

# Common Messages for ATV Safety

## A Guide for Injury Prevention Stakeholders

Prepared by:

*Alberta All Terrain-Vehicle [ATV] Working Group, 2009*

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In response to requests for evidence-based and consistent messaging from stakeholders throughout the province, the ACICR established a working group in January, 2009. The working group was composed of diverse representatives from all over the province including injury prevention specialists from former Regional Health Authorities (Aspen, Calgary, Chinook, David Thompson, East Central, Kidsafe Connection, and Peace Country) and community coalitions (Lakeland P.A.R.T.Y. Program, Grande Prairie and Area Safe Communities, and Safe Community Wood Buffalo), Regional Traffic Safety Coordinators in addition to representatives from the Alberta Off-Highway Vehicle Association, the RCMP, Alberta Tourism, Parks, and Recreation, Lac Ste. Anne County, as well as ATV instructors. The diversity within the working group facilitated a thorough review of the available research in order to produce this document which reflects the Alberta context where ATVs are used widely for farming and recreational purposes.

This information applies to the general population and may not apply to professional ATV operators or to individuals with specific health conditions.

All-terrain vehicles (ATV's can cause serious injuries or death.  
ATV injuries can be reduced by following these safety practices:

- **No child/youth under 16 years of age should operate an adult ATV.  
Ensure your child/youth only rides an ATV that is appropriate for their age, weight, and maturity.  
Follow manufacturers' recommendations.**
- **Wear an approved helmet with face and eye protection.**
- **Drive Sober – Alcohol, drugs and ATVs don't mix.**
- **Refuse to carry or be a passenger on an ATV built for one person.**

**All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) can cause serious injury or death.**

- Follow all ATV manufacturers' guidelines.
- Children under 16 years of age have an increased risk of injury and death on ATVs.
- ATVs weigh hundreds of kilograms and are harder to control than they appear.
- ATV rollover events are the most common cause of serious injury and can happen even on flat ground.

**No child/youth under 16 years of age should operate an adult ATV. Ensure your child/youth only rides an ATV that is appropriate for their age, weight, and maturity.**

**Follow manufacturers' recommendations.**

- Children and adolescents are injured as drivers of and passengers on ATVs.
- In Alberta, children and adolescents accounted for 18% of all ATV-related deaths.
- Children and youth are at particular risk as they do not have the physical strength, control, coordination or judgment of an adult.
- Youth-size ATVs might reduce the risk of injury.
- Use questions from The North American Guidelines for Children's Agricultural Tasks ([www.nagcat.org](http://www.nagcat.org)) to find out if your child or youth is ready to ride a youth-size ATV for chores.
- Anyone under 16 years of age operating a youth-size ATV should have constant, close, visual supervision by an adult.

**Wear an approved helmet with face and eye protection.**

- Head injuries are the leading cause of serious injury and death in ATV-related injury events.
- Facial injuries frequently happen to ATV operators.
- Wear over-the-ankle boots with heels, sturdy gloves, long-sleeved shirts, and long pants.

**Drive Sober – Alcohol, drugs and ATVs don't mix.**

- The consumption of alcohol and/or drugs (medication or illicit) is a major factor in ATV injuries and deaths.
- Even a couple of drinks will impair the ability to operate an ATV.
- Drinking alcohol and operating an ATV could result in an impaired driving charge.

**Refuse to carry or be a passenger on ATVs built for one person.**

- A passenger on a single rider ATV reduces the driver's ability to stop, turn or shift their weight. A passenger will make the ATV unbalanced.
- Only carry one passenger on a tandem ATV in the designated passenger seat.
- Never carry a passenger under 12 years of age or too small to grab the hand rails or plant their feet

**Take an ATV operator training course.**

- Formal hands-on training is needed to understand how to avoid ATV risks.
- Look for an ATV training course offered through reputable organizations such as the

