

# Dept. of Natural Resources: ATV/UTV riders- think smart before you start during gun deer season

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**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 2021, [41 people have died in ATV and UTV-related crashes](#). Most of the incidents involved people not wearing a helmet or seat belt. There were 38 fatal crashes in 2020.

Hunters using ATVs or UTVs to retrieve harvests or travel off-road to hunting locations should take life-saving precautions such as wearing a helmet and buckling 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 Lt. Martin Stone, DNR Conservation Warden and Off-Highway Vehicle Administrator. “Safety is part of the fun. Please ride responsibly.”

ATV riders at least 12 years old and born after Jan. 1, 1988 must complete a course before operating an ATV on public trails and areas in Wisconsin. UTV operators must be at least age 16.

Complete an ATV safety course either in classroom or online by [signing up here](#).

**ATV/UTV Tips For A Safe Ride:**

- Don't drink and ride.
- Slow down.
- Some terrain in Wisconsin is too steep for ATV/UTVs. Traverse hills with caution.
- 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 low 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.
- 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.

Hunters using ATV and UTVs can also help protect natural areas by removing mud, dirt and any vegetation from vehicles prior to traveling as they can easily transport invasive plant species or seeds that are harmful to local habitats.

[For more information on ATV/UTV laws visit the DNR's ATV/UTV Riding In Wisconsin webpage.](#)