride only on designated trails and at a safe speed

### 8. Take a hands-on ATV RiderCourse<sup>SM</sup> and the free online E-Course

Visit [ATVSafety.org](http://ATVSafety.org) or call 800-887-2887.

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