

Dept. of Natural Resources: Be smart before you start during gun-deer season

Posted on Friday, Nov 20, 2020

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DNR Reminds Hunters To Ride Safely When Using ATVs/UTVs



The DNR reminds hunters to ride safely when using ATVs and UTVs during their hunt this year. / Photo Credit: iStock/Kyryl Gorlov

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds hunters to ride safely when using all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and utility-terrain vehicles (UTVs) during their hunt this year.

Since January, [33 people have died in ATV and UTV-related crashes in 2020](#). Most of the incidents involved people not wearing a helmet or seat belt. There were 22 fatal crashes in 2019.

Hunters often use ATVs or UTVs to retrieve harvests or travel off-road to their hunting location. Hunters should remember to wear helmets and buckle up. Most hunting incidents involving ATVs or UTVs often occur on private lands and are linked by common factors.

“ATVs and UTVs are powerful and potentially dangerous vehicles. Oftentimes, accidents happen by simply going too fast for conditions, not judging the curve correctly or not knowing the terrain,” said DNR Conservation Warden Lt. Jon King. “Safety is part of the fun. Please ride responsibly so everyone can get back to their families safely.”

Follow these tips for a safe ride:

- Don't drink and ride.
- Slow down.
- Some terrain in Wisconsin is too steep for ATV/UTVs. Please be careful while traversing hills.
- Complete an [ATV safety course](#). ATV riders at least 12 years old and born after Jan. 1, 1988 must complete a course before operating an ATV. UTV operators must be at least age 16. This course may be completed either in a classroom or online.
- Display registration ID number on a rear plate for all ATVs and UTVs registered for public use.
- Always wear a Department of Transportation (DOT)-approved helmet. Hunters are more likely to come across low hanging branches or uneven terrain. Serious injuries and death can occur even at the slowest of speeds.
- Just as with other vehicles, long guns and bows/crossbows must be fully unloaded before transporting them in or on an ATV or UTV.

- Remove mud, dirt and any vegetation from your machine before using it in other areas. Machines can easily transport invasive plant species or seeds that are harmful to local habitats.
- Do not operate in or around waterways or wetlands. ATVs and UTVs are only allowed to cross waterways at bridges, roads or legal fords. Machine use in these areas is illegal and causes serious habitat damage that is very costly to repair.
- Know before you go. Review all ATV/UTV laws [here](#).