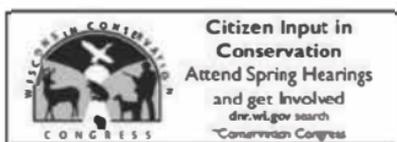


# WISCONSIN ATV/UTV Regulations



This pamphlet is a summary of Wisconsin's off-highway vehicle laws and regulations. For complete laws and regulations, consult the Wisconsin State Statutes Chapter 23.33 and Wisconsin Administration Codes NR 64.

**Helmets & Seat Belts Save Lives.  
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Conservation Congress



# WISCONSIN ATV/UTV Regulations

## Department of Natural Resources

P.O. Box 7921

Madison, WI 53707

For ATV/UTV and safety information, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "ATV" or "UTV"

DNR Call Center **1-888-936-7463**

Live chat and e-mail service available.



LE-500 2020

# What's New?

*For the most updated version of the regulations, view them online at [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov). Here's a brief synopsis of the most recent law changes:*

## **UTV Definition Changes**

The legal definition of an UTV has changed. No longer are low-pressure tires required. Now simply 4 or more tires are required. How the width of an UTV is measure has changed. UTVs are required to be originally manufactured, and must have at all times a width of not more than 65 inches as measured laterally between the outermost wheel rim on each side of the vehicle, exclusive of tires, mirrors, and accessories that are not essential to the vehicle's basic operation.

## **Secondary UTV Definition Changes**

For machines that would otherwise meet the ATV definition except for weight & width, two changes were made. The weight and width requirements are increased to not more than 2000 pounds, and a width of 65 inches or less as measured laterally between the outermost wheel rim on each side of the vehicle, exclusive of tires, mirrors, and accessories that are not essential to the vehicle's basic operation.

## **ATV Definition Changes**

The legal definition of an ATV has changed. No longer are low-pressure tires required. Now simply 3 or more tires are required. How the width of an ATV is measure has changed. ATVs are required to be commercially designed and manufactured, and must have a width of not more than 50 inches as measured laterally between the outermost wheel rim on each side of the vehicle, exclusive of tires, mirrors, and accessories that are not essential to the vehicle's basic operation.

## **ATV Passenger Rules**

Previously only on the roadway were passengers restricted only to those ATVs that were designed and intended for passengers. Now that requirement has been extended to all other areas. ATV operators cannot have a passenger riding in or on any part of an ATV that is not designed or intended to be used by passengers. Aftermarket seating does not comply with the new law change.

## **Lighted Headlamp Display Requirements**

Previously ATVs and UTVs were required to have a lighted headlamp & tail lamp during hours of darkness or during daylight hours when within a highway. ATVs and UTVs are now required to have a light-ed headlamp & tail lamp at all times during operation.

## **New ATV & UTV Auxiliary Lighting Restrictions**

No person (except emergency services personal) may operate an ATV or UTV that is equipped with any of the following:

1. A lamp that emits any color of light other than white or amber and that is visible from directly in front of the ATV or UTV.
2. A lamp that emits any color of light other than red, yellow, amber, or white and that is visible from directly behind the ATV or UTV.
3. A flashing, oscillating, or rotating lamp that emits any color other than yellow or amber.

Any person operating an ATV or UTV must dim his or her high beam headlamps and any auxiliary lamps when within 500 feet of an approaching ATV/UTV or vehicle, and within 500 feet to the rear of another ATV/UTV or vehicle. In addition an operator must dim his or her her back or her backup lamps unless actively backing.

# What's New?

For the most updated version of the regulations, view them online at [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov). Here's a brief synopsis of the most recent law changes:

## **Operational Requirements and Modification Restrictions**

- ATVs and UTVs cannot be operated with anything else other than tires. This restriction does not apply to private property or frozen waters.
- An ATV or UTV may not be modified so that its maximum width exceeds the width allowed for an ATV—50 inches or the width allowed for UTV—65 inches. This does not apply to the operation of an ATV or UTV on private property.



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## Definitions

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**Accident**—A crash involving an ATV/UTV is any accident (regardless of the number of vehicles involved) which results in a fatality or an injury that requires medical treatment by a physician.

**Accompanied**—Subject to continuous verbal direction or control, but not necessarily on the same machine.

**Agricultural Purpose**—a purpose related to the transportation of farm implements, equipment, supplies, or products on a farm or between farms. Operation between a dwelling and a farm or piece of non-agricultural property does not meet this definition unless the dwelling is on the same piece of property as the farm.

**All-terrain vehicle (ATV)**—a commercially designed and manufactured motor-driven device that has a weight, without fluids, of 900 pounds or less, has a width of not more than 50 inches as measured laterally between the outermost wheel rim on each side of the vehicle, exclusive of tires, mirrors, and accessories that are not essential to the vehicle's basic operation, is equipped with a seat designed to be straddled by the operator, and travels on 3 or more tires. See also: Small ATV.

**Dealer**—a person engaged in the sale of all-terrain vehicles for a profit at wholesale or retail.

**Designated Adult**—parent, guardian or adult designated by the parent or guardian.

**DNR**—Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

**DOT**—Department of Transportation.

**Golf cart**—a vehicle in which the speed attainable in one mile does not exceed 20 mph on a paved, level surface, and that is designed and intended to convey one or more persons and equipment to play the game of golf in an area designated as a golf course.

**Highway**—All public ways, thoroughfares, and bridges on the same. It includes the entire width between the boundary lines of every way open to the use of the public as a matter of right for the purpose of vehicle traffic. Generally Federal and State Highways are designated by a number, County highways are designated by a letter or letters. Town Highways are generally designated by a name.

**Hours of Darkness**—The period of time from ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise and all other times when there is not sufficient natural light to render clearly visible any person or vehicle on a highway at a distance of 500 feet.

**Immediate Family**—Persons who are related as spouses, as siblings or as parent and child.

**Implement of Husbandry**—A vehicle or piece of equipment or machinery designed for agricultural purposes, used exclusively in the conduct of agricultural operations and used principally off the highway, or a trailer-mounted bulk liquid fertilizer container.

**Land Under The Management And Control Of A Person's Immediate Family**— Land owned or leased by a person

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## Definitions

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or a member of a person's immediate family over which the owner or lessee has management and control. This term excludes land owned or leased by an organization of which the person or a member of the person's immediate family is a member.

**Low-speed Vehicle**—a motor vehicle that conforms to the definition and requirements for low-speed vehicles as adopted in the federal motor vehicle safety standards for low-speed vehicles under 49 CFR 571.3 (b) and 571.500.

### 49 CFR 571.3(b)

Title 49:Transportation PART 571—FEDERAL MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARDS § 571.3 Definitions.

(b.) Other definitions. As used in this chapter—Low-speed vehicle (LSV) means a motor vehicle,

1. That is 4-wheeled,
2. Whose speed attainable in 1.6 km (1 mile) is more than 32 kilometers per hour (20 miles per hour) and not more than 40 kilometers per hour (25 miles per hour) on a paved level surface, and
3. Whose GVWR [gross vehicle weight rating] is less than 1,361 kilograms (3,000 pounds).

