

All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's) Sit Astride Quad Bikes

All terrain vehicles (ATV's) and sit astride quad bikes are often used as work vehicles in a variety of industries such as agriculture, horticulture and forestry and are typically used for off road working, often on steep slopes. However, inappropriate use can cause serious injuries and fatalities.

All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's) - Sit Astride Quad bikes

Introduction

A sit astride ATV (often referred to as a quad bike) is a motorised vehicle with a seat designed to be straddled by the operator and with handlebars to control the vehicle's steering. The vehicle is intended to be used by one person only and without any passengers.

All terrain vehicles / sit astride quad bikes are designed to travel on four low pressure tyres and to be ridden and operated off road where the ground conditions can vary considerably.



To maximise manoeuvrability, ATV's have a narrow wheel base, short turning circle, high centre of gravity and low tyre pressures and these features can result in the ATV becoming unstable.

ATV's are not fitted with roll over protection (ROPS) and are capable of being driven at high speeds, which can cause serious or fatal injury to the rider if the vehicle overturns.

Legislation

The following regulations apply:

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations

Hazards

The main causes of fatal or serious injury involving ATV's are from:

- Being thrown off the ATV as the vehicle overturns - or from losing control of the vehicle
- Being trapped, crushed or asphyxiated under an overturned vehicle
- People in the vicinity being struck by, or run over by the vehicle
- Colliding with objects such as trees, walls, buildings, other vehicles etc
- Carrying passengers on the ATV or in towed vehicles. The long seat is designed to allow the operator to shift their body position backwards or forwards depending on slope conditions (active riding technique) and is not designed for carrying passengers. Carrying passengers in a trailer towed behind an ATV can cause the ATV to become unstable.

Before using an ATV, a number of questions should be considered, including:

- Is an ATV the most suitable piece of work equipment to use for the task or is there an alternative option such as a 4x4 vehicle with seat belts and protective cab, tractor, rough terrain vehicle (RTV with roll over protection)?
- Has the operator had formal training? Details of suitable training courses are available from franchised ATV dealers, ATV manufacturers, Lantra, the Forestry Commission, EASI (European ATV Safety Institution), the British Off Road Driving Association (BORDA), agricultural colleges and rural training providers.
- Does the operator have suitable head protection? Depending on the assessment of the circumstance the ATV is being used this could be a specialist ATV helmet, motorcycle helmet, equestrian helmet, cycle helmet or mountaineering helmet. The helmet should have a chinstrap and be compatible with suitable eye protection. The helmet should be manufactured and tested in accordance with the current EN or BS standard. Industrial hard hats and forestry helmets are not suitable helmets to be used for any ATV operation.
- Is the operator old enough to operate the quad bike? Children under the age of 13 are prohibited from using an ATV for work purposes. Children over the age of 13 should only ride an ATV of the appropriate size and power and after formal training on a low powered ATV. Children under the age of 16 are prohibited from riding most adult sized ATV's. The manufacturer's minimum age recommendation should be adhered to. The minimum recommended age may be displayed on the ATV or detailed in the operator's manual.
- Has the route the ATV will be driven on been checked for suitability and hazards including hidden obstructions, unstable ground conditions e.g. excessively wet, muddy, loose surfaces?
- Has the ATV been maintained and checked before use, in particular are tyres in good condition and the tyres inflated to the correct tyre pressure, wheel nuts are tightly fastened, the throttle operates smoothly, brakes work and lights work?
- If being used at night or in poor light conditions are the vehicles lights suitable for the activity and do the lights work and function correctly?
- Does the vehicle have sufficient fuel or battery charge?
- Are loads secure and distributed evenly to allow for changes to the handling of the ATV when going up or down slopes?
- If the ATV will be used to tow a trailer, is a suitable trailer used with the towing capacity, maximum weight on the tow hitch and drawbar loading limit known and complied with? Is the trailer, including the tow hitch, in good mechanical condition and safe to use? It is good practice to use a break-away cable when hitched to a trailer.
- Are loads (either in the trailer or on racks) distributed evenly and secured e.g. with ratchet straps or a net?

