



FACT SHEET #12

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ATV Safety

The use of all terrain vehicle or ATVs on farms has increased significantly in recent years. Unfortunately, incidents causing serious injury and death on ATVs have also increased. Most of these injuries and deaths can be attributed to improper use of ATVs and that's why it is important to make ATV safety a priority on your farm or ranch.

Similar to tractors, ATVs have a high incidence of rider and operator rollover. They may be quick and handy to do small jobs, but when combined with rough terrain, high-speed capabilities and a short wheelbase – it's a dangerous combination. Add to that a person's natural reaction to put their foot out to balance themselves – and you have a potentially deadly recipe.

An ATV is any two, three or four wheeled motorized vehicle designed for off-road, rugged landscapes. Although designed primarily for recreational use, ATVs are a popular and useful tool on farms. And, as with any equipment, there are safety rules that should be followed.

Most provinces require owners to register their ATV with the Ministry of Transportation and may issue driver licenses and vehicle plates. Vehicle liability insurance is required for all ATVs being driven anywhere other than on land owned or occupied by the vehicle owner and the driver must carry proof of insurance. Persons under 12 years of age are not permitted to drive an ATV except on land occupied by the vehicle owner, and under the close supervision of an adult. Check your provincial legislation for the laws that apply in your area.

Where You Can and Can't Drive

ATVs are prohibited from traveling on all highways, roads, and streets designed for the use of on-road vehicles. This prohibition includes the entire area between the boundary of property lines including the median strip, shoulders and ditches. There are two exceptions:

1. Operators may drive an ATV directly across certain roads. If crossing or operating an ATV on a road, the driver must be in possession of a valid driver's licence.
2. Vehicles with three or more wheels may be driven along a road by a farmer when used for a farming operation or by licenced hunters and trappers of fur-bearing animals when using these vehicles for hunting or trapping. All farmers, trappers and hunters that use an ATV on a road must display a slow moving vehicle (SMV) sign on the rear of the vehicle.

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.

ATV Safety Continued...

Safety Tips for ATVs

- All drivers, passengers, and riders on vehicles towed by an ATV, **must** wear CSA approved helmets with a visor or safety goggles.
- Wear proper clothing including trousers that cover the legs, boots high enough to cover the ankles, long-sleeves and gloves. Wear bright clothing to make yourself more visible.
- Make sure the vehicle is in neutral before starting the engine.
- Check the machine thoroughly before you start your ride. This includes checking the fuel lines and connections for leaks; the oil and fuel levels; brake and throttle control adjustments; tires and tire pressure; and that the engine is running smoothly.

Remember...

- You can ride further in one hour on an ATV than you can walk in a day – so don't risk getting stranded. Check local weather forecasts and tell someone where you'll be traveling and when you expect to be back. Whenever possible use the 'buddy system' (on a second machine) and don't go out alone.
- When operating a single-person ATV, do not carry passengers. A passenger can impair the driver's ability to shift weight to steer and control the ATV.
- Closely supervise new drivers, regardless of age, until they are familiar with the machine and can handle it competently.
- Bring along a first-aid kit, an extra ignition key and tools that may be needed for vehicle repairs.
- Be extremely careful in water. Check the depth of the water beforehand and drive slowly and carefully so you can steer around rocks and other obstacles.
- Be extra cautious when riding among pedestrians, horseback riders, livestock, and others.
- Always use a flag mast when riding in dunes and hills.
- Ride within your own skill limitations and those of your ATV. Keep both feet on the footrests at all times and never try to stabilize a tipping machine by putting your foot down... you could run over your foot or leg.
- Never drink and drive.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture along with the Farm Credit Canada, the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada want to remind Canadian farmers that whether at work or play "*Farm Safety Means Farm Safely*".

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For more information call:

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