### § 571.500 Standard No. 500; Low-speed vehicles.

- S1. Scope. This standard specifies requirements for low-speed vehicles. S2. Purpose. The purpose of this standard is to ensure that low-speed vehicles operated on the public streets, roads, and highways are equipped with the minimum motor vehicle equipment appropriate for motor vehicle safety.
- S3. Applicability. This standard applies to low-speed vehicles. S4. [Reserved.]
- S5. Requirements.
- (a) When tested in accordance with test conditions in S6 and test procedures in S7, the maximum speed attainable in 1.6 km (1 mile) by each low-speed vehicle shall not more than 40 kilometers per hour (25 miles per hour).
  - (b) Each low-speed vehicle shall be equipped with:
    1. Headlamps,
    2. Front and rear turn signal lamps,
    3. Taillamps,
    4. Stop lamps,
    5. Reflex reflectors: one red on each side as far to the rear as practicable, and one red on the rear,
    6. An exterior mirror mounted on the driver's side of the vehicle and either an exterior mirror mounted on the passenger's side of the vehicle or an interior mirror,
    7. A parking brake,
    8. A windshield that conforms to the Federal motor vehicle safety standard on glazing materials (49 CFR 571.205).
    9. A VIN that conforms to the requirements of part 565 Vehicle Identification Number of this chapter, and
    10. A Type 1 or Type 2 seat belt assembly conforming to Sec. 571.209 of this part, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 209, Seat belt assemblies, installed at each designated seating position.

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## Definitions

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**Mini-truck**—a motor truck, as defined in s. 340.01 (34), having a top speed of not more than 60 mph, and that is all of the following:

- ◇ Powered by an internal combustion engine with a piston or rotor displacement of not less than 660 cubic centimeters
- ◇ Not more than 60 inches wide
- ◇ Not more than 1,600 lbs in dry, unloaded weight
- ◇ Manufactured with a locking enclosed cab and a heated interior Non-pneumatic tire—a tire that is designed by the manufacturer to meet all of the following requirements: to have a minimum width of 6 inches, to have a reinforced structure, and to not be supported by air pressure.

**Operate**—To exercise physical control over the speed or direction of an ATV or UTV or to physically manipulate or activate any of the controls of an ATV or UTV necessary to put it in motion.

**Operator**—A person who operates an ATV or UTV, who is responsible for the operation of an ATV or UTV or who is supervising the operation of an ATV or UTV.

**Owner**—A person who has lawful possession of an ATV or UTV by virtue of legal title or equitable interest in the machine which entitles the person to possession of it.

**Private Property**—Land owned or leased by an individual, group of individuals or corporation (not government owned) or lands owned by a member of the immediate family (spouse, siblings, or parent). A trail, even though crossing private property, is not considered private for the purpose of enforcement of laws, i.e., registration, OWI etc.

**Raceway Facility**—An area, including a marked warm-up and testing area, specifically designated by a sponsor for the purpose of conducting a sanctioned race or derby for which any required local permits have been obtained.

**Renter**—A person engaged in the rental or leasing of ATVs or UTVs to the public.

**Roadway**—That portion of a highway between the regularly established curb line or that portion, which is improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicle travel excluding the berm or shoulder.

**Route**—A highway or sidewalk designated for use by ATV and/or UTV operators by the governmental agency having jurisdiction. Routes are identified at the beginning point by a sign showing the white silhouette of an ATV on a green background. White directional arrows on a green background show the continuation of the route.

**Sanctioned Race or Derby**—A competitive event sponsored by a county, town, city or village, by a promoter, chamber of commerce, ATV/UTV club or other similar organization.

**Small All-Terrain Vehicle**—An all-terrain vehicle that has 4 wheels and that has either an engine certified by the manufacturer at not more than 130 cubic centimeters or an equivalent power unit. These machines must be registered.

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## Definitions

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**Small Utility Terrain Vehicle**—means a utility terrain vehicle that has 4 wheels and that has either an engine certified by the manufacturer at not more than 200 cubic centimeters or an equivalent power unit.

**Snow Removal Device**—means an attachment designed and installed for the purpose of removing snow: may be a plow blade, blower, bucket, or brush.

**Temporary Operating Receipt**—means a receipt issued by the department or an agent that shows that an application and the required fees for a registration certificate have been submitted to the department or an agent.

**Town Highway**—Roads constructed and maintained by the towns (generally these roads are signed with names, for example Old Town Road).

**Trail**—A marked corridor on public property or on private lands subject to public easement or lease, designated for use by all-terrain vehicle operators by the governmental agency having jurisdiction, but excluding roadways of highways except those roadways which are not seasonally maintained for motor vehicle traffic. Trails are identified by signs showing a white silhouette of an ATV on a brown background.

**Used Exclusively on Private Property**—Use of an ATV/UTV by its owner or a member of his or her immediate family, only on land owned or leased by the all-terrain vehicle owner or a member of his or her immediate family.

**Utility Terrain Vehicle**—means any of the following:

1. A commercially designed and manufactured motor driven device that does not meet federal motor vehicle safety standards in effect on July 1, 2012, that is not a golf cart, low-speed vehicle, dune buggy, mini-truck, or tracked vehicle, that is designed to be used primarily off of a highway, **and that has, and was originally manufactured with, all of the following:**
  - a weight, without fluids, of 2,000 lbs. or less
  - four or more tires
  - a steering wheel
  - a tail light
  - a brake light
  - two headlights
  - a width of not more than 65 inches as measured laterally between the outermost wheel rim on each side of the vehicle, exclusive of tires, mirrors, and accessories that are not essential to the vehicle's basic operation
  - a system of seat belts, or a similar system, for restraining each occupant of the device in the event of an accident
  - a system of structural members designed to reduce the likelihood that an occupant would be crushed as the result of a rollover of the device
2. A commercially designed and manufactured motor driven device to which all of the following applies:
  - It does not meet federal motor vehicle safety standards in effect on July 1, 2012; is not a golf cart, low-speed vehicle, dune buggy, mini-truck, or tracked vehicle; is designed to be used primarily off of a highway; **and has, and was**

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## Definitions

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**originally manufactured with**, a weight, without fluids, of not more than 2000 pounds.

- It has a width of 65 inches or less as measured laterally between the outermost wheel rim on each side of the vehicle, exclusive of tires, mirrors, and accessories that are not essential to the vehicle's basic operation
- It is equipped with a seat designed to be straddled by the operator
- It travels on 3 or more tires
- It is not an all-terrain vehicle

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## Frequently Asked Questions

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- Q.** I can't find a DOT approved helmet small or light enough that my child can wear. Is it okay to place my child in a car seat with a bicycle helmet on an ATV/UTV?
- A. No.** The majority of the ATV/UTV safety laws were written to regulate ATV/UTV use on off-road trails. If an appropriate, legal helmet cannot be found for your child, they are most likely too young to safely be transported in an ATV/UTV.
- Q.** Is it legal to have a passenger on an ATV not designed for two people?
- A. No.** It has always been illegal to operate an ATV on the roadway with passengers unless the ATV was designed and intended for passengers. Now that requirement has been applied to all areas. ATV operators cannot have a passenger riding in or on any part of an ATV that is not designed or intended to be used by passengers.
- Q.** My machine meets most of the UTV specification, except it doesn't have a roll bar. Can I make my own roll bar so it meets legal UTV specifications?
- A. No.** Your machine must meet all the legal specifications as originally manufactured equipment, and it must always have those originally manufactured equipment and specifications.

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## ATV/UTV Clubs/Organizations

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Please consider joining a club, your help is needed. By staying on the trail you show your respect for the hard work of the local clubs and the rights of the property owners who have graciously allowed a trail to cross their property.

