

Training puts ATV RIDERS on road to safety



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Don't let an ATV ride turn into a dead end.

Riding all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) on the ranch or recreating in the rural countryside can be a mishap waiting to happen. Many people are killed or injured because of unsafe riding practices. Safety training greatly decreases the potential for crashes.

With more than seven million people riding ATVs, the machines serve the needs of agriculture, business, government, and people in various recreational pursuits and other activities.

ATVs are **not** toys! They can be hazardous when operated in an unsafe manner, such as driving too fast on sharp turns, negotiating steep side hills, or riding through ditches in conditions that could cause the machine to tip onto its operator.

The number of ATV accidents is difficult to determine. The Wyoming Department of

Transportation states that ATV crashes on Bureau of Land Management property, national forests, state or national parks, and on private property are often not reported. According to WYDOT, there were only seven crashes reported in 2000 and 18 in 2005. There were 10 injuries in 2000 and 19 in 2005. One person was reported killed in 2005.

Potential and existing ATV owners should complete safety training (ask any dealer who sells ATVs when they are going to have their next training) to help prevent accidents and injuries. Training should include, but not be limited to, starting and stopping, making turns, negotiating up, down, and across hills, making emergency stops, and swerving around and riding over obstacles.

In addition, anyone who already owns an ATV should:

- Always wear a U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)-approved helmet (identified by a DOT sticker). Helmet hair can always be fixed, but your head and body may not.
- Wear eye protection at all times. There are impact-resistant glasses, goggles, and face shields available. Wrap-around sunglasses are also useful as long as they provide protection from flying debris.
- Wear over-the-ankle boots, gloves, long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and a jacket for protection.
- Never ride ATVs on pavement – they steer erratically.





- Never ride ATVs under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. According to RacewayATV.com (www.racewayatv.com/atv-blog/2006/01/things-not-to-do-with-your-atv.html), more than half of all ATV crashes involve drugs or alcohol.
- Never ride above posted speeds or at full throttle.
- Never ride beyond an ability to safely operate an ATV.
- Never ride in a private area without the landowner's permission.

Parents can help prevent accidents and injuries to their children by:

- Providing safety training to all children before allowing them to ride any ATV.
- Never allowing children to ride an ATV unsupervised.

Choosing an age-appropriate ATV

Guidelines from the ATV Safety Institute are: children 6 and older – under 70cc engine size; age

12 and older – 90cc engine size; age 16 and older – over 90cc engine size.

About 92 percent of all ATV crashes and injuries involve one or more behaviors visibly warned against by the manufacturer. Everyone's goal should be to ride ATVs safely to enjoy them today and tomorrow.

Information about hands-on training is available through the Wyoming State Parks and Cultural Resources (http://wyotrails.state.wy.us/safety_education.htm). The half-day ATV Safety Institute's ATV RiderCourse provides training that includes pre-ride inspections, starting and stopping, quick turns, hill riding, emergency stopping and swerving, and riding over obstacles. Information is also provided about protective gear, local regulations, places to ride, and environmental concerns. Interested persons can call the ATV Enrollment Express at (800) 887-2887 to find and enroll in the nearest ATV RiderCourse.

Additional safety information can be obtained on the ATV Safety Institute Web site at www.atvsafety.org.

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