



# MAFES Dawg Tracks

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ATV - Safety for Farm-work & Fun



All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) seem to have gained in popularity everywhere you travel now, both for work and pleasure. Like all types of machinery, they are only as good as the training by the operator. Sound training and respect for the machine will allow one to enjoy many hours of fun and labor-saving time in agricultural work. However, lack of training and respect can lead to the heart-wrenching statistics that occurred in our own state of Mississippi. After reviewing these statistics, just think what the national statistics would be:

- 1982-2004 – Total Reported Deaths – 271
- 1999-2008 – Total reported deaths - 205
- Total Reported Deaths Under 16 yrs. of age – 89

These statistics are the reportable ones. Probably there are many more not reported. The troubling factor here is that most are preventable. Following are common causes of ATV accidents, some of which we may have experienced with friends, family or you as an individual:

- Unsafe Speeds
- Driving & Drinking
- Driving With Insufficient Training
- Driving in Unsafe Weather Conditions
- Driving on Unpaved Roads at High Speeds
- Driving in Heavy Traffic
- Driving on Paved Roads

The responsibility of safe operation rests entirely with the operator since Mississippi has no laws to govern their use. The only regulations of ATV use are through the Department of Wildlife & Fisheries and the Department of Parks & Recreation. These agencies specify permits, PPE and areas where riding is allowed.

Manufacturers, outdoor organizations, and safety agencies do their best to inform ATV users of safety procedures, such as:

- ✓ *Read and get totally familiar with the owner's manual, particularly safety warnings and labels on the ATV.*
- ✓ *Refrain from operating an ATV without proper training. Enrolling in a training course would be very beneficial.*
- ✓ *Children should not be allowed to ride adult-sized machines for the obvious reasons. It is very difficult for a child to control a machine that weighs in the area of 500 to 1000 lbs. and can move at speeds of 55 or more.*
- ✓ *Children under 12 years of age should not operate an ATV.*
- ✓ *Children ages 12-16 should operate an ATV with an engine size of 90cc or less.*
- ✓ *Always wear the proper protective equipment: an approved helmet, proper eye protection, boots with good ankle support, long pants, long sleeve shirt and a jacket, if conditions warrant it.*
- ✓ *"No Riders" should be the standing rule. A rider can upset your balance*

- ✓ *Refrain from operating a machine on paved roads. ATVs are off-road machines, not to be used on dirt or even gravel roads. The chances of a collision with other types of motor vehicles are much more pronounced.*
- ✓ *Maintain controllable speeds. Excessive speeds increase your chances of an accident due to the short wheelbase and maneuverability. These factors make them unstable and can easily roll over or flip over.*
- ✓ *Take special caution when approaching hills, turns or other obstacles when operating on unknown or unstable terrain.*
- ✓ *Most important – Do not use drugs or alcohol before or during the time you're operating an ATV.*

The ATV Safety Institute has issued the following as it's "Golden Rules," which are similar to other safety tips mentioned earlier, but worthy of noting again:

- Always wear DOT-compliant helmet, goggles, long sleeves, long pants, over-the-ankle boots, and gloves.
- Never ride on paved roads except to cross when done safely and permitted by law-another vehicle could hit you. ATVs are designed to operate off of highways.
- Never ride under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Never carry a passenger on a single-rider ATV, and no more than one passenger on an ATV specifically designed for 2 people.
- Ride an ATV that's right for your age.
- Supervise riders less than 16 yrs.; ATVs aren't toys.
- For pleasure – ride on designated trails and at safe speeds.
- Take a hands-on ATV Rider Course and the online E-Course. Visit [ATV.org](http://ATV.org) or call 800-887-2887.

### Acronym for Proper Starting-BONEC

- B** - Brake- Always keep the parking brake on.
- O** - On - On position for fuel cap vent or valve, and then for Ignition, if equipped.
- N** - Neutral - The transmission should always be in the Neutral position.
- E** - Engine - The engine stop switch should be in the "Run" or "Start" position.
- C** - Choke - If the engine is "Cold," put the choke in the "On" position and start the engine according to the instruction manual.

### Tips for Pre-ride Maintenance Checks-

- Check air pressure in tires, for cuts or gouges in tires.
- Check and tighten axle nuts.
- Check controls, cables, and brakes for proper adjustment.
- Check lights and ignition that they are good working order.
- Always check oil and fuel levels.
- Inspect the drive shaft chassis that the chains are lubricated and all nuts and bolts are tight.

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Excerpts: [www.safety.com](http://www.safety.com) / [www.atvsafety.com](http://www.atvsafety.com)  
[www.Zenith.com](http://www.Zenith.com)

**WISHING WON'T KEEP YOU SAFE-  
PRACTICING GOOD SAFETY WILL!**

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**~SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY~**