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## ATV/UTV Trail Patrol Ambassador

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Want to help others while out on the trail? Consider becoming a volunteer Trail Patrol Ambassador. Go to [www.trailambassador.com](http://www.trailambassador.com) for more information

## Registration Information

### What Can be Registered as an ATV?

An ATV must meet all of the following specifications:

- Commercially designed and manufactured
- A motor-driven device
- Dry weight of 900 pounds or less
- Width of 50 inches or less as measured laterally between the outermost wheel rim on each side of the vehicle, exclusive of tires, mirrors, and accessories that are not essential to the vehicles basic operation
- Has a seat designed to be straddled
- Travels on 3 or more tires

### What Can't be Registered as an ATV?

The following do not meet legal ATV Specifications:

- An ATV modified with tracks, skis, etc.
- Machines that can legally be registered as UTVs
- 6-8 wheel amphibious vehicles
- A go cart or golf cart (see Definitions)\*
- An off-road motorcycle
- Anything outside the ATV specifications listed above
- A homemade or non-commercially manufactured machine

### What Can be Registered as an UTV?

An UTV must be commercially designed and manufactured, **and that has at all times, and was originally manufactured with all of the following:**

- Four or more tires
- Dry weight of 2,000 lbs. or less
- Steering wheel
- Tail light
- Brake light
- Two headlights
- Width of not more than 65 inches as measured laterally between the outermost wheel rim on each side of the vehicle, exclusive of tires, mirrors, and accessories that are not essential to the vehicle's basic operation.
- Seat belts for each occupant
- Roll bar or similar structural system or device

#### Other Vehicles Qualifying as UTVs:

Any machines that would otherwise meet the ATV specifications (see "What Can Be Registered as an ATV") except that it **has, and was originally manufactured with** a weight that is more than 900 bs, but less than 2,000 bs. And has a width greater than 50 inches but 65 inches or less as measured laterally between the outermost wheel rim on each side of the vehicle, exclusive of tires, mirrors, and accessories that are not essential to the vehicle's basic operation.

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## What Cannot be Registered as an UTV?

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The following devices do not meet the UTV or ATV definition and cannot be registered:

- a motor-driven device that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards
- a dune buggy
- a UTV modified with tracks, skis, etc.
- a homemade or non-commercially manufactured machine.
- an UTV that's been modified after original manufacture to meet the definition of weight or width whether by a dealer or by private party.
- a golf cart\*
- vehicles that meet the legal definition of a low speed vehicle\*
- a mini-truck\*

\* \*See "Definitions"

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## Registration Requirements

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Unless specifically exempt, ALL ATVs and UTVs operated in Wisconsin must:

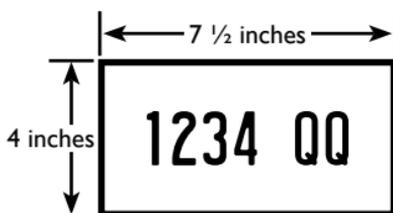
1. Display current Wisconsin registration decals (and a rear registration plate if public use registration) or
  2. Possess a temporary operating receipt or
  3. Possess a copy of a signed registration application from a dealer
- **Exception:** ATVs and UTVs displaying a valid non-resident trail pass.

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## Registration Display & Rear Registration Plate Requirements

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- **Registration and Decal Display** — Machines registered with the DNR are issued two decals. The decals must be displayed on both sides of the machine attached with their own adhesive. They shall be in a position which is forward of the operator and visible to law enforcement at all times. The decals shall not be blocked by the operator's body. Until decals are received by mail, operators must possess the temporary operating receipt issued for the machine. Operators shall carry all necessary registration cards and paperwork with them for display to law enforcement officer upon request.
- **Rear Registration ID Plate Requirement** — All ATVs and UTVs required to register for public use shall have a registration plate attached to the rear of the vehicle. Private and Private-Agricultural registrations do not need a plate. The plate may be constructed by the owner or commercially purchased by the owner – DNR does not provide them. Plate specifications shall be:



WHITE PLATE: 4" H x 7 1/2" W

BLACK LETTER NG: 1 1/2" H x 3/16" stroke (thickness)

a minimum of 4 inches high and 7 ½ inches wide

- The plate shall be white in color and shall display the four-number and two-letter registration ID in black characters for the ATV/UTV issued by the department. The minimum 4" x 7 ½" area shall be white and shall only contain the registration ID characters. Plates may be larger than the minimum size and the area outside the minimum white area may contain other graphics or colors. The registration ID numbers are located on the registration decals and registration certificate card.
- The registration ID numbers shall be a minimum of 1 ½ inches in height, and a minimum of a 3/16-inch stroke (width). The plate may be made from any type of material, but must be visible and in a legible condition at all times.



ATV & UTV showing proper decal placement

## Registration Options

- **Free Registration Weekend**—ATVs and UTVs are exempt from registration and trail pass requirements during the first full weekend in June. All other laws such as age restrictions and equipment apply.
- **Public Use**—Valid for legal operation on public trails, road routes frozen waterways and private property. Not valid for agricultural use. Valid for up to 2 years, beginning April 1st and expiring two years later on March 31st. Machines registered for Public Use are required to display their registration ID number on a rear plate. *Original: \$30, Renewal: \$30, Transfer: \$5*
- **Private Use, Agricultural**—Allows private registration for agricultural use if the machine is used for an agricultural purpose. Agricultural purpose includes a purpose related to the transportation of farm implements, equipment, supplies, or products on a farm or between farms. It is valid during operation on public roads for agricultural purposes, but is not valid for operation on public, frozen waterways or public lands open to ATVs/UTVs. Owners may dual register their machines for public use also. This type of registration remains valid until ownership is transferred. *\$15, Transfer: \$5*
- **Private Use, Non-Agricultural**—For use exclusively on private property (used on land owned by the applicant or an immediate family member). Remains valid until ownership is transferred. *\$15, Transfer: \$5*
- **Municipal & Government Use**—Used for state, county, city and village owned ATVs and UTVs. Machines registered for public use are required to display their registration ID number on a rear plate (see "Registration ID Plate Requirements"). Note: Government owned machines clearly displaying the name of the owner are exempt from displaying registration decals and an ID plate. *Original/ Renewal: \$5, Transfer: \$5*

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## Non-Resident Trail Pass Options

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- A temporary trail use receipt (printed on plain white paper) will be issued upon purchase of an annual trail pass and allows the nonresident to operate immediately. The physical trail pass decal will arrive in the mail in approximately 2 weeks.
- Annual trail passes may be ordered online at [gowild.wi.gov](http://gowild.wi.gov) or at DNR license agents. Annual trail passes expire March 31st. All trail passes arrive by mail.
- The Non-resident, 5-Day ATV/UTV Trail Pass must be printed from a personal computer or at a DNR License agent on plain white paper once the purchase is complete. The customer can operate immediately and will need to carry this document while on the trails.
- There is no decal or sticker issued or required when purchasing the 5-Day ATV or UTV Trail Pass.
- Nonresident 5-day trail passes may be purchased online or at any one of many sales locations.
- Annual trail passes must be clearly displayed in a location forward of the operator
- Machines displaying valid trail passes do not need a rear plate.

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## Registration Exemptions:

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An ATV or UTV is exempt from registration if:

- The ATV and UTV displays a valid nonresident trail pass, a valid trail pass temporary operating receipt, or a valid 5-day trail pass receipt.
- It is owned or leased by a federal agency, state agency, political subdivision of the state, or another state or a political subdivision thereof, if the exterior of the all-terrain vehicle or utility terrain vehicle displays the name of the government entity in a visible manner. Except that an ATV or UTV owned or leased by a federal agency, state agency, political subdivision of the state, or another state or a political subdivision thereof and used for enforcement purposes need not display the name of the government entity.
- It is covered by a valid registration of a federally recognized American Indian tribe or band, if all of the following apply:
  1. The registration program of the tribe or band is covered by an agreement under s. 23.35.
  2. The all-terrain vehicle or utility terrain vehicle displays the registration decal required by the tribe or band.
- It is used exclusively for racing on a raceway facility.
- It is present in this state, for a period not to exceed 15 days, and if it is used exclusively as part of an advertisement being made for the manufacturer of the ATV or UTV.

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## How do I Register my ATV/UTV?

