



MAFES Dawg Tracks

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Safe Use of ATVs



In January of 2005, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimated that all-terrain vehicles caused 125,500 injuries in 2003 that required Emergency Department treatment. The study also revealed that in 2002, ATV related deaths were the highest on record, 621. The age group that experiences the most injuries was 16 years and under. Some other statistics which warrants mentioning, as well as throwing up a flag, tells us more emphasis needs to be stressed on safe use of the ATVs: (from the CPSC 2003 report).

- ✓ Serious injuries (requiring emergency room treatment) increased 10 percent from 113,900 in 2002 to 125,500 in 2003.
- ✓ Estimated number of fatalities increased from 2001 to 2002 from 609 to 621.
- ✓ In 2003, there were 6.2 million ATVs in use, twice as many as in the 5 years before.

Following are some tips that will make your ATV riding experience much safer if they are reviewed and practiced:

- For pleasure and work, use the areas that have been traveled by ATVs in the past.
- Slow down when your sight line is poor. Cross streams at designated points (where the trail crosses).
- Comply with all signs and respect barriers.
- When you are pleasure riding, try to do so with two or three other riders. If there is a problem assistance is there already.
- In work or play situations, when you are using a winch, always inspect it before each use. Use the proper winch for the work load you are working on.
- Avoid using headphones or other devices that compromise your hearing while the ATV is in use.
- Avoid using alcohol or drugs when the ATV is in use.
- The “One-Seat-One Rider” should always be in effect.
- ATVs are not for public road use. Hard surfaces increase the risk for an overturn.

While pleasure riding or working with more than one ATV involved, we should respect the rights of our cohorts by:

- Being considerate of them while riding on trails and in work situations.
- In a pleasure situation, leave the gates in good order and get permission from landowners before crossing their property.
- While working cattle or other livestock, drive with caution. Sudden moves can spook the livestock, causing possible injury to them or yourself.

ATV Work Hazards-

❖ Overturns-

~ATVs are like small farm tractors and they should be governed by speed, the lay of the land and load size in a working environment.

~In a work or pleasure situation, be extremely careful on uneven terrain, around ditches and large rocks.

~Be careful when ascending or descending steep terrain. If the back of the machine is too heavy, there is a risk of a back overturn. Shifting your body weight to the front of the seat will help to counter balance some of the weight, thus reducing the potential for an overturn.

❖ Unseen Obstacles-

Be careful when riding for pleasure or for work to watch for unseen obstacles or uneven terrain. Even though you might be familiar with the area, conditions can change from one time to another.

Personal Protective Equipment-

The hazards that are involved with using ATVs can get really hairy, but with using the proper personal protective equipment we greatly reduce the potential for an injury. A helmet with a face shield should be used (our stations don't use them). Approved gloves should be used, along with long pants, long-sleeve shirts and the clothing should fit - but not be loose - which could catch on branches or fences. Boots or shoes that reach above the ankle should be worn. The heels and soles should be slip-resistant.