

# MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Be Savvy About ATV Safety



I believe this subject should be discussed annually because of the use on our support farms, and almost every family is touched by someone that has an ATV or Quad (another by-name).

Thousands of deaths and countless numbers of injuries have been linked to the use of the ATVs, from spinal to head injuries. Unlike automobiles, ATVs are rider reactive, which means that they have to shift their weight in curves, up hills, down slopes, and across slopes to remain safe.

## STATISTICAL FACTS ABOUT ATV USE:

The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that 5,791 people were killed in ATV incidents between 1982 and 2003. 32% of those folks were under the age of 16 and 13% were under the age of 12.

## MANUFACTURER'S GUIDELINES:

Suggest that:

- No one under the age of 16 should be allowed to operate an ATV with an engine larger than 90CC.
- For youths under the age of 12, an engine between the size of 70CC and 90 CC should only be allowed for their use.
- Some children may be old enough to ride an ATV, but they still don't have the skills, strength, or maturity to operate it safely.

## WEAR THE RIGHT GEAR:

**Head Protection** – A helmet is the most important piece of equipment a person can have on an ATV. A helmet designed strictly for ATV use can prevent serious head injuries. When you are purchasing a helmet, look for a seal or label from the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the Department of Transportation (DOT), or the Snell Memorial Foundation, which verifies that the helmet has been satisfactorily tested. As in all protective headgear, the correct fit is imperative for the maximum corrective action, if an incident should occur.

**Eye Protection** – Some helmets are made with face shields; if not, you should wear a pair of ANSI-approved goggles or glasses with hard-coated polycarbonate lenses. This will protect your eyes from swinging branches, rocks, flying dirt, limbs, insects, or water that can cause you to lose control of the machine and damage your eyes.

## Body Protection –

- Gloves protect your hands from scratches and scrapes, improves the grip on the hand controls, and reduces the soreness from pressure holding on the handlebars.

- Boots protect your feet from debris on the ground and enables you to keep your feet on the footrests. This is important in that it helps you maintain control of the machine and good balance.
- Sturdy long-sleeved shirts and/or jackets and long pants will help to protect your arms and legs from cuts and scrapes cause by limbs kicking up from the ground and swinging limbs.
- Proper clothing also serves to protect you from the weather elements like sunburn, windburn, and frostbite. Padded jerseys, pants, and shin guards are available and are an option, but normally are used only by professionals.

## DO PRE-RIDE CHECKS:

Like all motorized equipment, pre-use checks are important for your safety as well maintaining the machine for continued trouble free use.

- Tires and Wheels – Make sure that the tire pressure in the tires is as recommended and check for cuts and splits. Check axle nuts for tightness and that the cotter pin is in place and secure.
- Controls and cables – Check location and that all cables are in working order, the throttle reacts smoothly when the handlebar is in different positions, the foot shift works properly, and the brakes are correctly adjusted.
- Lights and electrical system – Ignition switch should stop the engine when it is in the “off” position and “on” position. Make sure that the headlights and taillights are in working order.
- Always check the fuel and oil levels.
- Chain and drive shaft chassis – Inspect, adjust, and lubricate the chain or drive shaft chassis. Check for loose nuts and bolts, loosened through vibration.

## START IT PROPERLY WITH BONEC:

- Brakes – Always have the parking brake on.
- On position – For fuel cap vent or valve, and then for the ignition key (if equipped).
- Neutral – The transmission always must be in the neutral position.
- Engine – The engine stop switch should be in the “run” or “start” position.
- Choke – If the engine is cold, put the choke in the “on” position and start the engine according to the manual.

As mentioned earlier, ATV's operate differently than other vehicles. We should take special precaution that the operator is well versed in the instructions' manual and practices the “Best Safety Practices” to avoid a serious or fatal injury.

**THINK SMART BEFORE  
YOU START!!**