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- **New or transfers of existing Wisconsin registrations** may be done online at [gowild.wi.gov](http://gowild.wi.gov), at DNR Service Centers or by mail. Application must be submitted within 10 days of purchase. Dealerships must submit application within 5 days of the sale.
- **Renewals** may be done online at [gowild.wi.gov](http://gowild.wi.gov), at DNR license agents, at a DNR Service Centers or by mail.
- **Replacement materials** may be done online at [gowild.wi.gov](http://gowild.wi.gov), at DNR Service Centers or by mail.

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## Where can I Register?

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### Transaction types

- **Online**—Visit the website [gowild.wi.gov](http://gowild.wi.gov) to complete your new, transfer, renewal and replacement transactions.
- **DNR license agents**—DNR license agents provide registration renewal service only; machine must already be registered in your name.
- **DNR**—DNR Service Centers provide full registration service for new, renewal, replacement and transfer of ATVs/UTVs.
- **By Mail**—After completing all requested information on the application form ([Form 9400-376](#)), make a copy, and mail the original application and appropriate fees to the address provided on the form. The form is available online or by calling **1-888-936-7463**. To operate, you must wait until your registration decals are received and displayed on your machine. It is unlawful to operate only with a copy of the application.
- **Temporary Operating Receipt**—Customers who submit registration applications and payment online, at a DNR Service Center or at a DNR license agent will receive a temporary operating receipt that allows for immediate operation until the registration decals and certificate are received by mail. Customers who submit their application and payment by mail will have to wait until they receive their materials in the mail before they can operate.

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*Late Fee: There is a \$5.00 late fee charged for renewing your ATV/ UTV registration after your current registration decal has expired.*

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- **Lost or destroyed registrations**—Choose one of the registration options above to apply for a replacement certificate card or registration decal.
- **Change of address**—Within 15 days of changing your address, you must notify the DNR in writing, stating your new address and the certificate number for the machine you own. This process is important to complete so that you receive a registration renewal notification by mail. You can also change your address by updating your customer account information at [gowild.wi.gov](http://gowild.wi.gov). Add your e-mail address and you will receive renewal notifications for all your recreational vehicles.
- **ATV/UTV Purchased from a Private Party or Out-of-State Dealer**—Complete a registration application either online, at a DNR Service Center or by mail. To operate you must either display current registration decals on your machine or carry a temporary operating receipt.

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## Transfer of Ownership

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- **ATVs/UTVs Already Registered in Wisconsin**—Complete a registration application either online, at a DNR Service Center or by mail to apply for transfer of ownership within 10 days of purchase. If the previous owner's registration is not current, you must apply for transfer of ownership and renew the registration before operation. To operate you must either display current registration decals on your machine or carry a temporary operating receipt. *Transfer fee: \$5, Renewal fee: \$30.*

- **ATVs/UTVs Not Previously Registered in Wisconsin** — Complete a registration application either online at [gowild.wi.gov](http://gowild.wi.gov), at a DNR Service Center or by mail. To operate you must either display current registration decals on your machine or carry a temporary operating receipt. *Original: \$30.*
- **ATV/UTV Purchased from a Wisconsin Dealer**—At the time of the sale, the Wisconsin dealer will complete and submit a registration application. You must carry your copy of the application form signed by the dealer while operating the machine until your registration decals and certificate arrive in the mail.

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## Commercial registration

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### ATV/UTV dealer definitions and requirements

- Commercial ATV/UTV Dealer Registration Application (Form 9400-589)
- Commercial Certificate: Every person who is an ATV or UTV manufacturer, dealer, distributor, renter or any combination thereof, engaged in business in the state shall register with the department and obtain a Commercial ATV/UTV certificate.
- The commercial registration fee is **\$90**. A commercial dealer certificate and three registration decals and certificate cards will be mailed.
- Additional Commercial Decals/Cards: Additional registration decals and certificate cards can be ordered with original and renewal Commercial Certificate applications.
- A current Commercial Certificate holder may also order additional registration decals and certificate cards. The fee for each additional registration decal is **\$30** and certificate is **\$5**.
- Commercial dealers will create or purchase their own plates to display their commercial decals upon. There is no size or color requirement for this plate.
- The registration period will begin on April 1 or the date of issuance/renewal and end on March 31 of the 2nd year following the date of issuance/renewal.
- Commercial decals/plates must be displayed on a machine before it may be operated. Machines may not be operated with a copy of the Commercial Application form.
- Commercial applicants cannot operate on a temporary operating receipt.

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## Dealer/Renter Requirements

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**A dealer cannot accept a machine for trade-in unless the ATV/UTV is currently registered either with the DNR or another state.** Dealers cannot operate on temporary operating receipts. The machines can only be operated legally when the commercial decal is displayed. Commercial registrations expire every two years. *Commercial Fee: \$90. Additional Decal Fee: \$30*

### Rental Businesses

- You can't rent or lease ATVs/UTVs to first-time (new) operators unless you provide the person instruction on how to operate them.
- You can't rent or lease a machine to a person under 16.
- You can't rent or lease a machine to anyone until you verify that all riders and operators under 18 have a helmet to use.

- All rental businesses must have clean, usable helmets available for rent to any renter under 18 or any person under 18 who will be on the rented ATV/UTV.

## **General Age & Safety Certificate Requirements**

ATVs and UTVs can be potentially dangerous. They weigh up to 2,000 lbs and often times capable of reaching high speeds. The use of these machines by children should be highly controlled; use of safety equipment such as helmets and safety belts should be the norm.

Crashes, injuries and deaths can happen in a split second. Close adult supervision is recommended to ensure that children are operating these machine safely and properly at all times.

A state motor vehicle driver's license is not required to operate an ATV or UTV in Wisconsin.

### **All-Terrain Vehicles**

- No person under 12 may operate an ATV.

All ATV operators at least age 12 and born on or after January 1, 1988 must possess a valid ATV safety certificate issued by this state or any other state or province. Operators must be in possession of this certificate while operating in areas open to the public such as trails, routes and frozen waterways and display it to a law enforcement officer upon request. Certified operators may transport other passengers. ATV Safety Institute (ASI) certificates are not valid in Wisconsin.

### **Safety Certificate Exceptions for ATVs:**

- ATV operators under age 12 may operate on private lands if they are under the supervision of an adult.
- No safety certificate is required while operating on private property owned by the operator's immediate family.\*
- No safety certificate is required for children under the age of 12, while operating on other private property with permission if they are accompanied by a designated adult.\*
- No safety certificate is required for children under the age of 12, while operating a small ATV\* on a public ATV trail, if they are accompanied by a designated adult.\*
- No children under the age of 12 may operate on a roadway for any reason, even to cross. Small ATVs\* may be towed with the key off or otherwise operated by an adult while on roadways.
- No safety certificate is required while operating an ATV or UTV during a demonstration event\* on a closed course. All operators under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a designated adult.

### **ATV Supervision Requirement**

All ATV safety certified operators age 12-15 must also be accompanied\* by an adult while operating on a designated ATV Route except for operation for agricultural purposes with adult supervision.

\* See *"Definitions"*

### **Utility Terrain Vehicles**

- No person under 16 may operate an UTV.

All UTV operators at least age 12 and born on or after January 1, 1988 must possess a valid ATV safety certificate issued by this state or any other state or province. Operators must be in possession of this certificate while operating in areas open to the public such as trails, routes and frozen waterways and display it to a law enforce-

ment officer upon request. Certified operators may transport other passengers. ATV Safety Institute (ASI) and Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association (ROVHA) certificates are not valid in Wisconsin.

### **Small UTV Rule**

Children age 12–15 years may operate small UTVs (200 ccs or less) on public, off-road ATV trails only. No children under 16 years may operate on a roadway for any reason, even to cross. Small UTVs\* may be towed with the key off or otherwise operated by an adult while on roadways. The child must be accompanied by a designated adult and possess a valid ATV Safety Certificate.

