



After conducting research on what youth wanted to see in Scouting, an introduction to all-terrain vehicles was piloted following an extensive review. The key design of the BSA's ATV program is the incorporation of the operation and safety training program of the All-Terrain Vehicle Safety Institute (ASI). When conducting the training as designed, the program has been quite successful with only minor incidents. When reviewing the following incidents, you will see the effect of operation outside of program design. Please review and help us prevent future occurrences.

## Incident Review #1

A Venturing crew was conducting a ride along a logging road on U.S. Forest Service property. A 14-year-old Venturer and a 34-year-old adult leader were riding together. The leader observed that they were going too fast for an upcoming curve and told the Venturer to slow down. Rather than applying the brake, the youth mistakenly applied the accelerator. The ATV missed the turn and went about 20 to 30 feet down a mountain. The youth had to be airlifted to the hospital. The leader, who had multiple injuries, was treated for shock and transported by ambulance.

### Key Points

- ATVs, including utility task vehicles (UTVs), are not to be used in unit-level Scouting activities.
- Most ATVs are designed for a single rider.
- Gaining familiarity of ATV controls during practice in a controlled environment is preferable to learning on a trail.

## Incident Review #2

Three staff members ages 15 to 19 had investigated a water line break in a program area and were all riding on a single ATV. While returning to staff camp, the driver took a turn too fast and rolled the ATV, resulting in head, back, and wrist injuries to all three staff members.

### Key Points

- Camp standards specifically outline appropriate use of vehicles for transit around camp.
- We are unaware of any ATV designed to carry three people. Hauling additional passengers raises the vehicle's center of gravity and the risk of overturning.
- ATVs are not designed to operate on hard surface roadways.

“ Appropriate riding gear includes helmets (DOT or Snell certified), eye protection, gloves, long-sleeved shirt or jacket, and over-the-ankle boots.”



## Incident Review #3

A Varsity Scout team filed a tour and activity plan to go sledding. When returning from the sledding hill, a UTV was towing a tube with an adult, who was holding a tube with a Scout's father. The tube with the Scout's father struck a tree stump and he suffered a fracture in his neck and a shattered femur. The stated reason for the tow was that the UTV was full of Scouts and there was no room for the two extra adults.

### Key Points

- Tow sports are limited to activity afloat. There are no authorized towing activities on land.
- The use of UTVs is not part of either a unit- or a council-level program.
- UTVs are specifically designed to haul small loads.

## Incident Review #4, #5, and #6

- A 21-year-old camp staff member was conducting a trail ride with a class. The staff member encountered a small obstruction while the handle bars were turned and the left side of the ATV left the ground and crashed into a tree, resulting in the dislocation of the staffer's knee.
- A group of staff members was retrieving ATVs from a program area for cleanup. The group detoured onto a fire road with large shale surfaces. A 22-year-old staff member going downhill in fourth gear missed a turn, rolled the ATV, and broke an arm.
- A 16-year-old Scout at summer camp who was on a planned trail ride encountered a muddy section and a rut concealed in the mud. The ATV flipped on top of the Scout, injuring his back. The muddy section was not intended as part of the ATV program experience.

### Key Points

- Terrain (obstacles, surface, and hazards) and speed in addition to maturity levels of the involved parties may have contributed to the incidents.
- Staff members who wanted a "joy ride" or the individual desire for a more exciting experience may have set up the occurrence of all three of these incidents.

“ ATVs are not ‘one-size-fits-all.’ ”

## Discussion Questions

- Under what conditions are ATVs approved program activities?
- Under what conditions are ATVs approved for non-program use at council camps and national high-adventure bases?
- Why is it important to follow the operation and safety training program of the ASI?
- Discuss the importance of riding posture, speed, and terrain.

## Resources

- National Camp Accreditation Program National Camp Standards—[www.scouting.org/filestore/outdoor%20program/pdf/430-056.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/outdoor%20program/pdf/430-056.pdf). See Standards PS-205 (“No deviation is permitted from the [ASI] course outline.”) and FA-711.
- The Sweet Sixteen of BSA Safety—[www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/resources/sweet16](http://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/resources/sweet16)
- All-Terrain Vehicle Safety Institute—[www.atvsafety.org](http://www.atvsafety.org)



“ While ATV injuries have declined in recent years, ATV incidents resulted in 97,200 emergency room visits and 340 fatalities in 2015.”

*Source: Consumer Product Safety Commission*