

# Safe Kids: Is it safe for my child to ride an ATV?



As more cases of serious injury and death are attributed to All-terrain vehicles (ATVs), there is a need for education due to their increasing popularity and improper use. ATVs handle differently from other vehicles including motorcycles. They are intended for off-road use only. Handling and control may be adversely affected by pavement.

ATVs are involved in approximately 45,000 injuries and 100 deaths to children ages 16 and under each year. In Florida, from 1982 – 2005, there were 295 reported deaths (source CPSC). The number of ATV-related injuries per year doubled between 1993 and 2001, and the injury and death rates are highest among riders under 16.

An ATV crash is 12 times as likely to kill a child as a bicycle crash. Helmets provide only limited protection — no safety device can protect against the spinal and abdominal injuries commonly caused by ATV rollovers, collisions and ejections. ATVs are inherently difficult to operate, and children do not have the cognitive and physical abilities to drive or ride these vehicles safely. Accordingly, Safe Kids Worldwide recommends that no children under age 16 be allowed to ride an ATV under any circumstances. A child riding an ATV is four times as likely to be seriously injured as a rider over age 16.

There are approximately seven million ATVs in use in the United States operated by more than 15 million Americans. It is important that all riders understand the importance of safe and responsible use of ATVs. Almost 90 percent of youth ATV-related injury incidents occur when a youth is operating an adult-sized ATV, meaning that the engine size is greater than 90 cubic centimeters.

## Florida State Laws:

- All ATVs operated on public land must be titled. There is no state registration requirement.
- All riders under 16 must wear a helmet and eye protection at all times.
- ATV use is prohibited on paved roads.
- As of July 2007, to ride on public land, riders under the age of 16 must have satisfactorily completed a rider-safety course, and a helmet and eye protection is required.



## Top 10 things every adult rider must know about ATVs

1. Children under age 16 should not operate an adult sized ATV. Fifty percent of ATV injuries and fatalities involve children under the age of 16.
2. All ATV users should take a hands-on safety-training course before operating an ATV.
3. Do not carry additional passengers on ATVs because they can affect the balance and make it difficult for the driver to stay in control.
4. Never operate an ATV on public or paved surfaces. ATVs should be operated only on designed trails.
5. Always wear a helmet and protective safety gear such as goggles, boots and gloves.
6. Wearing a helmet while operating an ATV reduces the risk of fatal head injury by 42 percent and the risk on nonfatal head injury by 64 percent.
7. Never operate an ATV while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
8. ATVs can travel at speeds in excess of 75 miles per hour and can weigh in excess of 700 pounds.
9. ATVs can easily roll and tip over. Their unpredictable nature in off-road conditions makes training and proper use essential.
10. ATVs should be operated during daylight hours.



For more information, please visit the Safe Kids North Central Florida Web site at: [shandssafekids.org](http://shandssafekids.org).

### Sources:

Safe Kids Worldwide  
ENA Injury Prevention Institute/EN Care  
Consumer Products Safety Commission

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