### **Safety Certificate Exceptions:**

- UTV operators under the age of 16 may operate on private lands if they are under the supervision of an adult.
- No safety certificate is required while operating on private property under the management and control of the operator's immediate family.\*
- No safety certificate is required for children under age 12 while operating on other private property with permission if they are accompanied by a designated adult.\*
- No safety certificate is required for children under the age of 16 while operating for agricultural purposes\* if supervised by an adult.
- No safety certificate is required while operating a UTV during a demonstration event\* on a closed course. All operators under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a designated adult.
- **ATV Safety Certification** may be obtained by successfully completing a DNR sponsored ATV safety course.

\* See "[Definitions](#)"

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## **ATV Safety Certification Courses**

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- Safety certification is obtained by completing a classroom course or an Internet course. Internet courses are conducted by two vendors: [www.atvcourse.com](http://www.atvcourse.com) and [www.offroad-ed.com](http://www.offroad-ed.com).
- Prior to Enrolling in a Safety Class you must obtain a WIDNR Customer Identification (Account) number. If you purchased a Wisconsin hunting or fishing license in the past, you already have a customer account. Inspect your DNR approvals (hunting license, fishing license etc.) for your ID number.
  1. This nine-digit number must be assigned to you by the DNR.
  2. It must be unique. You cannot use another person's number or you will not receive your certificate.
  3. Create a customer ID at [gowild.wi.gov](http://gowild.wi.gov) or by calling 1-888-936-7463 or visiting a DNR Service Center. If you are not sure if you have an ID number assigned to you, double-check first by calling 1-888-936-7463.

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## **Agricultural Use**

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"Agricultural purpose" means a purpose related to the transportation of farm implements, equipment, supplies, or products on a farm or between farms. Operation between a dwelling and a farm or piece of non-agricultural property does not meet this definition unless the dwelling is on the same piece of property as the farm.

The following laws apply specifically to ATVs/UTVs legally registered for "Private-Agriculture", displaying the corresponding registration decal stickers and while being legally used for an "agricultural purpose."

- ATV/UTV operators may operate on roadways while transporting farm implements, equipment, supplies, or products on a farm or between farms in the following manner:
  - ◊ At the extreme right side of the roadway, except for left turns.
  - ◊ With headlight(s) and taillight(s) activated and visible.
  - ◊ Obeying the roadway speed limit.
- Helmets are not required for agricultural use.

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## Helmet Requirements

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*We need your help!* Each year the majority of all ATV/UTV deaths in Wisconsin involve operators that were not wearing a helmet. Many of these victims may have survived their injuries had they only been wearing a helmet. Please set a good example for children and others by always wearing a helmet whether you're legally required to or not.

**All ATV/UTV operators and passengers** under the age of 18 are required to wear a minimum DOT standard ATV or motorcycle helmet with the chin strap properly fastened. *Bicycle helmets do not meet this requirement.*



### ***Helmet Exceptions:***

Helmets are not required in the following situations:

- The person is at least 18 years of age.
- The person is traveling for the purposes of hunting or fishing and is at least 12 years of age.
- The ATV or UTV is being operated for an agricultural purpose\*.
- The ATV or UTV is being operated by a person on land under the management and control of the person's immediate family\*.
- The person is being transported for medical reasons while under the care of emergency personnel.
- The person is an emergency responder who is responding to an emergency

\* See ["Definitions"](#)

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## Alcohol and Drugs

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- It is illegal to operate an ATV/UTV under the influence of alcohol or other drugs while on any property that is open to the public (generally this means trails, routes, lakes/rivers or corridors). Being under the influence is a condition in which a person's ability to operate an ATV/UTV is impaired due to the consumption of drugs and/or alcoholic beverages to the extent that the person's decision-making ability is negatively affected as well as their balance and reaction time.
- **No person may operate an ATV/UTV with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08% or more. In addition, a person can be also be arrested for operating under the influence with a BAC that is under .08%.**
- **No person may operate an ATV/UTV with any detectable amount of a restricted controlled substance in their blood.**

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*Don't drink and ride. This can lead to crashes, injuries and death. Practice "Zero Alcohol" which is a personal choice to wait until you are done riding for the day before consuming any alcoholic beverages, it's the smart choice!*

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- **Implied Consent law**—You are required to provide a sample of your breath, blood or urine if an officer has probable cause to believe you are operating an ATV/UTV under the influence. By operating an ATV/UTV on areas open to the public you have automatically consented to provide a sample of your breath, blood or urine to an officer who requests the test. If you refuse to provide a breath, blood or urine sample, you will be charged with an additional violation.
- **Absolute Sobriety**—ATV/UTV operators may not have any amount alcohol in their system if they are under the age of 21.

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## Where Can I Ride My ATV?

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Most off-road trail riding opportunities are located on County owned land, with some also found on State and Federal lands. In most instances, ATV/UTV riding is strictly restricted to designated and marked ATV trails and routes only. Stay on the trails and routes, riding in illegal areas can close and/or restrict riding opportunities for everyone. Check with local County, State and Federal offices for special regulations.

### **ATV/UTV Trail Information Sources:**

- County Forestry Offices
- DNR website [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) search keyword "ATV"
- U.S. Forest Service [fs.usda.gov](http://fs.usda.gov) website, search "Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest" and "Motor Vehicle Use Map"
- Dept. of Tourism [travelwisconsin.com](http://travelwisconsin.com) search keyword "ATV"
- Wisconsin ATV Association [watva.org](http://watva.org)
- Area Chamber of Commerce

### **ATV Trails**

All ATV trails are generally open to UTVs unless specifically signed as closed to UTVs. Check with local authorities.

- An ATV trail is an off-road corridor identified by small (6"x6") brown signs with the white silhouette of an ATV and orange blazer (diamond) signs. Be careful as snowmobile trails also use the orange blazer to mark the pathway of a trail. If the brown and

white ATV sign is not present, then you are not allowed to ride an ATV on that trail.

- A trail is different than a route and will generally never be on a road or in a ditch. You are only likely to be on a road involving a trail when you cross the road at marked intersections. The county, town, city or village may designate corridors on land it controls to be used as ATV trails.
- Some trails may be designated as multiple use trails. On these trails, you could encounter other traffic such as horses, motorcycles, ATVs, UTVs and bicyclists.

Counties, towns, cities or villages may designate specific hours or times of the year when the trail is open or closed. Check locally for any special restrictions.

### **ATV Routes**

An ATV Route is a public roadway that is designated as being open to legal ATV/UTV use by local units of governmental Routes must be designated through passage of a local ordinance and posted with ATV Route (24" x 18") green signs with the white silhouette of an ATV along with appropriate directional arrows. All roads designated as ATV Routes must be signed at the beginning and end of a route and at such intervals that enable riders to follow the route. ATV Route ordinances must be filed with any law enforcement agencies that have jurisdiction over the roadway.

Official copies of all ATV Route ordinances must be filed with the Department of Natural Resources at:

#### **WI DNR**

ATV Safety Program  
101 South Webster Street LE/8  
Madison, WI 53707-7921

There is no residential access allowance that permits you to ride on a roadway from a dwelling to the nearest trail or route. You will need to haul your machine to the nearest legal access point.

For a complete list of roadways designated as ATV Routes, contact the local township office and/or County Highway Department.

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## Public Roadway/Highway Use

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- Do not assume that you can ride on or next to roads (ditches) the same way snowmobilers do. These general allowances do not exist for ATV/UTV operation.
- Operation on and around public roads is restricted and in most cases illegal.

