



# WISCONSIN OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE REGULATIONS

Related to  
All-Terrain Vehicles,  
Utility- Terrain Vehicles  
Off-Highway Motorcycles



This pamphlet is an interpretive summary of Wisconsin's off-highway vehicle laws and regulations. For complete laws and regulations, consult the Wisconsin State Statutes Chapter 23.33 and 23.335 and Wisconsin Administration Codes NR 64 and 65.

**Helmets & Seat Belts Save Lives.  
Wear it Wisconsin!**



# WISCONSIN OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE REGULATIONS

Related to All-Terrain Vehicles, Utility-Terrain Vehicles & Off-Highway Motorcycles

## Department of Natural Resources

P.O. Box 7921

Madison, WI 53707

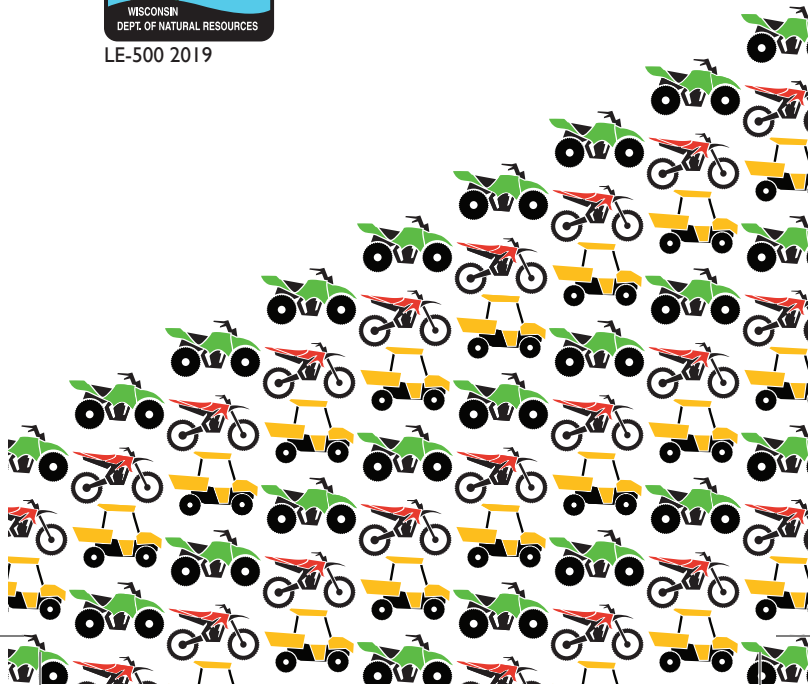
For ATV/UTV and safety information, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "ATV", "UTV" or "OHM"

