

Safety Precautions When on the ATV Trail

Whether you are a veteran of the ATV trail or a novice rider itching to explore the great outdoors on your four-wheeler, you need to bring with you more than a little good sense and safety precautions. Without a significant amount of awareness when it comes to protecting yourself and your ATV, you could wind up injured, lost, or otherwise in bad shape.

First, it's essential that you bring a helmet with you. In many places, it's the law. Of course, there might not be other people for a hundred miles except you and your riding companions, so your initial thought process might suggest the opposite. Unless you're a top-notch prognosticator or have access to a 100% accurate crystal ball, that kind of thinking is as risky as gambling on a horse with a lame leg. It is always better to err on the side of caution and wear a protective helmet when you ride on the ATV trail.

Next, remember the adage, "Drinking and driving don't mix"? It goes for ATVs as well as automobiles, motorcycles, and boats. Even one beer has the ability to render you in a state of slowed responsiveness... and that means that a wrong turn could be the last one you ever make. Save the alcoholic beverages for the celebratory dinner or party the night after a long day of ATV trail cruising.

Make sure you consider using the "buddy system". Though there are plenty of ATV enthusiasts who head out into the mountains with nary a friend save their trusty four-wheeled playmates, it is typically not a good idea. The thinking behind this safety precaution is a reasonable one: if anything happens to you on the ATV trail, having someone else there will speed up the process of getting you to a medical facility.

Of course, it's imperative that you have your cell phone on you for your ATV rides, though you cannot always rely on it unless you have a good connection rate. Without a cellular phone, you could find yourself off a trail in no time and without a clue as to how to get in contact with anyone reliable to help you out.

If you're exploring a new ATV trail, bring along an updated map of the area. In fact, you might want to get a couple of them and make sure both you and your riding buddies each have one. Sure, it's not supposed to be cool to say, "Let's look at the map," but it's a lot better than shivering along a remote ATV trail at midnight, wondering how in the world you will make it back.

It's also important that you turn on the local weather station by the use of the radio or a television before taking a four-wheeler spin. Though most ATVs are built to handle some tricky conditions, it's best to know what kind of elements you're likely to encounter. That way you can dress appropriately, bring along suitable gear or leave the ATV riding for another day if conditions look especially dicey.

Finally, one of the most important safety precautions is to ensure that the

operator of the ATV is healthy enough to navigate through the trail. If you're feeling at all ill or have a physical injury that could prevent you from being a dependable driver, you may need to head out another time. There is no shame in postponing an ATV ride if you're under-the-weather. And, besides, it's unlikely that you'll be able to enjoy the experience to its fullest if you're coughing, achy, or in pain.

By being prudent, you can ensure that your next ATV trail adventure is exciting, rewarding, and, most of all, safe.

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