### **You May Operate on Roadways in the Following Situations:**

- For agricultural purposes (see *"Agricultural Use" on p. 14*)
- On an officially designated and signed ATV Routes
- On roads not seasonally maintained for roadway use, during the time in which no maintenance occurs and the road hasn't been closed to ATV/UTV use.
- To cross a bridge, culvert or railroad right-of-way when operating on a designated and marked ATV/UTV trail, ATV Route or private property with permission if you:
  - ◊ Determine the location is safe to cross
  - ◊ Come to a complete stop.
  - ◊ Yield to all motor vehicles and pedestrians.
- To cross a roadway while operating on a designated and marked ATV trail or private property with permission if you:
  - ◊ Cross in the most direct manner possible
  - ◊ Come to a complete stop. Yield to all motor vehicles and pedestrians.

A person may operate an all-terrain vehicle or utility terrain vehicle on the roadway or shoulder of any highway to cross a bridge that is 1,000 feet in length or less if the operation is in compliance with a county ordinance that applies to that bridge and a city, village, or town ordinance that applies to that bridge.

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## Additional Roadway Restrictions

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Check with local authorities regarding any locally enacted ATV/UTV ordinances which may be more restrictive than state law.

### **When legally operating on a roadway:**

- You cannot pass other motor vehicles or ATVs/UTVs unless stationary and parked.
- No person may ride in or on any part of an ATV or UTV that is not designed or intended to be used by passengers.
- You must use hand signals to indicate your turning or stopping intentions if ATV/UTV is not equipped with turn lamps.
- Operate at the extreme right side of the roadway surface.
- Left turns can be made from any part of the roadway surface as long as it's safe and legal to do so.
- You must operate single file.
- You must have your head lamps and tail lamps on.

All children age 12-15 must be accompanied\* by an adult while operating on a designated ATV Route, regardless if they possess an ATV Safety Certificate.

**Exceptions:** Legal crossing and operation for agricultural purposes.

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**NOTE:** No ATV operators under age 12 and no UTV operators under age 16 may operate on a public roadway for any reason.

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\* See *"Definitions"*

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## Unimproved Right-of-Way/Ditch Use

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Operation on the unimproved right-of-way or ditch, outside the regular traveled portion of the road, is highly restricted and in most cases illegal. Many right-of-ways or ditch lines are privately owned, operation on private property without permission is trespassing.

### ***You May Operate on Unimproved Right-of-Ways in the Following Situations:***

- **Town Roads** (examples: Maple Road, Hanson Lane, etc.)
  - ◊ On designated and signed ATV trails or routes or on private property with permission.
- **County Highways** (Highway C, Highway TT, etc.)
  - ◊ On designated and signed ATV trails or routes or on private property with permission. If operating on a trail or running parallel to the highway, you must be at least 10 feet from the roadway portion of the highway.
- **State Highway**—(Highway 8, Highway 141, etc.)—on designated and signed ATV trails or routes or on private property with permission. If operating on a trail or route running parallel to the highway, you must be at least 10 feet from the roadway portion of the highway.
- **Interstate Highway**—(I-90, I-41, I-39, etc.)—no operation allowed.

When legally operating alongside roadways during the hours of darkness, operation must be in the same direction as motor vehicle traffic in the nearest lane unless the trail or route is located at least 40 feet from the roadway or separated by a headlight barrier.

During daylight hours, you may travel in either direction regardless of the flow of motor vehicle traffic.

## Trail Signs

### Trail and Route signs are standardized across Wisconsin.

Be familiar with them before your ride. When a county, city, village or town creates a route, ATV route signs must be erected along with directional arrow(s), at the beginning of an all-terrain vehicle route and at locations and intervals necessary to enable all-terrain vehicle operators to follow the route. Only individuals authorized by a local municipality may post, remove or alter ATV signs. If you see a signing problem, contact the local municipality and/or ATV club representative immediately.



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## Speed limits & Operational Restrictions

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- You must slow your ATV/UTV to 10 mph or less when you are riding within 100 feet of any person who is not on a motorized vehicle. This includes, but is not limited to slowing for anglers, hikers, bicyclists, joggers, horses, etc. as well as for other ATV/UTV operators standing along the trail.
- You must slow your ATV/UTV to 10 mph or less when you are riding within 100 feet of an ice fishing shanty while on the ice.
- You must slow your ATV/UTV to 10 mph or less when you are riding within 150 feet of a home or dwelling, unless you are operating on a legal ATV Road Route.
- You must obey the posted trail speed limits at all times.
- You must obey the posted regular motor vehicle speed limit when operating within a highway, or a reduced speed limit posted specifically for ATVs/UTVs that may be along the highway.
- You must obey all regulatory signs, such as stop signs, yield signs and speed limit signs.
- You must stop your ATV/UTV after being requested or signaled to do so by a law enforcement officer.
- You can't operate at speeds that are unreasonable or improper.
- You can't operate in a careless manner so that it endangers a person or property.
- All UTV passengers must have their seatbelts fastened at all times.
- No person may ride in or on any part of an ATV or UTV that is not designed or intended to be used by passengers.
- It is not legal to operate with passengers in any after-market seating placed in the cargo area of an ATV or UTV. UTV original factory seating may not be modified.
- An ATV/UTV may not be operated with anything other than tires. This does not apply to private property or on frozen waters.
- You can't operate on public property in areas closed to such operation.
- You can't operate on private property without the permission of the owner or lessee.
- ATVs/UTVs are required to have a lighted headlamp(s) & tail lamp(s) at all times during operation.
- An ATV/UTV operator must dim multiple-beam headlamps, adverse weather lamps, spot lamps, auxiliary lamps, high-beam lamps, or any other lamps when approaching oncoming ATVs/UTVs or other vehicles when within 500 feet, or when following an ATV/UTV or other vehicle when within 500 feet to the rear so that the glaring rays are not directed or reflected into the eyes of the operator of the other ATV/UTV or vehicle.
- No lighted backup lamp or white lamp visible from directly behind may be displayed on any ATV/UTV upon a highway, ATV route, ATV trail, frozen water, or public area except when being driven backward.
- You can't allow a person to operate if they are:
  - ◊ prohibited by law
  - ◊ have not obtained the required safety certificate or underage
  - ◊ Incapable of operating because they are physically or mentally disabled
  - ◊ under the influence of alcohol or drugs

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## Operation On and Around Waterways

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You cannot operate an ATV/UTV in any navigable water, or on the exposed bed of any navigable water (including exposed lakebeds in front of your property) except:

- To cross a stream by use of a bridge, culvert, ford or similar structure provided the crossing is in the most direct manner practical.
- To launch or load a boat, canoe, or other watercraft in the most direct manner practical.
- To access the frozen surfaces of any navigable waters provided the crossing or access is in the most direct manner practical.

Machines operating on public, frozen waterways must display either valid Public Use Registration decals or a valid trail pass.

“Bed of a navigable water\*” means all of the area below the ordinary high water mark of a lake or stream. During low-water periods, there may be several feet or more of exposed lake or streambed that is closed to ATV and other vehicular traffic.

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## ATV/UTV Equipment Requirements

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- Your ATV must be equipped with at least a single white headlamp and a red tail lamp.
- Your UTV must be equipped with 2 white headlamps and a red tail lamp and brake lamp.
- ATV/UTV headlamp(s) must be able to illuminate any person or object at a distance of 200 feet in front.
- ATVs/UTVs must be equipped with a tail lamp that is visible for 500 feet to the rear during the hours of darkness.
- No person may operate any ATV or UTV that is equipped with any of the following:
  - ◊ A lamp that emits any color of light other than white or amber and that is visible from directly in front of the ATV/UTV.
  - ◊ A lamp that emits any color of light other than red, yellow, amber, or white and that is visible from directly behind the ATV/UTV.
  - ◊ A flashing, oscillating, or rotating lamp that emits any color other than yellow or amber.
- An ATV/UTV may not be equipped with more than 2 back-up lamps that illuminate the area to the rear of the vehicle for a distance not to exceed 75 feet.
- If an ATV/UTV is equipped with additional adverse weather lamps, spot lamps, auxiliary lamps, or any other lamp on the front of the ATV/UTV that is capable of more than 300 candlepower, not more than 4 of these lamps may be illuminated simultaneously within 500 feet of an oncoming ATV/UTV or other vehicle upon a roadway, ATV route, ATV trail, or public area.
- An ATV/UTV may not be modified so that its maximum width exceeds the width allowed for either an ATV—50 inches or an UTV—65 inches. This does not apply to the operation of an ATV/UTV on private property.
- ATV/UTVs must be equipped with at least one brake, operated either by hand or by foot.