Assessing the Risks

Several factors need to be considered when using an ATV.

- The person
- The vehicle
- The route

The Person

Anyone riding the ATV should be:

- Trained
- Above the legal age limit
- Mentally and physically capable
- Wearing a suitable helmet / head protection
- Wearing long sleeved clothing, gloves and sturdy boots with ankle protection
- Not riding the ATV under the influence of drink or drugs
- Informing someone of where they are going and what time they are expected back
- Equipped with a fully charged mobile phone

The ATV

The ATV should:

- Be inspected before use – see check sheet in Appendix 1
- Have the correct tyre pressures
- Have sufficient fuel or battery charge
- Have a first aid kit
- Not be used to carry any passengers

The Route

The route should be:

- Planned
- Walked before using the ATV to check for hidden obstructions, hollows or other hazards

Road use – Highway code Rule 158

Certain models of sit astride quad bikes, are suitable only for off-road use and do not meet legal standards for use on roads. Vehicles that do not meet these standards **MUST NOT** be used on roads. They **MUST NOT** be used on pavements, footpaths, cycle paths or bridleways either. You **MUST** make sure that the quad bike meets legal standards and is properly registered, taxed and insured before using it on the roads. Even when registered, taxed and insured for the road, vehicles **MUST NOT** be used on pavements.

Reference: [Highway code Rule 158 - The Highway Code](#)

Checklist

A generic All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) sit astride quad bike Checklist is presented in Appendix 1 which can be tailored to your own organisation.

Specialist Partner Solutions

Aviva Risk Management Solutions can offer access to a wide range of risk management products and services at preferential rates via our network of Specialist Partners. For more information please visit:

[Aviva Risk Management Solutions - Specialist Partners](#)

Sources and Useful Links

- European ATV Safety Institute (EASI) - [Quad Safety](#)
- Health and Safety Executive - [ATV's](#)
- The Highway Code - [The Highway Code](#)

Additional Information

Relevant Loss Prevention Standards include:

- Lone Working
- Driving in Adverse Weather
- Side by side ATV's, Rough Terrain Vehicles (RTV's), Utility Vehicles (UTV's)

To find out more, please visit [Aviva Risk Management Solutions](#) or **speak to one of our advisors.**

Email us at riskadvice@aviva.com or call 0345 366 6666.*

*The cost of calls to 03 prefixed numbers are charged at national call rates (charges may vary dependent on your network provider) and are usually included in inclusive minute plans from landlines and mobiles. For our joint protection telephone calls may be recorded and/or monitored.

Appendix 1 - ATV (All Terrain Vehicle) Sit astride Quad bike Checklist

Location	
Date	
Completed by (name and signature)	

	All Terrain Vehicle – Sit astride quad bike Checklist	Y/N	Comments
1.	Have you carried out adequate risk assessments and developed safe systems of work?		
2.	Have all operators received formal training in the use of the ATV?		
3.	Have staff a suitable ATV helmet?		
4.	Is the helmet worn?		
5.	Has the route been planned and checked?		
6.	Is the ATV in a good, safe overall condition? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clean and dry • free from oil • free from mud • free from damage • no visible leaks etc 		
7.	Does the foot brake work effectively?		
8.	Does the handbrake work effectively?		
9.	Are the tyres in good condition?		
10.	Are the tyre pressures at the correct inflation?		
11.	Are the wheel nuts secure?		
12.	Does the steering operate smoothly?		
13.	Does the throttle operate smoothly?		
14.	Is the seat secure and in good condition?		
15.	Is the carrier / rack secure and in good condition?		

	All Terrain Vehicle – Sit astride quad bike Checklist	Y/N	Comments
16.	Are loads distributed evenly and secured during transit?		
17.	Do all lights work and function correctly?		
18.	Does the clutch (if manual) work smoothly?		
19.	Are there sufficient fluid levels? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oil • transmission • brake • battery 		
20.	Is there enough fuel or sufficient battery charge?		
21.	Has the ATV been correctly maintained to ensure its safe operation?		
22.	Additional comments:		

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