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Owner:	Todd Numan	Approval:	Michael Labosky

Fact Sheet: ATV/Snow Mobile/Utility Vehicle

All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and other utility vehicles have unique hazards not associated with regular vehicles. There are more than 700 deaths and 100,000 injuries each year involving ATVs. Overturning can be fatal, but it is also preventable. Potential ATV/utility vehicle related health concerns include:

- **Traumatic injury**
- **Hypothermia**
- **Frostbite**
- **Snow blindness**

Personal Protective Equipment

- Safety glasses/goggles
- Department of Transportation compliant helmet
- Long sleeves, long pants
- Over-the-Ankle Boots
- Gloves

Snowmobiles require additional:

- Face mask with UV filter
- Snow suit

Preparation and Training

- Check state and local laws regarding ATV use and registration requirements.
- Watch the weather and check trail conditions before riding.
- If available, use a vehicle with a rollover protective structure.
- Do not use three-wheeled ATVs.
- Always get written permission from the landowner, or agency, before using utility vehicles at a field site.
- Carry a tool kit and a tow rope for potential mechanical difficulties.
- Carry extra fuel.
- A fire extinguisher should be available on every vehicle.
- Prior to use, perform a brief inspection of:
 - Wheels
 - Lights and switches
 - Controls
 - Oil/Fuel
 - Chain/Driveshaft and Chassis

- Consider taking a class in [ATV](#) or [Snowmobile](#) safety that covers safe driving techniques.
- It is recommended you always carry a first aid kit and take courses in: [Basic First Aid](#)

General Safety

- Always use seatbelts, if they are available.
- Three people is the minimum number that you should have in your group if ATVs are used. One person should be able to go for help, and one should be able to stay at the scene, in case of an accident.
- Do not modify the vehicle. Modifications can alter the center of gravity and make rollovers more likely.
- Items must be securely stored such that they do not impede operation.
- Do not exceed the weight limit for the vehicle.
- Do not drive ATVs on paved roads.
- Cross paved roads at safe locations with good visibility.
- Always operate at safe speeds appropriate for the terrain.
- Watch carefully for objects hidden under the brush or snow such as rocks, stumps, and broken fences.
- Watch for low-hanging branches that can cause head injuries.
- Know ice thickness before crossing waterways as the ice may not support your weight.

Emergency Response

- If someone has an accident, secure the scene to ensure no one else becomes injured.
- Assess if emergency services are required. If there is no phone service, send someone for help immediately.
- Perform supportive first aid. Assess for spinal injury before moving the victim. If the victim is not responsive, always presume they may have a spinal injury and never move them.
- Assess for shock. To treat shock, have the victim lie flat on their back with their legs elevated, keep them warm by covering them with extra clothing or blankets.
- Keep them as dry and warm as possible.

References and Additional Resources

- [ATV Safety Information Center](#)
- [Snowmobile Safety Awareness Program](#)
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources [Ice Safety Resources Page](#)
- Adapted from *ATV/Utility Vehicle Fact Sheet*, by University of Maryland: Department of Environmental Safety, Sustainability & Risk (<https://essr.umd.edu/about/research-safety/field-research-safety/planning>) with permission.