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## Exhaust and Noise Restrictions

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- Your machine must be equipped with a functioning muffler that prevents unusual or excessive noises.
- No person may manufacture, sell, rent or operate an ATV/UTV in such a manner that noise emitted from the machine is louder than 96 decibels when measured on the “A” scale; measured in the manner prescribed in the reaffirmed 1998–07, Society of Automotive Engineers Standard J1287, entitled Measurement of Exhaust Sound Levels of Stationary Motorcycles.
- No one shall deny or refuse an inspection or testing of an ATV/UTV by any law enforcement officer who reasonably suspects a violation of an equipment requirement.
- Your machine must be equipped with a spark arrester at all times, even during the winter.

**No person may manufacture, sell, rent or operate an ATV/UTV that is louder than 96 decibels.**

Excessive or unusually loud machines are illegal and hurt Wisconsin’s trail system. Do not increase your exhaust noise or operate with your exhaust system in excess of normal operation. Excessive noise threatens riding opportunities statewide.

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## ATV/UTV Crashes

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*If you are involved in a crash, the first thing to do is ensure you are okay and not going to be involved in another crash from oncoming traffic. You must provide help to anyone else who was involved.*

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- The operator of an ATV/UTV involved in any crash that results in an injury requiring treatment by a physician or a fatal incident **must report** the crash as soon as possible to a Conservation Warden or another law enforcement officer.
- The operator must file a written report of the incident within 10 days to the DNR. Official DNR [Operator Crash Report forms](#) can be obtained by visiting the DNR website [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov), a DNR Service Center or sheriff’s office.
- Duty upon striking a person, attended or occupied vehicle upon a roadway:
  - ◇ The ATV/UTV operator involved in a crash shall reasonably investigate what was struck and if the operator knows or has reason to know that the crash resulted in injury or death of a person or in damage to a vehicle that is driven or attended by a person, the operator shall stop the ATV/UTV as close to the scene as possible and remain at the scene until the ATV/UTV operator has done all of the following:
    1. Provide name, address and the registration number of the ATV/UTV to the person struck or to the operator or occupant of or person attending any vehicle collided with; and
    2. Upon request and if available, shall exhibit his or her operator’s license to the person struck or to the operator or occupant of or person attending any vehicle collided with; and
    3. Shall render reasonable assistance to any person injured in the accident, including transporting, or making arrangements to transport the person to medical treatment if it is apparent that medical treatment is necessary or if requested by the injured person
- Any stop required shall be made without obstructing traffic more than is necessary.

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## ATV/UTV Sanctioned Races

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- During races, machines are not exempt from the requirements to be equipped with a spark arrester and a functioning muffler which restricts noise to 96 decibels or less.
- Machines are exempt from registration only if they are used exclusively for racing at a racing facility.
- During a race, parade, derby or exhibition you may ride on certain roads only if the road is blocked off by the county, town, city or village having jurisdiction. In addition:
  - ◊ No state trunk highway or connecting highway may be blocked off for an ATV/UTV event.
  - ◊ The county, town, city or village blocking the road(s) must notify the local police department and the county sheriff at least one week in advance.
- If you are the sponsor conducting a sanctioned race or derby on a raceway facility, you must:
  - ◊ Make provisions to keep spectators at least 100 feet away from race competitors on the frozen surfaces of public waters.
  - ◊ Give notice of the race or derby to the local Conservation Warden or law enforcement agency having jurisdiction.
- A sanctioned race or derby means a competitive event sponsored by a local unit of government, chamber of commerce, an ATV/UTV club, promoter, or similar organization.
- A raceway facility means an area, including a marked warm-up and testing area, specifically designated by a sponsor for the purpose of conducting a sanctioned race or derby for which any required local permits have been obtained.

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## ATVs/UTVs and Hunting, Fishing or Trapping

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ATVs/UTVs can be useful while hunting, fishing or trapping. Remember that off-trail/off-road operation is generally not allowed on publicly owned lands, even to retrieve game. Never enter areas that have been gated, cabled, posted or otherwise restrict ATV/UTV or motor vehicle use. Check with the appropriate property owner/manager for special regulations and/or permits.

### **Other restrictions:**

- No person may place, possess, or transport a firearm, bow, or crossbow in or on an ATV/UTV, unless one of the following applies:
  - ◊ The firearm is unloaded or is a handgun.
  - ◊ The bow does not have an arrow nocked.
  - ◊ The crossbow is not cocked or is unloaded.
- It is illegal to discharge any firearm, including handguns, in or from any moving or stationary ATV/UTV.
  - ◊ Except for certain disabled hunters with proper permits. Qualified disabled hunters with the permit authority to shoot from a stationary vehicle must have all firearms (other than handguns) unloaded while the vehicle is in motion
- It is illegal to drive, pursue or harass any wild animal.
- A cocked or loaded crossbow may be placed on, **but not in**, an ATV/UTV which is **stationary**.
- A loaded firearm may be placed on, **but not in**, an ATV/UTV which is **stationary**.

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## Disabled Operators

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If you hold a Class A or Class B disabled hunting permit, you may operate an ATV/UTV on the roadway portion of a highway (not an interstate) if you are traveling for the purposes of hunting that are allowed by the permit. All other ATV/UTV safety certificate and age restrictions apply.

No other special regulations exist for disabled ATV/UTV operators.

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## Liability of Landowners: 895.52 Wisconsin Statutes

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Landowners who allow ATV/UTV trails to cross their property are not required to keep the premises safe for recreational activities, to inspect the property, or to give warning of an unsafe condition, use, or activity on the property. They are generally held free of liability but there are a few requirements.

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## Trails At Risk From Invasive Species

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*INVASIVE SPECIES are taking over our parks and natural areas making it difficult to enjoy nature. You can play a critical role in slowing the spread of invasive species.*

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### **What ATV/UTV Users Need to Know About Invasives**

- Invasive species are non-native plants, animals, and diseases that can cause harm to the economy, environment, and human health.
- Invasive plants tend to reproduce and grow quickly making trails impassable. They affect wildlife shelter and food sources by reducing native plant populations which also leads to soil erosion.
- Invasive insects and diseases can kill trees.

### **What Does This Have to do With ATV/UTV Users?**

- Invasive plant seeds, insects, and diseases can be moved on equipment, such as mud on tires or seeds with burs on clothes and shoes.
- Concerns about spreading invasive species may endanger access to lands and trails in the future.

### **How Can ATV/UTV Users Help?**

- Learn to recognize invasive species.
- Wear clothing and footwear that do not attract seeds.
- Inspect and clean hair, clothing, shoes, and gear before and after recreating.
- Clean your ATV/UTV before and after use. Pay special attention to the tires, wheel wells and undercarriage.
- Properly dispose of soil, seeds, or plant parts from cleaning.
- Minimize soil disturbance; stay on designated trails, roads, and other developed areas.

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*Avoid areas that are infested with invasive species:  
"When in doubt, stay out!"*

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## **Enforcement, Penalties & Common Violations**

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Any Conservation Warden, officer of the state patrol or inspector, county sheriff or municipal peace officer may enforce ATV/UTV laws. The fines for violating these laws range from \$150—\$2,000. You could also face up to one year in jail. Most of the ATV/UTV laws are safety related. Violating these laws oftentimes endangers others and reflects negatively on the entire ATV/UTV community.

