

# ATV and UTV Safety Resource Guide

Prepared by: National Association of Development  
Organizations Research Foundation

Off-highway vehicles (OHVs) are widely used in rural communities for recreation, work, and transportation, but their growing use also brings significant safety challenges. This resource guide introduces key safety considerations and practical tools to help regional planners and safety advocates reduce OHV-related injuries. Whether the reader is a rider themselves or interested in local OHV safety practices, this guide introduces essential safety and training resources and highlights various stakeholders' roles for ensuring safer OHV experiences for riders.



Photo Source: UNMC  
Central States Center  
for Agricultural Safety  
and Health



## About this Resource Sheet

This resource does not provide an exhaustive list of potential sources. Any mention of a specific company, product, service, or website in this publication does not constitute or imply an endorsement by the research team. This resource was authored by Program Manager Haley Schultheis and Senior Program Manager Krishna Kunapareddy and published by the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Research Foundation with support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development through a contract to provide technical assistance to rural communities. USDA is an equal opportunity provider. The University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health played a key role in developing this resource guide and remains a leading advocate for ATV/UTV safety. Any opinions, findings and conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funding agency.

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# Off-Highway Vehicle Basics

Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) are powerful machines that support recreation, work, and transportation across a variety of landscapes, but are especially popular in rural areas. OHVs include various types of vehicles including All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), Utility Task Vehicles (UTVs), and Recreational Off-Highway Vehicles (ROVs).

Feature	 ATV	 ROV	 UTV
Primary Use	Recreation	Recreation/Work	Work
Steering	Handlebar	Steering Wheel	Steering Wheel
Seating	Straddle	Bucket/Bench	Bucket/Bench
Cargo Bed	No	Sometimes	Yes (Standard)
Roll Cage	No	Yes	Yes

Credit: Consumer Federation of America

OHVs versatility makes them popular for various uses; however, their power and off-road capability also come with significant risks, especially when operated without proper knowledge or equipment. In 2024, the Consumer Federation of America documented **632 OHV fatalities and injuries generally exceed 100,000 per year.**

**Each state defines the off-road vehicle types in their own way and may have different laws and regulations regarding lawful use.**

**Riders should always follow the manufacturer's guidelines for minimum age and riding conditions.**

## The biggest risk factors for OHV related injuries and deaths include:

- rollovers
- collisions
- occupant ejections
- carrying passengers on single-rider vehicles
- riding on paved roads
- alcohol use
- excessive speeds
- improperly trained operators



Photo Source: UNMC Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health

# Outreach Materials + Information

Riders lower their risk for preventable injuries and fatalities when they better understand machine capabilities, wear appropriate protective gear, and follow established safety guidelines. The following materials and information support public outreach, safety planning, and evidence-based intervention for Off-Highway Vehicles.

## **NADO Rural Transportation Webinar: Understanding ATV and UTV Risks with UNMC Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health**

(<https://tinyurl.com/mumdbewy>)

This virtual webinar explores trends in ATV + UTV crash data in the state of Alabama, and highlights various techniques to promote safe use of these vehicles in recreational and agricultural settings.

## **UNMC Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health: ATV/UTV Safety and Operation Resources**

(<https://tinyurl.com/47dzp8nd>)

UNMC Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health ATV/UTV Safety page provides educational resources that highlight the risk of ATV and UTV use. The resources also offer practical guidance for preventing injuries.

## **United States Consumer Product Safety Commission: OHV & ATV Safety Resources and Crash Data**

(<https://tinyurl.com/yc7n22da>)

The CPSC ATV Safety Information Center offers guidance on ATV risks and provides practical safety tips in training, age-appropriate use, and protective gear. It serves as a centralized resource to help riders, and advocates, make informed decisions and reduce preventable injuries.

## **ATV/UTV Safety in Local, State, Regional, and Tribal Planning**

Cass County, MN: Regulating ATV Use on County Highways and Public Right-of-Ways  
(<https://tinyurl.com/ywur7p4w>)

Oconto County, WI: ATV and UTV Ordinances  
(<https://tinyurl.com/yjh4w6yv>)

Park Hills, MO: UTV and ATV Ordinances on City Streets  
(<https://tinyurl.com/5be335j4>)

Menominee Indian Tribe, WI: ATV Regulations  
(<https://tinyurl.com/yhzs3xt4>)

Association of Central Okolona Governments Regional Safety Action Plan (pg. 120)  
(<https://tinyurl.com/yc8hzp5d>)

Iowa DOT: Regulations for Driving on Iowa Public Roads  
(<https://tinyurl.com/3m4fjmfw>)

## **Potential OHV Safety Stakeholders**

