

As we move from winter into the spring and summer, ATV (All Terrain Vehicle) riding season is fast approaching. The Steuben County Traffic Safety Board encourages all Steuben County residents who own and ride ATV's to approach riding season with personal safety in mind.

According to the All-Terrain Vehicle Safety Institute®, there are nearly ten million ATVs in use across the United States, being operated by more than 35 million Americans. Many ATV owners share their ATV's so it is essential that riders and non-riders alike understand the importance of the safe and responsible use of ATVs.

An ATV in New York State must be registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) if it is operated anywhere in New York State, including on the owner's property, unless you qualify for a special exemption.

Summer and holidays are a time when children have more free time to enjoy many activities, including riding ATVs. Nearly 90 percent of youth ATV-related injury incidents occur when a youth is operating an ATV manufactured and intended for use by an adult. Parental supervision is a key element to a child's safety and children under the age of 16 must be supervised at all times when operating an ATV. Parents literally hold the key to their children's safety. Every ATV has an ignition key, and when a parent or guardian controls the key, they control the use.

You do not need a driver license to operate an ATV in New York State, but certain restrictions apply to operators under age 16. If you are age 10 through age 15, you may operate an ATV only:

- Under adult supervision; or,
- Without adult supervision on lands owned or leased by your parent or guardian; or,
- On any lands where ATV use is permitted, without adult supervision, if you have completed an ATV safety training course approved by the DMV. You should carry your course completion certificate when operating any ATV.

If you are under age 10, you may operate an ATV only:

- Under adult supervision; or,
- Without adult supervision on lands owned or leased by your parent or guardian.

Adult Supervision means being accompanied by a person at least 18 years of age, or a person 16 or 17 years of age who holds an ATV safety course completion certificate from an approved safety course provider.

The most recent Consumer Product Safety Commissions Report on ATV Related Deaths and Injuries published in February 2013, states that New York State is ranked eighth in ATV related deaths across the nation. The report indicates that 327 fatalities occurred in 2011 with an estimated 107,500 Emergency Room treated injuries. The Commission reports that 11,688 fatalities have been reported since 1982 when the collection of data first began. The report shows that 25% of the fatalities occur in children younger than 16. The report also states that there has been a 2.5% increase in emergency room injuries to children 16 years and younger from 2010-2011.

You may not operate any ATV anywhere in New York State, except on your own property, unless it is covered by liability insurance. Minimum required coverage is \$50,000/\$100,000 for death, \$25,000/\$50,000 for injury, and \$10,000 for property damage in any one accident. You must show

proof of this insurance upon the request of a judge, the police, or a person claiming to have suffered injury or property damage from your operation of the ATV.

It is important to follow some basic rules when you are venturing out on your ATV. These important rules come from the ATV Safety Institute.

The ATV Safety Institute's Golden Rules

1. Always wear a DOT-compliant helmet, goggles, long sleeves, long pants, over-the-ankle boots, and gloves.
2. Never ride on paved roads except to cross when done safely and permitted by law - another vehicle could hit you. ATVs are designed to be operated off-highway.
3. Never ride under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
4. Never carry a passenger on a single-rider ATV, and no more than one passenger on an ATV specifically designed for two people.
5. Ride an ATV that's right for your age.
6. Supervise riders younger than 16; ATVs are not toys.
7. Ride only on designated trails and at a safe speed.
8. Take an approved ATV safety Course.

Steuben County is a great place for outdoor sports. There are many great trails and areas to explore on your ATV, however, safety should be your number one concern. The Steuben County Traffic Safety Board would like to encourage you to stop and take time to consider your safety before you ride.

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