



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Keep safety in mind when it comes to ATVs**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The Alabama Department of Public Health and the Alabama Child Death Review System urge parents to take special care to ensure their children's safety when it comes to use of all-terrain vehicles, or ATVs.

"ATVs are not toys," Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, cautioned. "They can be dangerous, regardless of their size, and require considerable skill to operate safely."

### **Did you know that...**

- It is against Alabama law to operate an ATV on public roads?
- Alabama currently does not require an operator's license or graduation from a safety course prior to operating an ATV in Alabama?
- Appropriate safety equipment, such as a helmet, knee/elbow padding, and suitable clothing can provide protection while riding an ATV?
- Since January 2000 the Alabama Child Death Review System, which works to determine any preventable circumstances in unexpected child deaths, has reviewed at least 20 ATV-related infant and child deaths?

### **Of these deaths reviewed**

- Sixteen had operators 16 years old or younger.
- At least four deaths occurred to a "passenger" on the ATV.
- "Passenger" fatalities ranged in age from 2 to 10 years old.
- Your Local Child Death Review Team wants you to know of these dangers.

### **What does all this mean?**

- The Southeast Child Safety Institute recommends that children not be allowed to operate an ATV until they are 16 years old. However, ATVs come in all sizes. If you choose to allow younger children to operate an ATV, your children's safety depends on your providing the right-sized ATV. The ATV Safety Institute gives these guidelines for maximum power of the vehicles according to the age of the rider.

6 years and under, under 70 cc

12 years and older, 70-90 cc

16 years and older, over 90 cc

- At the very least, don't let unsupervised children ride on or operate an ATV – no matter what the size of the ATV.
- Always require ATV operators to wear appropriate safety equipment.
- Never allow children to ride as passengers on an ATV.
- Always ask that your ATV dealer provide an approved ATV safety course prior to operating an ATV. Some dealers also offer a videotaped safety course for purchasers. Ask that your children view this course as well and complete the checklist/answer sheet afterward.

The ATV Safety Institute sponsors a Web site, <http://www.atvsafety.org>, which lists a toll-free number (800-887-2887) to call for information about safety courses. For more information contact the Alabama Child Death Review System at (334) 206-2953 or the Injury Prevention Division, Alabama Department of Public Health, at (334) 206-5541.

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