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**National Children's Center**  
for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety

June, 1999

Dear Child Safety Advocate:

The "All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Safety" professional resource packet contains materials that may be relevant to your injury control or health promotion efforts. The packet is intended to provide professionals with injury facts, ideas for preventive actions, and approaches to promote safe operation of all-terrain vehicles. Materials were developed with funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration through the Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

Contact us at the National Children's Center, a site of the Children's Safety Network, if you would like to discuss in detail the contents of this packet or other rural injury prevention efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Lee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Barbara Lee, RN, PhD

Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Hanna". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name being the most legible part.

Chris Hanna, MPH  
Program Manager

Enclosures: Fact Sheet: ATV Safety  
Selected ATV Organizations and Resources  
Resources: ATV Safety Education Programs  
Injury Control Strategies - What Can Child Safety Advocates Do?  
State ATV Requirements (SVIA)



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# Fact Sheet

## ATV Safety

### Background

All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are motorized vehicles with large, low-pressure tires, designed for off-the-road use. ATV models vary in size and power, with engine sizes ranging from 50 to 500

cc and vehicle weights from 100 to 600 pounds.<sup>1</sup>

The Consumer Product Safety Commission and ATV distributors signed a voluntary agreement with ATV manufacturers containing the following components: three-wheeled ATVs would no longer be available for purchase, required training for new ATV operators, age restrictions placed on ATVs being sold, and to provide safety warnings to prospective ATV buyers.<sup>2</sup>

There were an estimated 3,910,000 ATVs in the United States in 1997. Approximately 14% of ATV operators are younger than 16 years of age.<sup>2</sup>

### Estimated National Injury Experience

From 1985 through 1997, children under 16 years of age accounted for approximately 40% of the 887,000 ATV-related injuries.<sup>3</sup>

An annual average of 20,267 children under 16 years of age were treated for ATV-related injuries in hospital emergency rooms in the United States from 1995 to 1997.<sup>7</sup>

During 1985 to 1997, 3200 ATV-related deaths were recorded for all ages. Nationally, the annual toll has remained fairly stable since 1992.<sup>2</sup>

From 1985 to 1997, males between the ages of 12 and 19 years of age accounted for 30% of the ATV-related fatalities in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

### Estimated Cost of Injury

The annual cost of nonfatal ATV-related injuries among children under 18 years of age in 1997, was \$1.5 million (1997 dollars) for an estimated 73,300

injuries. The average cost per injury is estimated at \$20,655.<sup>4</sup>

### Regional and State Injury Experience

The majority of ATV operators and passengers who experienced ATV-related head injuries, report not wearing a helmet.<sup>2,5,6</sup>

A nationwide survey of injured ATV operators found the hospitalization rate for ATV-related injuries was 13%, compared to a hospitalization rate of 4% for other consumer product-related injuries.<sup>2</sup>

Injuries to children and young adults in Wisconsin who operate ATVs are 6 times more likely to result in hospitalization and 12 times more likely to result in a fatality as compared to bicycle-related injuries.<sup>7</sup>

Frequent mechanisms of ATV-related fatal and non-fatal injuries to operators and passengers are ATV rollovers and collisions with stationary objects.<sup>2,6,7</sup>

From 1985 to 1997, four-wheeled ATV-related injuries and fatalities for all ages increased approximately threefold, while the use of four-wheeled ATVs increased eightfold.<sup>2</sup>

### Risk Factors

ATV operators and passengers who were injured were most likely:

- not wearing a helmet<sup>4,8</sup>
- operating an ATV not recommended for their age by the manufacturer<sup>4</sup>
- a male under 19 years of age<sup>2</sup>
- transporting a second person<sup>2,4</sup>
- a recreational user<sup>2,9,10</sup>

Young children often lack the physical size and strength, cognitive abilities, and fine motor skills to operate an ATV properly. Parents of children less than 16 years of age should be counseled to provide alternatives to motorized recreation.<sup>1</sup>

*The literature does not offer evidence that ATV operator instruction reduces the risk of a TV-related injuries to children.*

## References

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10. Stueland D, Zoch T. Off-road vehicular injuries in central Wisconsin: Farm residents versus non-farm residents. *J Agric Saf and Health* 1995; 1(3): 159-163.
11. American Academy of Pediatrics. All-terrain vehicles: two-, three-, and four-wheeled unlicensed motorized vehicles. (Statement from the Committee on Accident and Poison Prevention). *Pediatrics* 1987; 79(2):306-398. *The AAP is currently revising this statement to raise the minimum driver age to 16 years.*



### For more information:

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