DNR Call Center **1-888-936-7463**

(7 a.m.—10 p.m. Seven days/week) Live chat and e-mail service available



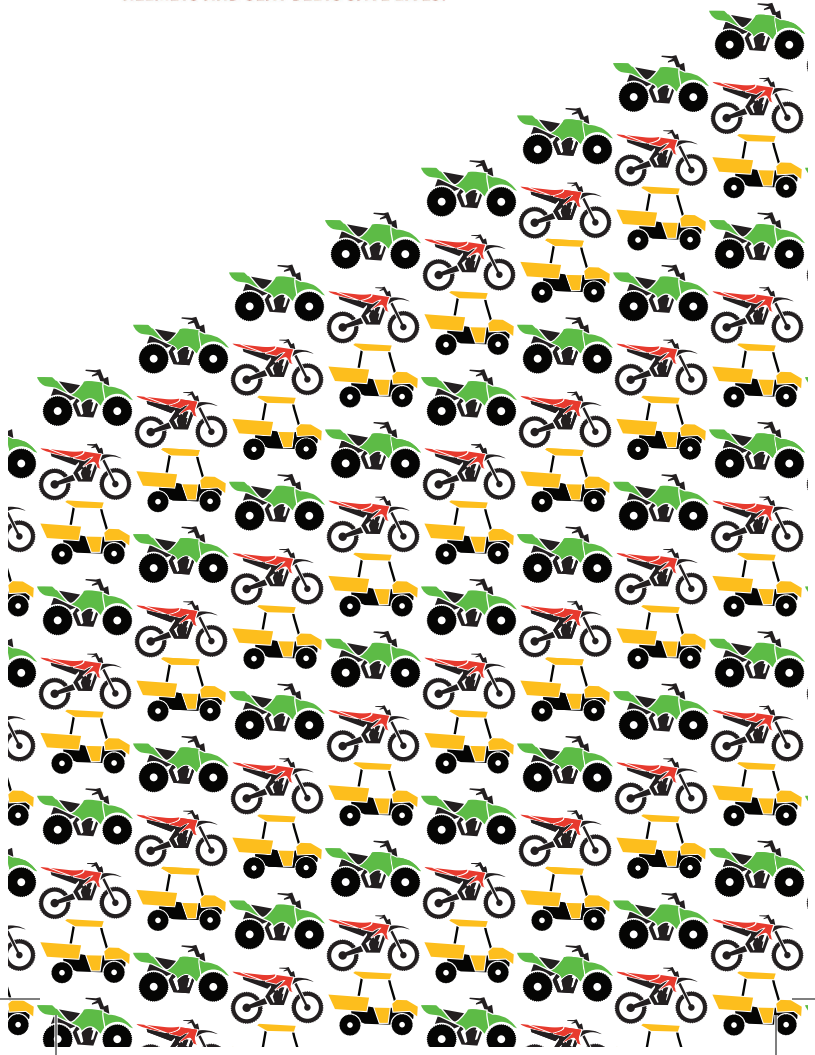
LE-500 2019





# WEAR IT WISCONSIN

HELMETS AND SEAT BELTS SAVE LIVES!



# Wisconsin All-Terrain Vehicle & Utility Terrain Vehicle Laws

See page 34 for Off-Highway Motorcycles





# What's New?

*For the most updated version of the regulations, view them online at [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov). Here's a brief synopsis of the most recent law changes:*

## **ATV Route Signing Requirements**

Additional options for ATV route sign posting have been created. All route sign posting is regulated by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. For more information visit: [wisconsin.gov](http://wisconsin.gov) and search keyword "ATV".



---

## ATV / UTV Contents

---

Accidents and Crashes .....	29
Agricultural Use .....	20
Alcohol and Drugs.....	22
ATV Safety Certification Courses.....	20
ATVs/UTVs and Hunting, Fishing or Trapping.....	30
ATVs/UTVs and Snow Removal.....	33
ATV/UTV Clubs/Organizations.....	13
ATV/UTV Equipment Requirements.....	28
ATV/UTV Sanctioned Races .....	29
ATV/UTV Trailer Information.....	32
ATV/UTV Trail Patrol Ambassador.....	13
Basic Safety Code.....	34
Dealer/Renter Requirements .....	18
Definitions .....	8
Disabled Operators.....	30
Enforcement, Penalties & Common Violations .....	32
Help Prevent Violations .....	32
Exhaust and Noise Restrictions.....	28
Frequently Asked Questions.....	12
General Age & Safety Certificate Requirements.....	19
Helmet Requirements.....	21
How do I Register my ATV/UTV? .....	16
How Is the Wisconsin ATV/UTV Program Paid For? .....	35
Liability of Landowners: 895.52 Wisconsin Statutes .	30
Motor Vehicle Trailer Information.....	32
OHM Regulations .....	36
Operation On and Around Waterways.....	27
Public Roadway/Highway Use .....	24
Registration Information .....	13
Rear Registration ID Plate Requirement.....	15
Speed Limits/Restrictions.....	27
Other ATV/UTV Restrictions .....	27
Trails At Risk From Invasive Species .....	31
Trail Signs .....	26
Transfer of Ownership.....	17
Unimproved Right-of-Way/Ditch Use .....	25
Where Can I Ride My ATV?.....	22
Winter ATV/UTV Use.....	33
Flotation Requirements:.....	33

---

## Definitions

---

**Accident**—A crash involving an ATV is any accident (regardless of the number of vehicles involved) which results in a fatality or an injury that requires medical treatment by a physician.

**Accompanied**—Subject to continuous verbal direction or control, but not necessarily on the same machine.

**Agricultural Purpose**—a purpose related to the transportation of farm implements, equipment, supplies, or products on a farm or between farms. Operation between a dwelling and a farm or piece of non-agricultural property does not meet this definition unless the dwelling is on the same piece of property as the farm.

**All-terrain vehicle (ATV)**—a commercially designed and manufactured motor-driven device that has a weight, without fluids, of 900 pounds or less, has a width of 50 inches or less, is equipped with a seat designed to be straddled by the operator and on 3 or more low-pressure or non-pneumatic tires. See also: **Small ATV**.

**Dealer**—a person engaged in the sale of all-terrain vehicles for a profit at wholesale or retail.

**Designated Adult**—parent, guardian or adult designated by the parent or guardian.

**DNR**—Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

**DOT**—Department of Transportation.

**Golf cart**—a vehicle in which the speed attainable in one mile does not exceed 20 mph on a paved, level surface, and that is designed and intended to convey one or more persons and equipment to play the game of golf in an area designated as a golf course.

