ATV Safety and Gear Meeting Kit

WHAT IS AN ATV OR ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE?

An ATV, is any two, three or four wheeled motorized vehicle designed for off-road, rugged landscapes. By design, ATVs are “driver active” where the operator sits on a saddle-like seat, and steers with handlebars, similar to a motorcycle or snowmobile. On “driver active” vehicles, the operator´s body movements help control the steering and direction, requiring a strong combination of skill, good judgement, attention and physical strength.

ATV FACTS

ATVs have unique features that enable them to operate in harsh work environments where larger, less mobile vehicles cannot safely be used. Their oversized, deep tread, and low-pressure tires (4-5 psi) and light weight (600-1000 pounds) – compared to other motorized vehicles – enhance their maneuverability but also present risks such as a rollover which may occur due to a high center of gravity and a relatively narrow wheelbase.

PRIMARY REASONS FOR WORK-RELATED ACCIDENTS INVOLVING ATV’S

- Unbalanced loads in excess of the ATV’s specified limits
- Operating at excessive speeds for the terrain/operation
- Operating ATVs on paved roads
- Not wearing a protective helmet
- Insufficient or no training
- Carrying passengers

PRECAUTIONS FOR THE SAFE USE OF ATVS AT WORK FOR EMPLOYEES

- Wear PPE including a helmet, eye-protection, long pants, and sturdy boots.
- Participate in hands-on training in the safe handling and operation of an ATV.
- Conduct a pre-ride inspection of tires, brakes, headlights, etc., and follow employer's maintenance polices for upkeep of the ATV.
- Understand how implements and attachments may affect the stability and handling of the ATV
- Never exceed the manufacturer's specified hauling and towing capacity or weight limits and ensure cargo is balanced, secured, and loaded on provided racks.
- Be aware of potential hazards such as trees, ruts, rocks, streams and gullies, and follow posted hazard warnings.
- Drive at speeds safe for weather and terrain and never operate ATVs on surfaces not designed for ATVs such as paved roads and highways.
- Never permit passengers on the ATV, unless the ATV has an additional seat specifically designed to carry them.
- Never operate an ATV while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

OPERATIONAL SAFETY: MAKE A PRE-RIDE CHECK

- **Tires and wheels:** Make sure air pressure in tires is at recommended rate and check for cuts or gouges. Tighten axle nuts and secure with cotter pins.
- **Controls and cables:** Check controls, cable locations and make sure all work, including throttle and brakes.
- **Lights and electrical system:** Ignition switch should stop the engine when in"off"position and when in"on"position, headlights and taillights should work.
- **Oil and fuel:** Check oil and fuel levels.

- **Chain and/or drive shaft chassis:** Inspect, adjust, and lubricate chain and/or drive shaft chassis. Check for nuts and bolts loosened by vibration.

A SAFETY GEAR CHECKLIST FOR ATV RIDERS

Helmet: The most important piece of safety gear you can wear while riding your ATV.

The first thing you should do when purchasing a helmet is look at the back to see which safety standards the helmet has met.

When wearing a helmet, it should fit nice and snug, it shouldn't be able to rotate while you're wearing it and you shouldn't be able to fit your thumb between the helmet and your forehead. If you can, you need one slightly smaller in size.

Long sleeve shirts/pants: A cotton or synthetic riding jersey really comes in handy when weather conditions aren't ideal. If it is raining or snowing out, the jersey will help wick moisture. Not only that, but make sure to get one with good elbow pads on them.

A good long sleeve shirt and pants will help your skin if you fall.

Gloves: It may seem like a luxury to wear gloves while riding your ATV out on the trails, but these are essential. Good gloves will protect your hands from flying gravel and rocks, they'll also protect your hands from bushes and branches as you drive past large trees.

The constant rubbing and squeezing of the handles can cause your hands to get sore, callused and blistery, all of which a good pair of gloves will help prevent.

Goggles: Of this list of safety gear items to wear while on the trails, probably the most necessary one in terms of usage would be safety goggles.

The goggles, on the other hand, will get more use than you would imagine. Both tiny and large objects flying rapidly towards your eyes never actually make it into your eyes because they get refracted through the use of goggles.

Motocross goggles keep sweat, dust, dirt, mud, rocks, bugs, sticks and branches out of your eyes and allow you to keep focused of the road in front of you.

Boots: You want to have boots that provide adequate ankle and foot support and that ride up high enough to prevent burns from the engine and exhaust.

Chest Protector: Chest protectors probably aren't as necessary if your use of the ATV is limited to work on the farm, but if your plan is to do heavy trail riding under high speeds, then a chest protector is a must have!

Neck Protector: "Do I really need one?" And when it comes down to it, the answer that seems to stick out most is "what is your level of risk tolerance?"

FINAL WORD

Injuries and deaths can happen at all points while operating an ATV: mounting and dismounting, transporting farm supplies, driving on slopes and performing maintenance. Rollovers, collisions, flying debris, pinch points, moving parts, uneven surfaces, burn hazards and noises are all things we have to be aware of when operating an ATV.