



Consumer Federation of America



Natural Trails & Waters
COALITION



All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Safety Crisis: America's Children at Risk

Major Findings

All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are killing and injuring nearly 112,000 people every year and children younger than 16 are paying the heaviest price. The mounting number of injuries and deaths proves that the ATV industry's self-regulating approach to safety is failing to protect consumers, especially children. This fact sheet summarizes the major findings of a report, *All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Safety Crisis: America's Children at Risk*, issued by the Consumer Federation of America, Natural Trails and Waters Coalition, and Bluewater Network.

ATVs are Bigger, Faster and More Dangerous than Ever

- ? The average adult-size ATV now weighs 550 pounds.
- ? Many ATVs can travel as fast as 75 miles per hour.

Injuries and Fatalities are Rising Dramatically

- ? The risk of injury to riders of four-wheel ATVs today is nearly as great as it was when highly dangerous "three-wheelers" were banned in 1988.
- ? Between 1982 and 2001, at least 4,541 adults and children were killed by ATVs.
- ? Between 1993 and 2001, the number of injuries caused by ATVs more than doubled to 111,700.

Children Under 16 are Most at Risk

- ? Between 1982 and 2001, 1,714 children under the age of 16 – or 38 percent of the total number of fatalities – were killed while riding ATVs. Of those, 799 were children under age 12.
- ? Between 1993 and 2001, ATV-related injuries suffered by children under 16 increased 94 percent to 34,800.

Industry's Self-Regulating Approach to Safety is Not Working

- ? A court-approved consent decree between ATV manufacturers and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, which forced the industry to end production of highly dangerous three-wheel ATVs, expired in 1998. Since that time, some manufacturers have been operating under voluntary, unenforceable "action plans." Others have not even gone that far.
- ? The self-regulating approach relies on fine print in ads, warning labels, and recommendations enforced at the discretion of manufacturers.

-Over Please-

ATVs Should be Regulated Under the Same Kind of Common Sense Rules Applied to Cars

- ? Every state has a comprehensive system to promote safety on America's roads and highways, including age limits and licensing and training requirements for every driver of a car. It's a different story for ATVs:
 - ? 24 states have no minimum age to drive an ATV, and 19 more allow children ranging from 8 to 12 years old to drive them;
 - ? 42 states do not require a license to drive an ATV; and
 - ? 35 states do not require any safety training or testing to drive an ATV.
- ? The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) have issued formal policies recommending that children under 16 not be allowed to drive ATVs under any circumstance. This reflects their conclusion that the safe operation of ATVs requires the same or greater skill, judgement and experience as needed for cars.

Action Steps to Protect Children

While this problem is serious, there are promising solutions. The report includes several recommendations, many developed by doctors who treat people injured by ATVs, that would better protect children, and every rider of an ATV.

- ? Every state should adopt the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) that no child under 16 be allowed to operate ATVs under any circumstance.
- ? The ATV industry should join doctors, consumer advocates and others in pressing every state to adopt model legislation developed by the AAP concerning licensing, training and other aspects of ATV safety.
- ? The CPSC should ban the use of adult-size ATVs by children under 16 and require manufacturers to provide refunds for all three-wheel ATVs and adult-size four-wheel ATVs purchased for use by children. The CPSC can take such action by approving the petition submitted by the Consumer Federation of America and others.

To view the full report, please visit: www.consumerfed.org or www.naturaltrails.org. For more information about this problem, contact Scott Kovarovics of Natural Trails and Waters Coalition (202-429-2696), Rachel Weintraub of Consumer Federation of America (202-387-6121) or Sean Smith of Bluewater Network (415-544-0790).