**Highway**—All public ways, thoroughfares, and bridges on the same. It includes the entire width between the boundary lines of every way open to the use of the public as a matter of right for the purpose of vehicle traffic. Generally Federal and State Highways are designated by a number, County highways are designated by a letter or letters. Town Highways are generally designated by a name.

**Hours of Darkness**—The period of time from ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise and all other times when there is not sufficient natural light to render clearly visible any person or vehicle on a highway at a distance of 500 feet.

**Immediate Family**—Persons who are related as spouses, as siblings or as parent and child.

**Implement of Husbandry**—A vehicle or piece of equipment or machinery designed for agricultural purposes, used exclusively in the conduct of agricultural operations and used principally off the highway, or a trailer-mounted bulk liquid fertilizer container.

**Land Under The Management And Control Of A Person's Immediate Family**—Land owned or leased by a person or a member of a person's immediate family over which the owner or lessee has management and control. This term excludes land owned or leased by an organization of which the person or a member of the person's immediate family is a member.



---

## Definitions

---

**Low-speed Vehicle**—a motor vehicle that conforms to the definition and requirements for low-speed vehicles as adopted in the federal motor vehicle safety standards for low-speed vehicles under 49 CFR 571.3 (b) and 571.500.

### 49 CFR 571.3(b)

Title 49:Transportation PART 571—FEDERAL MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARDS § 571.3 Definitions.

(b.) Other definitions.As used in this chapter—Low-speed vehicle (LSV) means a motor vehicle,

1. That is 4-wheeled,
2. Whose speed attainable in 1.6 km (1 mile) is more than 32 kilometers per hour (20 miles per hours) and not more than 40 kilometers per hour (25 miles per hour) on a paved level surface, and
3. Whose GVWR [gross vehicle weight rating] is less than 1,361 kilograms (3,000 pounds).

### § 571.500 Standard No. 500; Low-speed vehicles.

S1. Scope.This standard specifies requirements for low-speed vehicles. S2. Purpose.The purpose of this standard is to ensure that low-speed vehicles operated on the public streets, roads, and highways are equipped with the minimum motor vehicle equipment appropriate for motor vehicle safety.

S3. Applicability.This standard applies to low-speed vehicles. S4. [Reserved.]

S5. Requirements.

- (a) When tested in accordance with test conditions in S6 and test procedures in S7, the maximum speed attainable in 1.6 km (1 mile) by each low-speed vehicle shall not more than 40 kilometers per hour (25 miles per hour).
- (b) Each low-speed vehicle shall be equipped with:
  1. Headlamps,
  2. Front and rear turn signal lamps,
  3. Taillamps,
  4. Stop lamps,
  5. Reflex reflectors: one red on each side as far to the rear as practicable, and one red on the rear,
  6. An exterior mirror mounted on the driver's side of the vehicle and either an exterior mirror mounted on the passenger's side of the vehicle or an interior mirror,
  7. A parking brake,
  8. A windshield that conforms to the Federal motor vehicle safety standard on glazing materials (49 CFR 571.205).
  9. A VIN that conforms to the requirements of part 565 Vehicle Identification Number of this chapter, and
  10. A Type 1 or Type 2 seat belt assembly conforming to Sec. 571.209 of this part, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 209, Seat belt assemblies, installed at each designated seating position.

---

## Definitions

---

**Mini-truck**—a motor truck, as defined in s. 340.01 (34), having a top speed of not more than 60 mph, and that is all of the following:

- ◇ Powered by an internal combustion engine with a piston or rotor displacement of not less than 660 cubic centimeters
  - ◇ Not more than 60 inches wide
  - ◇ Not more than 1,600 lbs in dry, unloaded weight
  - ◇ Manufactured with a locking enclosed cab and a heated interior
- Non-pneumatic tire—a tire that is designed by the manufacturer to meet all of the following requirements: to have a minimum width of 6 inches, to have a reinforced structure, and to not be supported by air pressure.

**Operate**—To exercise physical control over the speed or direction of an ATV or UTV or to physically manipulate or activate any of the controls of an ATV or UTV necessary to put it in motion.

**Operator**—A person who operates an ATV or UTV, who is responsible for the operation of an ATV or UTV or who is supervising the operation of an ATV or UTV.

**Owner**—A person who has lawful possession of an ATV or UTV by virtue of legal title or equitable interest in the machine which entitles the person to possession of it.

**Private Property**—Land owned or leased by an individual, group of individuals or corporation (not government owned) or lands owned by a member of the immediate family (spouse, siblings, or parent). A trail, even though crossing private property, is not considered private for the purpose of enforcement of laws, i.e., registration, OWI etc.

