Message To Parents

While there is no age requirement for driving an ATV, this does not mean a child of any age can safely operate an ATV. It is the responsibility of the parents to make sure their children are prepared mentally and physically to drive an ATV. With ATVs coming in many sizes, it is also important to match the rider with the ATV. The Patrol strongly urges parents to have their children attend a certified ATV safety course. As with operating any motor vehicle, safety should come first.

Scooters And Motorized Vehicles

Scooters and motorized bicycles have been advertised as toys, but unless you have a driver's license, they are illegal to operate on public streets and highways.

Many of today's trendy scooters—gas or electric—qualify as motorized bicycles, and Missouri law explicitly prohibits the operation of a motorized bicycle on a public street unless the driver holds a valid license to operate a motor vehicle. (Section 307.195.1, RSMo.) Operating motorized bicycles on interstate highways is also prohibited. (Section 307.195.2, RSMo.)

No helmet is required for the operator of the motorized bicycle, but it is recommended, and the motorized bicycle is not required to be licensed.

A motorized bicycle is, "Any two-wheeled or three-wheeled device having an automatic transmission and a motor with a cylinder capacity of not more than 50 cubic centimeters, which produces less than three gross brake horsepower, and is capable of propelling the device at a maximum speed of not more than 30 miles per hour on level ground." (Sections 301.130 and 307.180.2, RSMo.)

The electric equivalency to 50cc is 2237.1 watts of power. Therefore, any motorized bicycle or scooter (gas or electric) which does not meet the specifications above is classified as a motorcycle and the rider and cycle must be licensed as such.

Recreational off-highway (utility) vehicles (four or six wheels) may be operated within three miles of the operator's primary residence. Cities and counties may issue special permits to licensed drivers for special uses of recreational off-highway vehicles. A valid operator's or chauffer's license is required to operate a recreational off-highway vehicle on the highways. The driver of the vehicle must wear a seat belt. A recreational off-highway vehicle being operated on the highway must display a lighted headlamp and a lighted tail lamp, and must be equipped with a roll bar or roll cage construction. (Section 304.033 RSMo.)

This brochure provides only basic information on ATV safety. Patrol members regularly present programs on traffic safety to civic groups, schools, clubs, etc. If your group would like such a program, please contact the public information and education officer at the troop headquarters nearest you, or the public information and education division at (573) 526-6115.

For the Missouri State Highway Patrol Headquarters nearest you, consult your local phone directory.

Emergency Assistance
1-800-525-5555 or cellular *55

Road Conditions:
1-888-275-6636

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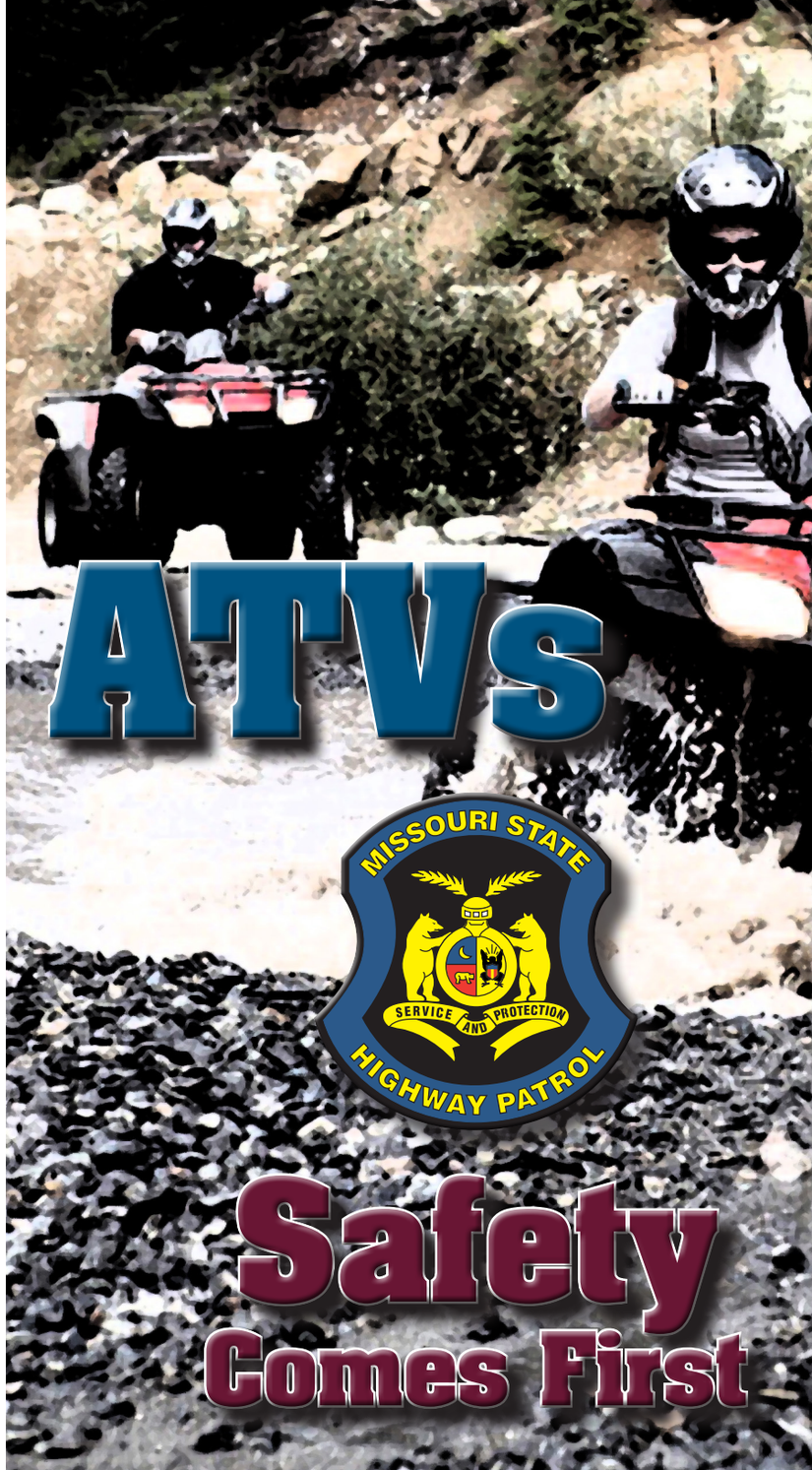

