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ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE SAFETY

Clover Safe notes are intended primarily for 4-H volunteers and members nine years and older.



*Photograph Courtesy of
Sierra Foothill REC*

According to data available from the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, a total of about 50,000 youth aged 18 years and younger were treated in hospitals for all-terrain vehicle injuries during 2005. Broken bones, bruises, and cuts were the most common types of injuries. All-terrain vehicles are regulated by the California Vehicle Code (CVC), Sections 38000 through 38506.

Pre-Use Activities

- The driver an all-terrain vehicle should be aware of specific property hazards/obstacles and vehicle weight carrying/towing limits.
- Thoroughly review and understand information provided in the all-terrain vehicle operator's manual with particular attention given to

descriptions of safety procedures.

- Before using, always inspect the all-terrain vehicle for damage or disrepair. If an all-terrain vehicle fails the pre-use inspection, notify your group leader, parent, or guardian and remove the vehicle from service.

CVC All-Terrain Vehicle Operating Requirements

- All-terrain vehicle operators under the age of 18, shall only drive on California public lands if they: (1) are taking a prescribed safety training course under the direction of a certified all-terrain vehicle instructor; (2) are under the direct supervision of an adult that has been certified in California or another state; or (3) have a safety certificate issued by California or another state (CVC Section 38503).
- All-terrain vehicle operators under the age of 14 shall not drive on California public lands unless they satisfy one of the three conditions set forth above for operators under the age 18 years and are accompanied by or under the direct supervision of a parent or guardian or an adult authorized by a parent or guardian (CVC 38504).
- All-terrain vehicle operators are required to wear approved helmets (CVC Section 38505) and as a good safety practice, should always wear eye protection.
- Passengers are not allowed on all-terrain vehicles (CVC Section 38506).
- It is unlawful to drive an all-terrain vehicle at a speed greater than is reasonable or prudent or at a speed which endangers the safety of persons or property (CVC Section 38305).
- All-terrain vehicle operators shall be able to reach and operate all controls necessary to operate the vehicle (CVC Section 38304).
- No operator shall place in motion an all-terrain vehicle that is stopped, standing, or parked until such movement can be made with reasonable safety (CVC Section 38312).
- No operator shall turn an all-terrain vehicle from a direct course or move right or left until such movement can be made with reasonable safety (CVC Section 38314).
- It is unlawful for an operator of an all-terrain vehicle to disobey any sign, signal, or traffic control device placed or maintained by a government authority (CVC Section 38300).
- When operated between sunset and sunrise, all-terrain vehicles must be equipped with one tail lamp and one head lamp that is sufficient to see 200 feet ahead (CVC Section 38355).
- It is unlawful to operate an all-terrain vehicle with a wanton and willful disregard for the safety of other persons or property (CVC Section 38316).
- The speed limit within 50 feet of any campground, campsite, or concentration of people or animals shall be 15 miles per hour unless posted otherwise (CVC Section 38310).
- All-terrain vehicles shall not be operated in a manner likely to cause malicious or unnecessary damage to the land, wildlife, wildlife habitat, or vegetative resources (CVC Section 38319).