**Raceway Facility**—An area, including a marked warm-up and testing area, specifically designated by a sponsor for the purpose of conducting a sanctioned race or derby for which any required local permits have been obtained.

**Renter**—A person engaged in the rental or leasing of ATVs or UTVs to the public.

**Roadway**—That portion of a highway between the regularly established curb line or that portion, which is improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicle travel excluding the berm or shoulder.

**Route**—A highway or sidewalk designated for use by ATV and/or UTV operators by the governmental agency having jurisdiction. Routes are identified at the beginning point by a sign showing the white silhouette of an ATV on a green background. White directional arrows on a green background show the continuation of the route.

**Sanctioned Race or Derby**—A competitive event sponsored by a county, town, city or village, by a promoter, chamber of commerce, ATV/UTV club or other similar organization.

**Small All-Terrain Vehicle**—An all-terrain vehicle that has 4 wheels and that has either an engine certified by the manufacturer at not more than 130 cubic centimeters or an equivalent power unit. These machines must be registered.

---

## Definitions

---

**Small Utility Terrain Vehicle**—means a utility terrain vehicle that has 4 wheels and that has either an engine certified by the manufacturer at not more than 200 cubic centimeters or an equivalent power unit.

**Snow Removal Device**—an attachment designed and installed for the purpose of removing snow, such as a plow blade, blower, bucket, or brush Street—Every highway within the corporate limits of a city or village except alleys.

**Town Highway**—Roads constructed and maintained by the towns (generally these roads are signed with names, for example Old Town Road).

**Trail**—A marked corridor on public property or on private lands subject to public easement or lease, designated for use by all-terrain vehicle operators by the governmental agency having jurisdiction, but excluding roadways of highways except those roadways which are not seasonally maintained for motor vehicle traffic. Trails are identified by signs showing a white silhouette of an ATV on a brown background.

**Used Exclusively on Private Property**—Use of an ATV by its owner or a member of his or her immediate family, only on land owned or leased by the all-terrain vehicle owner or a member of his or her immediate family.

**Utility Terrain Vehicle**—means any of the following:

- A commercially designed and manufactured motor driven device that does not meet federal motor vehicle safety standards in effect on July 1, 2012, that is not a golf cart, low-speed vehicle, dune buggy, mini-truck, or tracked vehicle, that is designed to be used primarily off of a highway, and that has, and was originally manufactured with, all of the following:
  - ◇ A net weight, without fluids, of 2,000 pounds or less.
  - ◇ Four or more low pressure or non-pneumatic tires.
  - ◇ A steering wheel. A tail light.
  - ◇ A brake light.
  - ◇ Two headlights.
  - ◇ A width of not more than 65 inches.
  - ◇ A system of seat belts, or a similar system, for restraining each occupant of the device in the event of an accident.
  - ◇ A system of structural members designed to reduce the likelihood that an occupant would be crushed as the result of a rollover of the device.

**Validated Receipt**—a copy of your ATV/UTV Registration Application (form 9400-376) “validated” (stamped PAID) by a DNR office authorized validation site or, if purchased from a Wisconsin dealer, a copy of the registration application signed by the dealer, showing proof that registration has been applied for and proper fee paid.

---

## Frequently Asked Questions

---

- Q.** Are all snowmobile trails open for winter ATV use?
- A. No.** Only certain counties allow ATVs and/or UTVs to operate on snowmobile trails under certain conditions. Check with the County Snowmobile Coordinator to find out if landowner agreements have been updated to legally allow ATVs/UTVs.
- Q.** I can find a helmet small or light enough that my child can wear. Is it okay to place my child in a car seat with a bicycle helmet in a UTV?
- A. No.** The majority of the ATV/UTV safety laws were written to regulate ATV/UTV use on off-road trails. If an appropriate, legal helmet cannot be found for your child, they are most likely too young to safely transport in a UTV.
- Q.** Is it legal to have a passenger on an ATV not designed for two people?
- A. Yes,** however it is not recommended. Please follow the manufacturer's recommendations and do not carry a passenger unless the ATV is specifically designed for two people.
- Q.** Can I drive my ATV or UTV on any public road if I display a slow moving vehicle sign?
- A. No.** A slow moving vehicle sign may only be used by slow moving vehicles authorized to be on the road in the first place. ATVs and UTVs may not be used on every public road. Slow moving vehicle signs are required for vehicles that usually operate at speeds less than 25 mph, usually farm machinery.
- Q.** I'm from out of state. Can I still purchase Wisconsin Public Use registration? Do I still need to purchase a non-resident trail pass?
- A. Yes,** anyone may register their machine for Wisconsin Public Use registration. Machines displaying valid Public Use registration don't have to display a non-resident trail pass.
- Q.** My machine meets most of the UTV specification, except it doesn't have a roll bar. Can I make my own roll bar so it meets legal UTV specifications?
- A. No.** Your machine must meet all the legal specifications with original manufacturer equipment.
- Q.** I modified my ATV/UTV with a track system. Can I legally use it on the snowmobile trails?
- A. No.** Whereas certain snowmobile trails may allow winter ATV/UTV use, replacing the tires with tracks has now moved your machine outside of legal ATV/UTV definition. Tracked ATVs/UTVs may be used on private property with permission and on frozen waterways.

