

Using Courtesy While Driving an ATV

Since its introduction to the public in the 1970's, those who ride All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) have had to deal with a number of issues regarding their behavior. Some of these issues deal with safety, while others deal with rider's behavior towards sharing trails and those whose land they trespass on. Many drivers irresponsibly disregard laws that prohibit the use of ATVs in certain areas. Because of this, hundreds of trails have been designated as safe and legal places for ATV riders to use. As with all forms of vehicular travel, there are a number of rules, both implied and legislated, which have been developed to ensure the safety of those who drive ATVs.

Regardless of why someone is using a trail, it is important to remember that all trail users are responsible for watching and listening for others. This should result in those who use trails actively looking and listening for others, as opposed to merely reacting when someone or something comes their way. This approach will go a long way towards preventing the accidents and misunderstandings that can take place on the trails.

It is generally accepted that traveling on the right side of the trail removes indecision about the proper side on which to pass. If you need to pass on the left for one reason or another, always ask for and get permission before you do so. Make sure that you are able to slow down significantly and use caution at all curves and junctions. While riding an ATV is not the time that you want to experience a surprise! Surprises are never safe - regardless of what type of vehicle you happen to be riding!

If you should encounter a horse while you are riding your ATV, always yield to the horse and rider. Go out of your way to make sure that the horse has seen and heard you. In addition, you will want to give the horse adequate room to pass you on the trail. Remember that motorized recreation vehicles, such as ATVs, can usually be heard coming, and the horse rider may be well out of the way. If not, be courteous, and shut off your motor. Then allow the rider to get a safe distance beyond you before you start it back up again. If you happen to notice that a horse is becoming edgy, nervous, or agitated, always turn off your engine. Then ask the rider what you can do to make the situation better for him and the horse.

Unfortunately, the great majority of responsible riders have had their reputation negatively affected by those who do not follow the rules of the trails and who do not take the necessary time to be courteous. Simple courtesy and respect for others and their property will discourage riders of ATVs from riding on non-designated trails, or from using other's private land without

permission. This type of responsible thinking will also prevent riders from driving their ATV under the influence of alcohol or drugs. A number of accidents happen each year because of this unfortunate behavior.

If you are planning riding your ATV on a trail designed for ATV use, keep in mind that there is always a good chance that you may encounter someone who is using the trail for a purpose other than the driving of ATVs. In these situations, it is best to give others the respect that you desire from them. Be active in your effort to hear and see other who is on your trails. When you do encounter them, always yield.

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