

Off-road Safety

All Terrain Vehicles

The use of all terrain vehicles has grown over recent years; The Canadian All-Terrain Vehicle Distributors indicate that the retail sales of all terrain vehicles has more than tripled in the last five years from 5 700 units in 1997 to 18 000 units in 2001 (Canadian Institute for Health Information Ontario Trauma Registry Analytic Bulletin, December 2003).

DID YOU KNOW THAT the report by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) indicated that ATV-related hospitalizations has increased by almost 50% in the past five years and is now the third most common cause of severe injuries! (Canadian Institute for Health Information Ontario Trauma Registry Analytic Bulletin, December 2003).

Statistics from the CIHI indicate that the number of ATV injuries in the Cochrane District is as follows:

YEAR	NUMBER OF INJURIES
1998-1999	9
1999-2000	13
2000-2001	13
2001-2002	7
2002-2003	11

Children are being seriously injured

Children between the ages of 5 to 19 are the most vulnerable, as the sheer weight of ATVs cause serious injuries in this age group. As well ATVs unlike other automobiles don't have restraints or a protective frame, so riders are often thrown from the vehicle, leading to head, spinal cord and internal injuries that can be fatal. (Thunder Bay District Health Unit, 2005.)

Children under the age of 16 do not have the judgment; maturity and or physical strength to safely operate adult sized all terrain vehicles. Parental supervision of children aged between 12 and 16 does not prevent accidents from happening. (Smartrisk, 2005)

Accidents are preventable

Take the necessary precautions:

- ATV's are not designed for more than one passenger. ATV's can easily flip back and cause very serious injuries for both rider and passenger.
- Wear protective gear such as pants, long sleeve shirts, gloves, approved helmet and protective eyewear.
- Be cautious and drive at safe speeds. Responsibility is the key!
- Never drink and ride. Plan for alternative methods of transportation.
- Parents should ensure that if their child does ride an ATV that they should have the developmental skills required to safely operate an ATV.

(Adapted from the Thunder Bay District Health Unit)