



Safekids
NEW ZEALAND

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Factsheet

All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Related Injury

Key facts

- New Zealand ATV related fatalities and injuries constitute 6% of motor vehicle related mortality and morbidity for all age groups.
- While it is difficult to gain exact figures of the numbers of children injured and killed on ATVs it is an area of increasing concern for rural communities.
- Each year on average at least 60 children will be injured on an ATV severely enough to require hospitalisationⁱ.
- In 77% of all injury cases involving children the child was the driver of the vehicle.ⁱⁱ
- International research demonstrates that drivers under the age of 16 have a 1 in 3 chance of having an ATV related injury during the average lifespan of the ATV.ⁱⁱ

In general, manufacturers recommend that ATVs should not be used by people under the age of 16 and display prominent warning labels on all new ATVs sold in New Zealand. Manufacturers also warn riders never to carry passengers. In this country safety guidelines for use of ATVs on farms are set out in the "Agricultural Guideline Safe Use of ATVs on New Zealand Farms"

Who is most at risk?

- Children are particularly vulnerable to injury because ATVs require the rider to use 'active riding techniques'. Children do not have the body size, weight, perception and co-ordination skills to actively ride ATVs safely.ⁱⁱⁱ



- Approximately 10% of ATV injuries notified to ACC occur to children under the age of 16.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Children aged 10 to 14 years are the age group most often hospitalised (58%), followed by 5 to 9 year olds (32%) and then pre-schoolers (10%).ⁱ
- Research undertaken in the mid 1990s showed that children aged 12 – 15 years were the age group most likely to operate ATVs (36%) followed by children aged 4 - 11 years (27%).^{iv}
- Boys (71%) account for the vast majority of injuries. Compared to girls (29%).

Causes & circumstances of injury

- The majority of children's ATV injuries (61%) occur on farms.^{iv}
- Most injuries associated with ATVs occur when the driver loses control on hard uneven surfaces, the ATV rolls over and the driver or passenger is thrown off, or there is a collision with a fixed object.^v
- Injuries most commonly sustained by children are fractured limbs (25%) followed by concussion (11%).ⁱ

Safekids New Zealand's mission is to reduce the incidence and severity of unintentional injuries to New Zealand's children aged 0-14 years.

What is the Law?^{vi}

- ATVs are defined as vehicles designed for off-road use, with three or more wheels, an engine capacity exceeding 50 ml and a gross weight of less than 1,000 kilograms.
- ATVs which will never be used on any public road do not have to be registered or licensed.
- Riders of ATVs being used on a public road must by law wear an approved motorcycle helmet. There is no law requiring ATV riders to wear helmets when riding off road, although the Land Transport Safety Authority strongly recommend a helmet be worn at all times.

ATVs and Children : Lessons for NZ from the American Experience

- ATVs have been used in the United States for at least a decade longer than in New Zealand.
- Research undertaken in the US last year provides sobering reading for the injury impact on children under the age of 16. The key findings of the research are:
 - In the US 18% of total fatalities on ATVs occur to children under the age of 12.
 - Children under the age of 16 make up approximately 14 % of all ATV riders but disproportionately suffer 38% of total fatalities.
 - More than 95% of children under the age of 16 injured on ATVs were riding adult sized machines.

Source: Natural Trails and Waters Coalition. ATV Safety Crisis: Americas Children At Risk. 2002.

Georgina's Story

Eight year old Georgina had pestered her father to let her ride the ATV, which was parked in a paddock near their house.

Georgina mounted the ATV and rode around for a while.

Her fatal injury occurred when she put the vehicle into reverse and backed into a half round pole that was part of a small fence protecting a tree from animals.

She received a knock to the back of her head, which rendered her unconscious. Her neck was pinned between the pole and the bar that runs across the handlebars of the ATV.

ATV's are tractors.

Empower yourself to say "No"!

Thoughts from the parents of 8 year old Georgina.

Source: NZ Police. About ATVs, A School Road Safety Education Resource. 2002.

ⁱ Dow, N., NZHIS Child ATV Injuries 2000 -2001, SafeKids, Editor. 2002.

ⁱⁱ US Consumer Produce Safety Commission 2000. CPSC Document 5081. Young People Under the Age of 16 Should Not Ride Adult-Size ATVs : Safety Alert.

ⁱⁱⁱ ACC F2 All Terrain Vehicles. www.acc.co.nz/injury_prevention

^{iv} Langely, J. 1996. Tractors, motorcycles, ATVs: inconsistencies in legislation for child safety. Examples from New Zealand. Injury Prevention Vol 2, 1, p 4 – 6.

^v Wren, J. 2002. Submission on Draft NZ Standard DR8600 All Terrain Vehicle Helmets.

^{vi} LTSA. Factsheet 19 ATV Registration, Licensing and Safety. 2000.