---

## ATV/UTV Clubs/Organizations

---

Please consider joining a club, your help is needed. By staying on the trail you show your respect for the hard work of the local clubs and the rights of the property owners who have graciously allowed a trail to cross their property.

---

## ATV/UTV Trail Patrol Ambassador

---

Want to help others while out on the trail? Consider becoming a volunteer Trail Patrol Ambassador. Go to [www.trailpatrol.com](http://www.trailpatrol.com) for more information.

---

## Registration Information

---

---

### What Can be Registered as an All-Terrain Vehicle?

---

An ATV must meet all of the following specifications:

- Commercially designed and manufactured
- A motor-driven device
- Dry weight of 900 pounds or less
- Width of 50 inches or less
- Has a seat designed to be straddled
- Travels on 3 or more low-pressure or non-pneumatic tires

---

### What Can't be Registered as an All-Terrain Vehicle?

---

The following do not meet legal ATV specifications:

- An ATV modified with tracks, skis, etc.
- Machines that can legally be registered as UTVs
- 6-8 wheel amphibious vehicles
- A go cart or golf cart (*see Definitions*)\*
- An off-road motorcycle
- Anything outside the ATV specifications listed above
- A homemade or non-commercially manufactured machine

---

### What Can be Registered as an UTV?

---

A UTV must meet all of the following specifications:

- Commercially designed and manufactured
- Four or more low pressure tires or non-pneumatic tires
- Dry weight less than 2,000 lbs
- Steering wheel
- Tail light
- Brake light
- Two headlights
- Max width of 65 inches
- Seat belts for each occupant
- Roll bar or similar structural system or device

#### **Other Vehicles Qualifying as UTVs:**

Any machines that would otherwise meet the ATV specifications (see "What Can Be Registered as an ATV") except that the weight is more than 900 lbs, but less than 2,000 lbs.

---

## What Cannot be Registered as a UTV?

---

The following devices do not meet the UTV or ATV definition and cannot be registered:

- A motor-driven device that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards
- a dune buggy
- a UTV modified with tracks, skis, etc.
- a homemade or non-commercially manufactured machine
- a golf cart\*
- vehicles that meet the legal definition of a low speed vehicle\*
- a mini-truck\*

\* \*See *“Definitions”*

---

## Registration Requirements

---

Unless specifically exempt, ALL ATVs and UTVs operated in Wisconsin must:

1. display current Wisconsin registration decals, or
2. possess a temporary operating receipt or
3. possess a copy of a signed registration application from a dealer.

**Exception:** ATVs / UTVs displaying valid non-resident trail passes.

**Display**—Machines registered with the DNR are issued two decals. The decals must be displayed on both sides of the machine, in a position which is forward of the operator and visible to law enforcement. Until decals are received by mail, operators must possess the temporary operating receipt issued for the machine. Operators should carry all necessary registration cards and paperwork with them for display to a law enforcement officer upon request.

---

## Registration Options

---

- **Free Registration Weekend**—ATVs and UTVs are exempt from registration and trail pass requirements during the first full weekend in June. All other laws such as age restrictions and required equipment apply.
- **Public Use**—Valid for legal operation on public trails, road routes frozen waterways and private property. Not valid for agricultural use. Valid for up to 2 years, beginning April 1st and expiring two years later on March 31st. Machines registered for Public Use are required to display their registration ID number on a rear plate. *Original: \$30, Renewal: \$30, Transfer: \$5*
- **Private Use, Agricultural**—Allows private registration for agricultural use if the machine is used for an agricultural purpose. Agricultural purpose includes a purpose related to the transportation of farm implements, equipment, supplies, or products on a farm or between farms. It is valid during operation on public roads for agricultural purposes, but is not valid for operation on public, frozen waterways or public lands open to ATVs/UTVs. Owners may dual register their machines for public use also. This type of registration remains valid until ownership is transferred. \$15

