

THINKFIRST CANADA'S ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE INJURY PREVENTION TIPS

PREVENTING CHILD AND YOUTH ATV-RELATED INJURY

ThinkFirst Canada and its valued partners in injury prevention recommend that children under the age of 16 refrain from operating any type of all-terrain vehicle (ATV). In addition, ThinkFirst Canada recommends requiring mandatory use of appropriate helmets and safety training for all those operating ATVs regardless of age.



TOP TIPS: THINKFIRST BEFORE OPERATING AN ATV

- **Wait until you are 16 to ride**
- **Limit engine output.** Excessive speed is a major risk factor for ATV related deaths.
- **Wear a helmet!** Wear a helmet that is up to the standard recommended for motorcycles. A US Consumer Product Safety Commission found that helmet use could reduce the risk of ATV non-fatal head injuries by 64% and risk of death by 42%.
- **Do not ride an ATV on roads and highways**
- **Always ride sober**
- **Follow manufacturer instruction for proper ATV use, maintenance and passenger limits**
- **Respect the environment.** Make sure you can see your environment, and can respond in time to avoid objects, people, trees, and other hazards.
- **Take an ATV training program**
- **Supervise youth**

DID YOU KNOW?

The rise in popularity of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) has been accompanied by a rise in catastrophic injury. Like cars, ATVs are motorized vehicles that require adult skills and judgment to operate safely. ATVs can travel up to speeds of 105 Km/h and can weigh up to 227kg, approximately 500lbs. ThinkFirst Canada recognizes that while ATVs pose a degree of risk to all riders, the risks are greater for children and youth.

MythBuster

ATVs are powerful machines that require strength and skill to operate. So it makes sense to start teaching kids to ride early, right? NO! The truth is that ATVs cause more permanent disabilities and death (commonly called "catastrophic injuries") than most other sport or recreational activities. Children and youth lack the knowledge, development and skills to safely operate these vehicles. ATV use by children has resulted in serious injury and death.

In 2000/2001, severe injuries related to ATV use accounted for 13% of all severe injuries sustained through sports and recreational activities, making ATV related injuries the third most common cause of severe injuries in sports and recreation in Canada. Many studies have drawn attention to the burden of ATV injuries. ThinkFirst's Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation -funded research project found that there were 16 ATV related deaths in Ontario alone in both 2004 and 2005, the last two years studied, and that the majority of these were due to brain or spinal injuries. Catastrophic outcomes from ATV use were also found through research by Heinicke and Tator, published in "All Terrain Vehicle Riding" in *Catastrophic Sports and Recreation Injuries in Canada: Causes and Prevention*, a book recently published by the University of Toronto Press. During the four years studied, 34 individuals under the age of 20 were catastrophically injured. That represents 41% of all individuals injured; of those 34 injured, 11 were under the age of 11. In addition to vehicle size and rider age, alcohol and lack of equipment are documented factors in ATV injuries.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Please pass on this information to young people, their parents and educators, to medical personnel, police, governments, equipment makers and retailers. Think *first* Canada!

FEEDBACK PLEASE! Tell us what you think about ATV use and child and youth health:
info@thinkfirst.ca.

Remember: thinkfirst.ca before you play!