

# Dept. of Natural Resources: Ride slow, ride sober & wear your safety equipment this holiday weekend

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**MADISON, Wis.** – Ahead of the Fourth of July holiday weekend, 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 by following safety best practices.

A lack of safety equipment is the leading cause of ATV/UTV incidents. 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.

Make safety your top priority when enjoying Wisconsin's many ATV/UTV riding opportunities. Always operate at a responsible speed and ensure you and your passengers wear helmets and seat belts.

[So far this year, eight people have died in ATV/UTV crashes.](#) Six of the eight fatal crash victims did not wear a helmet at the time of the crash. Additionally, two of the five fatal UTV crash victims were not wearing a seat belt at the time of the crash.

“ATV/UTV trails and routes often see increased traffic on holiday weekends. Knowing how to be a smart and safe operator is a necessary part of the fun when out on the trails,” said Lt. Martin R. Stone, DNR Off-Highway Administrator. “This year, six of the eight fatal crashes occurred on public roads or routes. Use extra caution when operating on paved surfaces and reduce your speed to ensure a safe return home.”

**SAFETY TIPS & SAFETY COURSE**

When used safely, ATVs and UTVs provide fun, family recreation and are valuable tools for working or exploring the outdoors. However, these vehicles are powerful and can be dangerous and even fatal. It is the responsibility of all ATV and UTV operators to make the sport a safe one.

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 ATV/UTV riding in Wisconsin webpage.](#)