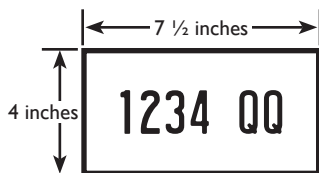
- **Private Use, Non-Agricultural**—For use exclusively on private property (used on land owned by the applicant or an immediate family member). Remains valid until ownership is transferred. \$15
- **Municipal & Government Use**—Used for state, county, city and village owned ATVs and UTVs. Machines registered for public use are required to display their registration ID number on a rear plate (see “Registration ID Plate Requirements”). Note: Government owned machines clearly displaying the name of the owner are exempt from displaying registration decals and an ID plate. \$5

#### **Rear Registration ID Plate Requirement**

All ATVs/UTVs required to register for Public Use shall have a plate attached to the rear of the vehicle. Private and Private-Agricultural registrations do not need a plate. The plate may be constructed by the owner or commercially purchased. Plate specifications must be:

- Minimum of 4 inches high and 7 1/2 inches wide.
- The plate must be white in color and display the four-number and two-letter registration ID in black characters for the ATV/UTV issued by the department. The minimum 4" x 7 1/2" area must be white and must only contain the registration ID characters. Plates may be larger than the minimum size and the area outside the minimum white area may contain other graphics or colors. The registration ID numbers are located on the registration decals and registration certificate card.
- The registration ID numbers shall be a minimum of 1 1/2 inches in height, and a minimum of a 3/16-inch stroke (width). The plate may be made from any type of material, but must be visible and in a legible condition at all times.

In addition to the plate, when received, Public Use registration decals must be affixed to each side of the vehicle in a place that is forward of the operator and clearly visible to law enforcement.



WHITE PLATE: 4" H x 7 1/2" W

BLACK LETTERING: 1 1/2" H x 3/16" stroke (thickness)

---

## Non-Resident Trail Pass Options

---

- A temporary operating receipt (printed on plain white paper) will be issued upon purchase of an annual trail pass and allows the nonresident to operate immediately. The physical trail pass decal will arrive in the mail in approximately 2 weeks or less.
- Annual trail passes may be purchased online or over the counter at select authorized sales locations or by calling WDNR at 1-888-WDNRINFO (1-888-936-7463). Annual trail passes expire March 31st
- The Non-resident, 5-Day ATV/UTV Trail Pass must be printed from a personal computer or Go Wild location on plain white paper once the purchase is complete. The customer can operate immediately and will need to carry this document while on the trails.
- There is no decal or sticker issued or required when purchasing the 5-Day ATV or UTV Trail Pass.
- Nonresident 5-day trail passes may be purchased online or at any one of many sales locations.
- Annual trail passes must be clearly displayed in a location forward of the operator
- Machines displaying valid trail passes do not need a rear plate.

---

## Registration Exemptions:

---

- ATVs/UTVs that have purchased valid trail passes are exempt.
- ATVs/UTVs present in this state for less than 15 days, if used exclusively as part of an advertisement being made for the manufacturer of the ATV or UTV, are exempt from registration and trail pass requirements.
- ATVs/UTVs owned by government agencies and clearly displaying the name of the owner on the outside of the vehicle are exempt from registration.
- ATVs/UTVs used exclusively for racing on a raceway facility.

---

## How do I Register my ATV/UTV?

---

- **New or transfers of existing Wisconsin registrations** may be done online, at a DNR Service Center or by mail. Application must be submitted within 10 days of purchase. Dealerships must submit application within 5 days of the sale.
- **Renewals** may be done online, at any of our sales agents, at a DNR Service Center or by mail.
- **Replacement materials** may be done online, at a DNR Service Center or by mail.

---

## Where can I Register?

---

**NOTE:** If you are registering your ATV/UTV, you will need to provide the weight, width and Vehicle Identification Number.

### *Transaction types*

- **Online**—Visit the Go Wild website to complete your new, transfer, renewal and replacement transactions.
- **Sales agents**—More than 1,000 sales agents provide registration renewal service only.
- **DNR**—DNR Service Centers provide full registration service for new, renewal, replacement and transfer of ATVs/UTVs.
- **By Mail**—After completing all requested information on the

## 16 • Wisconsin UTV/ATV Regulations



application form (*Form 9400-376*), make a copy, and mail the original application and appropriate fees to the address provided on the form. The form is available online or by calling **1-888-936-7463**. To operate, you must wait until your registration decals are received and displayed on your machine. It is unlawful to operate only with a copy of the application.

- **Temporary Operating Receipt**—Customers who submit registration applications and payment at a DNR Service Center, online or at a sales agent will receive a temporary operating receipt that allows for immediate operation until the registration decals and certificate are received. Customers who submit their application and payment by mail will have to wait until they receive their materials in the mail before they can operate.

---

*Late Fee:* There is a \$5.00 late fee charged for renewing your ATV/ UTV registration after your current registration decal has expired.

