

# ATV SAFETY



## Providing ATV Safety Anticipatory Guidance

### Why Is It Important To Include ATV Safety In Anticipatory Guidance?

**ATV-related deaths and injuries are a nationwide concern among children aged 16 and younger.**

According to the most recent reports, children under the age of 16 accounted for 1 in every 5 ATV-related fatalities since 1982.<sup>1</sup> Among pediatric deaths, 42% of victims were under 12 years of age. In addition, 25% or more of nonfatal injuries were among victims 16 years old or younger.<sup>2</sup> Importantly, annual pediatric ATV fatalities outnumber deaths from bicycle crashes.<sup>3</sup>

**What is an all-terrain vehicle (ATV)?** ATVs, also known in the U.S. as four-wheelers or quads, are motorized, off-road vehicles with low-pressure tires, a seat straddled by a rider, and handlebar controls for steering and braking.

**What puts children at increased risk for ATV crashes and injuries?** Major risk factors include driving adult sized vehicles that children are not physically or cognitively able to safely operate, riding as or carrying passengers, riding on the road, and not wearing a helmet.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, children and adolescents rarely have safety training and are still developing the decision-making skills necessary to operate an ATV. Too often parents and other caregivers are not provided the training and guidance needed to understand the risks associated with this vehicle and to make decisions that reflect those risks.

**Counseling and safety programs can reduce injury.** Injury prevention counseling tailored to parents has been shown to be effective in reducing certain types of injury.<sup>5</sup> In addition, a survey of primary care providers found that many believed providing ATV safety anticipatory guidance was important and that there was a need for resources to accomplish this goal.<sup>6</sup>

**Current safety laws provide little guidance.** Evidence-based safety laws related to children can provide parents with guidance for decision-making. Unfortunately, ATV laws vary from state-to-state and even from county-to-county in some states. In addition, parents are often unfamiliar with the laws and limited enforcement may miss opportunities to bridge this knowledge gap.

### How Could You Provide Anticipatory Guidance About ATV Safety?

Let parents and guardians know that the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)<sup>7</sup> and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons<sup>8</sup> recommend that no child under 16 years of age ride on an ATV. If this message is not readily accepted ...

Urge parents and guardians to make sure their children and teens:

- Operate appropriately sized vehicles.
- Stay off public roadways (paved or unpaved).
- Not ride as or carry passengers on ATVs designed for only one rider (almost all ATVs are designed for a single rider).
- Always wear a helmet and other protective gear such as eye protection, boots, gloves, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt.

Finally, let them know that modeling safe behavior is one of the most effective ways they can promote safe ATV riding by their children and teens.

### What anticipatory guidance should you provide if you encounter resistance to ATV safety?

Encourage parents and their children to complete an ATV safety course if one is available in their area. If no safety courses are locally available, online courses are available and can provide a basic overview of safety.

Families who do not currently follow or are unaware of best practices for ATV safety should be given basic safety information to help them understand the importance of this issue.

# Current Manufacturing Standards for Youth ATVs

AGE IN YEARS	ATV YOUTH LABEL	MAXIMUM SPEED WHEN RESTRICTED	MAX SPEED WHEN UNRESTRICTED
Less than 6	No ATVs are designed to use in children under 6-years-old		
6 and older	Y-6+	10 mph	15 mph
10 and older	Y-10+	15 mph	30 mph
12 and older	Y-12+	15 mph	30 mph
14 and older	Y-14+/T	20 mph	30 to 38 mph

Although age recommendations and proper fit will help to prevent crashes, the speeds recommended by the industry are not evidence-based and parents should err on the side of lower speeds.

## Resources

- University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital ATV Safety: <https://www.uichildrens.org/atv-safety/>
- Consumer Product Safety Commission: ATV Safety Information Center: [www.ATVsafety.gov](http://www.ATVsafety.gov)
- ATV Safety Institute: <https://atvsafety.org/>
- National 4-H ATV Safety Leader's Guide: [https://4-h.ca.uky.edu/files/national\\_4-h\\_atv\\_safety\\_leaders\\_guide-revised\\_credits\\_03-2015.pdf](https://4-h.ca.uky.edu/files/national_4-h_atv_safety_leaders_guide-revised_credits_03-2015.pdf)
- Check your state's ATV Laws here: <https://goo.gl/uXJ5MJ>
- Hands On *RiderCourse* training: <https://atvsafety.org/atv-ridercourse/>
- Specialty Vehicle Institute of America: [www.svia.org](http://www.svia.org)
- State Department of Natural Resources: <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-Do/Off-Highway-Vehicles>

## References

- 1 U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. 2014 Annual Report of ATV-Related Deaths and Injuries. Available at: <https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/pdfs/2014atvannualreport.pdf>
- 2 *CPSC Blogger, CPSC Infographic: Big Real Tough Deadly ATV Statistics*. May 22, 2014. Available at: <http://onsafety.cpsc.gov/blog/2014/05/22/cpsc-infographic-big-real-rough-tough-deadly-atv-statistics/>
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- 4 Denning, G., Harland, K. and Jennissen, C. Age-Based Risk Factors for Pediatric ATV-Related Fatalities, *Pediatrics*, 2014, 134(6):1094-1102.
- 5 Bass JL, Christoffel KK, Widome MW, et al. Childhood injury prevention counseling in primary care settings: a critical review of the literature. *Pediatrics*. 1993;92:544-550.
- 6 Jennissen, C., Denning, G., Sweat, S., Harland, K. and Buresh, C. All-terrain vehicle injury prevention: Healthcare providers' knowledge, attitudes, and the anticipatory guidance they provide, *J Community Health*, 2012, 37(5):968-975.
- 7 American Academy of Pediatrics. All-terrain vehicle injury prevention: two-, three-, and four-wheeled unlicensed motor vehicles, *Pediatrics*, 2000, 105(6):1352-1354
- 8 American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Position Statement 1101: All-terrain Vehicles. Rosemont, IL. 2010. Available at: <https://aaos.org/contentassets/1cd7f41417ec4dd4b5c4c48532183b96/1101---all-terrain-vehicles.pdf>

