



Off-Highway Vehicle Safety

Off-highway vehicles (OHVs) include all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), utility task vehicles (UTVs), and other motor vehicles capable of off-highway travel and work activities. One of the largest, most traumatic claims ever experienced by a Member employee covered by the Risk Pool involved a UTV. According to the 2022 Consumer Product Safety Commission, over a 5-year period from 2017 through 2021, there were an estimated 517,700 emergency department-treated injuries in the United States that were associated with OHVs.

ATVs and UTVs are popular vehicles operated here in Texas and offer a wide range of applications for TMLIRP Members. From utility operations to parks and recreation services, these vehicles provide access to challenging terrain and efficient transportation of equipment and materials. However, ensuring the safety and well-being of employees is paramount. Here are safety tips and best practices for operators working in these diverse fields:

Inspections (Pre/Post)

- Conduct thorough pre-trip inspections, verify that the Off-highway vehicle is in proper working condition.
- Before setting out on daily tasks, inspect the Slow-Moving Vehicle (SMV) emblem (if applicable), warning lights, brakes, and other safety features.
- Follow the T-CLOC checklist (**T**ires and **W**heels, **C**ontrols and **C**ables, **L**ights and **E**lectrics, **O**il and **F**uel, **C**hain/Driveshaft and **C**hassis).
- Verify that all attachments such as spreaders, sprayers, and wenchers are securely attached and compatible with the machine.

Seat Belts and Rollover Protection

- Always wear seat belts when operating Off-highway vehicles (if applicable). Seat belts provide a critical level of protection.
- If your utility vehicle is equipped with roll-over protection structures (ROPS), ensure they are in good working condition and used as intended.
- Only transport the same number of passengers as there are seatbelts or seats.
- Avoid sharp turns and sudden starts or stops.

Driver Operations

- Ensure all employees are well-trained in the safe operation of ATVs and UTVs. This includes proper use of controls, handling, and maneuvering techniques. Refer to the Texas Transportation Code for rules and regulations that might pertain to your county of operation.
- Operators should have a valid driver's license.
- Where applicable, require operators and passengers to wear personal protective equipment, including helmets, gloves, eye protection, and durable clothing.
- Equip operators with a means of communication, such as two-way radios, to facilitate safety and coordination.
- Train operators in emergency procedures, such as what to do in case of an accident, rollover, or getting stuck in remote locations. Ensure there is a first aid kit and emergency tools on board.
- If towing, do not exceed the maximum towing load as specified by the owner's manual.

Additional Resources:

- [Texas Transportation Code – Off-Highway Vehicle Training and Safety Law](#) -
- ATV Safety Institute – [Golden Rules](#)
- Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association – [Safety Rules](#)
- TMLIRP DVD Library – Golf Cart and LSV Safety: On and Off the Course, Disk # 535
- Texas Department of Insurance – [Workplace Safety Videos](#) – ATV and Golf Cart Safety -
- US Consumer Product Safety Commission - [2022 Reported Deaths and Injuries Involving Off-Highway Vehicles](#)