

ATV/Utility Vehicles Fact Sheet

All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) and other utility vehicles have unique hazards not associated with regular vehicles. There are more than 700 deaths and 100,000 injuries each year in the US involving ATVs. Overturning can be fatal, but it is also preventable.

Potential ATV/utility vehicle related health concerns include:

- **Traumatic injury**
- **Hypothermia**
- **Frostbite**
- **Snow blindness**

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Department of Transportation compliant helmet
- Safety glasses , or a DOT-approved face shield / visor built-into a compliant helmet
- Long sleeves, long pants
- Boots
- Gloves

Snowmobiles require additional:

- Face mask with UV filter
- Long underwear
- Snow suit
- Cold weather gloves

PREPARATION AND TRAINING

- Check state and local laws regarding ATV use and registration requirements.
- If available, use a vehicle with a rollover protective structure.
- Do not use three-wheeled ATVs (tricycle design) where there is a single front wheel and 2 rear wheels. 4 or more wheeled ATVs are far safer than any 3 wheeled ATV.
- Always get written permission from the landowner, or agency, before using vehicles at a field site.
- Carry a tool kit and a tow rope for potential mechanical difficulties.
- Carry extra fuel (stored properly).
- A fire extinguisher should be available on every vehicle.
- Prior to use, perform a brief inspection of:
 - Wheels
 - Lights and Switches
 - Controls
 - Oil/Fuel
 - Chain/Driveshaft and Chassis
- It is recommended you take a course in: **Basic First Aid, ATV/Snowmobile driving safety**

ATV/Utility Vehicles Fact Sheet

GENERAL SAFETY

- Always use seat belts, if they are available.
- If ATVs are used, then at a minimum your group should have two ATVs and three people. In case of an accident, one person should be able to go for help on an ATV, and one should be able to stay at the scene and provide care to the victim.
- Carry two-way radios or satellite communication devices when traveling out of reliable cell range, and have a plan for communicating with each other.
- Carry a whistle to aid search and rescuers locating you.
- Do not modify the vehicle. Modifications can alter the center of gravity and make rollovers more likely.
- Secure all carried items so that they do not impede operation or create an entanglement hazard.
- Do not exceed the number or riders on one ATV (2 maximum is usual unless specifically noted by the manufacturer), or the weight limit, for the vehicle.
- Do not drive ATVs on paved roads. Instead, drive on gravel or dirt next to a road as needed; extended driving on hard pavement can damage the drive system.
- Cross paved roads at safe locations with good visibility.
- Always operate at safe speeds appropriate for the terrain.
- Watch carefully for objects hidden under the brush or snow such as rocks, stumps, and broken fences.
- Watch for low-hanging branches that can cause head injuries.
- For snowmobiles, take care around frozen bodies of water, the ice may not support you and your vehicle's weight. Also be aware of avalanche risks.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- If someone has an accident, secure the scene to ensure no one else becomes injured.
- Assess if emergency services are required. If there is no phone service, send someone for help immediately.
- Perform supportive first aid. Assess for spinal injury before moving the victim. If the victim is not responsive, always presume they may have a spinal injury and never move them.
- Assess for shock. To treat shock, have the victim lie flat on their back with their legs elevated, keep them warm by covering them with extra clothing or blankets.
- Keep them as dry and warm as possible.

REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[ATV Safety Information Center](#)

[Snowmobile Safety Awareness Program](#)

Illness, injury and close call events shall be reported by submitting an [SU-17](#).

If you have questions or need support, contact EH&S's Field Safety Program at ehs_field_safety_support@lists.stanford.edu.

Permission for use granted from the University of Maryland, Department of Environmental Safety, Sustainability & Risk.