ATVs: Safety Comes First

Speeding down the road, splashing through a creek, or riding on the tracks may seem fun on an all-terrain vehicle (ATV). But, doing so is dangerous and illegal in the state of Missouri. The Missouri State Highway Patrol wants ATV operators and owners to be aware of the laws, regulations, and safety measures that should be taken when operating an ATV.

Certificate Of Ownership

It is unlawful for any person to own an ATV in this state unless a certificate of ownership (title) has been issued by the Missouri Department of Revenue. Application for a certificate of ownership must be made within 30 days after the owner acquires the ATV.

Certificate of ownership and decal shall expire with any change of ownership. A new owner must register the ATV in his or her name with the Department of Revenue and pay the registration fee.

Registration Requirements

1. No person shall operate an ATV within the state unless the ATV has been registered with the Department of Revenue.
2. Registration is not required for ATVs:
   - owned and operated by the United States, anotherstate, or a governmental agency;
   - owned and operated by the state of Missouri or an agency thereof;
   - covered by a valid registration of another state or country, and that have not been within Missouri for more than 30 days.
3. No person under the age of 16 is allowed to register an ATV.
4. Upon receipt of registration and fee, the Department of Revenue shall issue a decal showing the registration number and expiration date. The decal must be displayed at all times and be affixed to the right front fork or frame of the ATV where it is clearly visible.

Operation — Where

Highways

No person shall operate an ATV upon the highways of Missouri unless the ATV is owned and operated by the government for official use, or operated for agricultural use between the hours of sunrise and sunset. ATVs may be operated by handicapped persons on secondary roads occasionally. The sunrise to sunset rule applies. Governing bodies may issue special permits to licensed drivers for special use within city limits or on county roads.

Anyone operating an ATV on a highway must have a valid operator's license. All ATVs must be operated at speeds less than 30 miles per hour. ("Highway" is defined as any road open to the public, including dirt/gravel roads.)

Municipalities

A municipality may adopt an ordinance or resolution that allows all-terrain or utility vehicles to operate on the streets and highways under its jurisdiction. The person operating an all-terrain or utility vehicle must maintain proof of financial responsibility or maintain any other insurance policy providing equivalent liability coverage for an all-terrain vehicle.

Private Property

No person shall operate an ATV on private property without the consent of the owner. When on someone else's property, an ATV operator must stop and identify himself or herself upon request of the landowner, and, if requested by the landowner, shall remove the ATV from the premises.

Rivers and Streams

No person can operate an ATV in any stream or river in Missouri unless the waterway is within the boundaries of land owned by the operator or permission for the operator to ride has been granted by the property's owner.

Railroads

Railroad tracks and the property on which they lie are private property. Anyone riding an ATV on the tracks or the area around them is committing a crime, and putting their life in great danger. A train cannot stop quickly. It takes more than a mile for a train to come to a complete stop when the emergency brakes are applied. There is no way an engineer or conductor will be able to foresee someone or something on the track a mile ahead of the train's location.

Operation — By Whom

No person under the age of 16 shall operate an ATV in Missouri unless he or she is accompanied by or under the direct supervision of a parent or guardian, or is accompanied by an adult who is authorized by the parent or guardian. (Note: This does not apply on private property owned by the parent or guardian of such person operating the all-terrain vehicle.)

Operation — How

No person shall operate an ATV:

- in a careless way so as to endanger the person or property of another;
- while under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance;
- without a securely fastened safety helmet, unless at least age 18. The Patrol recommends that everyone, regardless of age, wear protective headgear.
- with a passenger, except for agricultural purposes.

Every person legally operating or driving an ATV upon the highways of Missouri (see section entitled "Operation: Where?") shall observe and comply with the rules of the road.

Required Safety Equipment

Every ATV, except those used in competitive events, shall have the following equipment:

- a lighted headlamp and tail lamp when the ATV is operated on any street or highway;
- a slow-moving equipment emblem mounted on the rear of the ATV when being operated on any street or highway;
- a bicycle flag, extending at least seven feet above the ground, must be attached to the rear of the ATV when operating on any street or highway;
- an adequate muffler system;
- A U.S. Forest Service-qualified spark arrester; and
- a brake system in good operating condition.