---

- **Lost or destroyed registrations**—Choose one of the registration options above to apply for a replacement certificate card or expiration decal.
- **Change of address**—Within 15 days of changing your address, you must notify the DNR in writing, stating your new address and the certificate number for the machine you own. This process is important to complete so that you receive a registration renewal notification by mail. You can also change your address by updating your GoWild account information. Add your e-mail address and you will receive renewal notifications for all your recreational vehicles.
- **ATV/UTV Purchased from a Private Party or Out-of-State Dealer**—Complete a registration application either online, at a DNR Service Center or by mail. To operate you must either display current registration decals on your machine or carry a temporary operating receipt.

---

## Transfer of Ownership

---

- **ATVs/UTVs Already Registered in Wisconsin**—Complete a registration application either online, at a DNR Service Center or by mail to apply for transfer of ownership within 10 days of purchase. If the previous owner's registration is not current, you must apply for transfer of ownership and renew the registration before operation. To operate you must either display current registration decals on your machine or carry a temporary operating receipt. *Transfer fee: \$5, Renewal fee: \$30.*
- **ATVs/UTVs Not Previously Registered in Wisconsin**—Complete a registration application either online, at a DNR Service Center or by mail. To operate you must either display current registration decals on your machine or carry a temporary operating receipt.
- **ATV/UTV Purchased from a Wisconsin Dealer**—At the time of the sale, the Wisconsin dealer will complete and submit a registration application. You must carry your copy of the application form signed by the dealer while operating the machine until your registration decals and certificate arrive in the mail.

---

## Commercial registration

---

### ATV/UTV dealer definitions and requirements

- Commercial ATV/UTV Dealer Registration Application (Form 9400-589)
- Commercial Certificate: Every person who is an ATV or UTV manufacturer, dealer, distributor, renter or any combination thereof, engaged in business in the state shall register with the department and obtain a Commercial ATV/UTV certificate.
- The commercial registration fee is \$90. A commercial dealer certificate and three registration decals and certificate cards will be mailed.
- Additional Commercial Decals/Cards: Additional registration decals and certificate cards can be ordered with original and renewal Commercial Certificate applications.
- A current Commercial Certificate holder may also order additional registration decals and certificate cards. The fee for each additional registration decal is \$30 and certificate is \$5.
- Commercial dealers will create or purchase their own plates to display their commercial decals upon. There is no size or color requirement for this plate.
- The registration period will begin on April 1 or the date of issuance/renewal and end on March 31 of the 2nd year following the date of issuance/renewal.
- Commercial decals/plates must be displayed on a machine before it may be operated. Machines may not be operated with a copy of the Commercial Application form.
- Commercial applicants cannot operate on a temporary operating receipt.

---

## Dealer/Renter Requirements

---

**A dealer cannot accept a machine for trade-in unless the ATV/UTV is currently registered either with the DNR or another state.** Dealers cannot operate on validated applications, the machines can only be operated legally when the commercial decal is displayed. Commercial registrations expire every two years. *Commercial Fee: \$90. Additional Decal Fee: \$30*

### Rental Businesses

- You can't rent or lease ATVs/UTVs to first-time (new) operators unless you provide the person instruction on how to operate it.
- You can't rent or lease a machine to a person under 16.
- You can't rent or lease a machine to anyone until you verify that all riders and operators under 18 have a helmet to use.
- All rental businesses must have clean, usable helmets available for rent to any renter under 18 or any person under 18 who will be on the rented ATV/UTV.

---

## **General Age & Safety Certificate Requirements**

ATVs and UTVs can be potentially dangerous. They weigh up to 2,000 lbs and often times capable of reaching high speeds. The use of these machines by children should be highly controlled; use of safety equipment such as helmets and safety belts should be the norm.

Crashes, injuries and deaths can happen in a split second. Close adult supervision is recommended to ensure that children are operating these machine safely and properly at all times.

A state motor vehicle driver's license is not required to operate an ATV or UTV in Wisconsin.

### **All-Terrain Vehicles**

All ATV operators at least age 12 and born on or after January 1, 1988 must possess a valid ATV safety certificate issued by this state or any other state or province. Operators must be in possession of this certificate while operating in areas open to the public such as trails, routes and frozen waterways and display it to a law enforcement officer upon request. Certified operators may transport other passengers. ATV Safety Institute (ASI) certificates are not valid in Wisconsin.

