

Dept. of Natural Resources: Think smart before you start - ATV/UTV safety saves lives

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds operators of all-terrain vehicles (ATV) and utility terrain vehicles (UTV) to think smart before they start during late-summer outings.

When enjoying off-road rides and adventures, wearing a helmet and seat belt, monitoring speed and using caution on hills and uneven terrain could save your life.

So far this year, 26 people have died in ATV/UTV crashes. [Most crash victims were not wearing seat belts or helmets.](#)

“As we enjoy those late-summer rides and get ready for fall excursions, it’s important to use caution and wear protective gear,” said Lt. Martin R. Stone, DNR Off-Highway Vehicle Administrator. “Rollover crashes have caused nearly half of the ATV/UTV fatalities in Wisconsin in 2021. Monitoring speed and using caution on rough terrain is critical; some terrain in Wisconsin is too steep for ATVs and UTVs.”

Follow these tips for a safe ride:

- Never consume alcohol or drugs before or during your ride.
- Wear a seat belt and a Department of Transportation (DOT)-approved helmet.
- In addition to a seat belt and helmet, wear protective clothing such as eye protection, gloves, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt.
- Keep your speed in check for the terrain, visibility conditions and your experience.
- Remember that some terrain in Wisconsin is too steep for ATV/UTVs. Please be

careful while traversing hills or uneven terrain.

- Know before you go. Review all ATV/UTV laws [here](#).

One of the best things ATV and UTV operators can do to operate safely is to take an online safety course. [A list of approved safety education classes is available on the DNR Safety Education webpage.](#)

ATV and UTV operators born on or after Jan. 1, 1988, who are at least 12 years old for an ATV (and at least 16 years old for UTV) must complete an ATV safety certification course to operate in Wisconsin (exception: on private property owned by operator's immediate family).

Wisconsin law requires every operator involved in a crash incident to report the incident without delay to law enforcement officials. In addition, within 10 days of the incident, the operator must submit a [written report to the DNR](#).

For more information on ATV and UTV recreation in Wisconsin, [visit the DNR's website](#).