### Top Ten Violations (not in order)

- Operate Without Valid Registration
- Operate in a Careless Manner
- Operate While Intoxicated
- Operate on Private or Public Property Without Permission Illegal
- Operation on or Near Highways
- ATV Equipment Violations
- Owner Permitting Operation by Unauthorized Person
- Operate/Ride ATV Without Head Gear
- Operate Without a Valid Safety Certificate/Fail to Carry

### **Help Prevent Violations**

- Always conduct a pre-ride inspection to ensure your equipment is operating properly.
- Review the local, state and federal regulations of the area in where you plan on riding and ask questions if you are unsure of a regulation.
- Double-check to make sure you are carrying all your required paperwork.
- Slow down, ride sober and always wear a helmet.
- Ride only with safe, responsible and courteous operators
- Take an ATV Safety Course.

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## **Motor Vehicle Trailer Information**

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### **Title**

If the combined weight of an ATV/UTV, trailer and accessories is over 3,000 pounds, you will need to title the trailer with the Wisconsin DOT and equip the trailer with brakes.

### **Trailer lighting**

You cannot tow a trailer with a motor vehicle during the hours of darkness unless it displays the lighting equipment as prescribed in Section 347 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

### **Safety chains**

Safety chains are required on all towed vehicles and trailers. For further information contact the Wisconsin DOT.

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## **ATV/UTV Trailer Information**

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There are no specific regulations regarding towing trailers behind ATVs/UTVs. Trailers may not interfere with the legal lighting requirement for ATVs/UTVs. Towing trailers that create hazardous conditions for other operators and/or cause a crash may be result in the operator being found negligent.

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## Winter ATV/UTV Use

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Snowmobile trails are not automatically open to ATV/UTV use. In many cases it is illegal to operate on a snowmobile trail. Violating this law threatens current and future opportunities to have joint use trails. Check locally for special ATV/UTV allowances on county snowmobile trails.

- You must slow to 10 MPH or less when within 100 feet of an ice fishing shanty (ice shack) or person not on a snowmobile, ATV/UTV or other motorized vehicle.
- ATVs/UTVs modified with after-market tracks and or skis are not considered snowmobiles and cannot be registered or used as such. They may be operated on frozen waterways and private property with permission.
- Check with local law enforcement agencies, DNR offices or bait shops daily to get the most current information on ice conditions.

**No one expects to break through the ice, so be prepared by carrying the following equipment with you:**

- Life preserver or
- Length of rope
- Float coat
- Ice picks
- Ice creepers
- Cell phone

### **Flotation Requirements:**

Certain local units of government, such as Dane County, may have ordinances regarding the installation of floats on ATVs/UTVs as well as a permit. Please check locally for any such special requirements.

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## ATVs/UTVs and Snow Removal

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A person may operate an ATV with a snow removal device attached, for snow removal purposes and under the following restrictions:

- At a speed not to exceed 5 mph while on a public sidewalk
- At a speed not to exceed 15 mph while on or adjacent to a roadway
- Operation is allowed on all roadways where the motor vehicle speed limit is 45 mph or less
- Operation shall be restricted to the far right-hand side of the road
- Operation is also allowed on roads that are legal and open ATV Routes
- Operators must be 16 years or older and if born on or after January 1, 1988 must also possess a valid ATV Safety Certificate.
- Operation is only allowed between October 1 and April 30 for the purpose of removing snow
- Operators may not travel at a distance greater than 2 miles from their original starting or loading point
- Machines must display one or more illuminated, yellow lights that are flashing or rotating and visible for 360 degrees

### **Other Provisions:**

- A city, village, or town may enact an ordinance authorizing the operation of ATVs with snow removal devices (that are operating for snow removal purposes) on roads where the speed limit is greater than 45 mph, if the road is located within the territorial boundaries of that city, village, or town; regardless of who has jurisdiction over the particular roadway.

- ATVs/UTVs are required to have their headlamps on at all times while operating on any road. Headlamps must be able to illuminate an object at least 200 feet away. Tail lights must be visible from at least 500 feet away during the hours of darkness. Operators must be certain that their snow removal equipment does not interfere with these legal lighting requirements.
- ATVs/UTVs must have current Public Use Registration while operating on public roadways, public road right of ways or on public sidewalks.
- Helmets are required for all operators under age 18, except while operating on lands under the ownership or management of their immediate family.\*

\* See *“Definitions”*

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## Basic Safety Code

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- Do not consume alcohol or take drugs prior to or during operation.
- Use a proper size ATV helmet, goggles, or visor that is at minimum, DOT certified.
- Slow down and don't cut to the inside of the trail at corners, it's dangerous and illegal.
- If you operate your machine at night, don't override your lights.
- Follow the manufacturer's recommendation and state laws regarding safe transport of passengers on your machine.
- Familiarize yourself with the area before you ride it. Have a map, GPS or smartphone app to assist you with safely navigating the trails.
- If traveling on the ice, check with local law enforcement, DNR or bait shops for the most current ice conditions.

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*If you don't know the ice conditions; don't go.*

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- Wear a long sleeve shirt and pants, gloves and have other appropriate clothing along depending on the weather.
- Always conduct a pre-ride inspection on your machine to make sure it is operating safely and legally.
- Know the weather forecast, especially the ice and snow conditions in the area.
- Always completely read the Owner's Manual before operating your machine.
- Always use the buddy system and ride with at least one other person.
- Plan your ride and ride your plan. Leave details of your trip location(s), approximate arrival time(s), who you are riding with, etc. at your home, hotel, cabin or other location where people will be able to find it in case of an emergency. Failing to stick with the details of your plan may result in lack of timely assistance or rescue if you need it.

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## How Is the Wisconsin ATV/UTV Program Paid For?

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You help fund the ATV/UTV program. When you register your machine or purchase a Trail Pass the fees are credited into a special account with the majority of the funds dedicated to the trail system. Other portions of the collected fees help manage law enforcement operations, the registration system, and other costs associated with running the ATV/UTV program.

In addition to the registration fees you pay, there are several other sources of revenue that are used by the ATV/UTV program.

One source of program income is derived from the state gasoline excise tax. Currently, there is a formula transfer of gasoline excise tax on 25 gallons of gasoline for every ATV/UTV registered by the end of each February. These funds are dedicated to the trails program.

Each year the Department of Natural Resources distributes the majority of the trail dollars to counties and other municipalities that participate in the ATV/UTV program through a grant process. These grants reimburse counties for the cost of trail maintenance. Grants are also awarded for infrastructure improvements such as trail or bridge rehabilitation and the development of new trails or intensive use areas.

### **Who is involved?**

Conservation Wardens and sheriff patrols monitor ATV/UTV activities on trails, routes and corridors to ensure people are abiding by the rules. They offer riders assistance and are available to assist you with information about the trails. They also respond to crashes and search and rescue of lost and/or injured riders. You can help by respecting the rules and setting a good example for others to follow.

The Off-Road Vehicle Council was created in 1986 to help guide the Department with all matters related to ATVs/UTVs including the distribution of trail funds to counties. The Council is made up of 7 volunteers from various parts of the state. Council members offer recommendations to the Department on legislative issues, safety concerns and sponsor funding requests. In 2013, the council became Governor appointed.

## **Helmets Save Lives. Wear it Wisconsin!**



This pamphlet is not a complete set of ATV/UTV laws; however, it supplies the essential information. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions, contact the Department of Natural Resources or your local law enforcement authorities. Check with local governing agencies for local ordinances that may be more restrictive than state regulations.