### **Safety Certificate Exceptions for ATVs:**

- No safety certificate is required while operating on private property owned by the operator's immediate family.\*
- No safety certificate is required for children under the age of 12, while operating on other private property with permission if they are accompanied by a designated adult.\*
- No safety certificate is required for children under the age of 12, while operating a small ATV\* on a public ATV trail, if they are accompanied by a designated adult.\*
- No children under the age of 12 may operate on a roadway for any reason, even to cross. Small ATVs\* may be towed with the key off or otherwise operated by an adult while on roadways.
- No safety certificate is required while operating an ATV or UTV during a demonstration event\* on a closed course. All operators under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a designated adult.

### **ATV Supervision Requirement**

All ATV safety certified operators age 12-15 must also be accompanied\* by an adult while operating on a designated ATV Route except for operation for agricultural purposes with adult supervision.

\* See "[Definitions](#)"

### **Utility Terrain Vehicles**

All UTV operators at least age 12 and born on or after January 1, 1988 must possess a valid ATV safety certificate issued by this state or any other state or province. Operators must be in possession of this certificate while operating in areas open to the public such as trails, routes and frozen waterways and display it to a law enforcement officer upon request. Certified operators may transport other passengers. ATV Safety Institute (ASI) and Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association (ROVHA) certificates are not valid in Wisconsin.

### **Small UTV Rule**

Children age 12–15 years may only operate small UTVs (200 ccs or less) on public, off-road ATV trails only. The child may cross roads at trail crossings, however no other roadway operation is allowed.

Routes. The child must be accompanied by a designated adult and possess a valid ATV Safety Certificate.

**Safety Certificate Exceptions:**

- No safety certificate is required while operating on private property under the management and control of the operator's immediate family.\*
- No safety certificate is required for children under age 12 while operating on other private property with permission if they are accompanied by a designated adult.\*
- No safety certificate is required for children under the age of 16 while operating for agricultural purposes\* if supervised by an adult.
- No safety certificate is required while operating a UTV during a demonstration event\* on a closed course. All operators under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a designated adult.
- **ATV Safety Certification** may be obtained by successfully completing a DNR sponsored ATV safety course.

\* See "[Definitions](#)"

---

## ATV Safety Certification Courses

---

- Safety certification is obtained by completing a classroom course or an Internet course. Internet courses are conducted by two vendors: [www.atvcourse.com](http://www.atvcourse.com) and [www.offroad-ed.com](http://www.offroad-ed.com).
- Prior to Enrolling in a Safety Class you must obtain your own, individual DNR Customer ID number. DNR Customer ID numbers are also needed to purchase hunting and fishing licenses and can be found printed on all licenses.

You can obtain a DNR Customer ID number by:

4. Using the DNR web site
5. Calling DNR Customer Service from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. at **1-888-936-7463**
6. Visiting a DNR Service Center during their regularly scheduled hours.

---

## Agricultural Use

---

"Agricultural purpose" means a purpose related to the transportation of farm implements, equipment, supplies, or products on a farm or between farms. Operation between a dwelling and a farm or piece of non-agricultural property does not meet this definition unless the dwelling is on the same piece of property as the farm.

The following laws apply specifically to ATVs/UTVs legally registered for "Private-Agriculture", displaying the corresponding registration decal stickers and while being legally used for an "agricultural purpose."

- ATV/UTV operators may operate on roadways while transporting farm implements, equipment, supplies, or products on a farm or between farms in the following manner:
  - ◊ At the extreme right side of the roadway, except for left turns.
  - ◊ With headlight(s) and taillight(s) activated and visible.
  - ◊ Obeying the roadway speed limit.
- Helmets are not required for agricultural use.
- ATV operators age 12 and born on or after January 1, 1988 may operate on roadways if they possess a valid ATV Safety Certificate.
- ATV operators under age 12 may not operate on roadways.
- ATV operators under age 12 may operate on private lands if they are under the supervision of an adult.

- UTV operators under the age of 16 may operate on private lands if they are under the supervision of an adult.
- UTV operators age 16 and born on or after January 1, 1988 may operate on roadways if they possess an ATV Safety Certificate
- No safety certificate is required while operating on property under the management and control of their immediate family.

---

## Helmet Requirements

---

*We need your help!* Each year the majority of all ATV/UTV deaths in Wisconsin involve operators that were not wearing a helmet. Many of these victims may have survived their injuries had they only been wearing a helmet. Please set a good example for children and others by always wearing a helmet whether you're legally required to or not.

All ATV/UTV operators and passenger under the age of 18 are required to wear a minimum DOT standard ATV or motorcycle helmet. Bicycle helmets do not meet this requirement.



### ***Helmet Exceptions:***

Helmets are not required in the following situations:

- While operating on lands under the management and control of your immediate family\*
- While operating for agricultural purposes\*
- While operating for the purpose of hunting and fishing.
- If the operator is age 18 and older.

### ***Helmets for Passengers:***

If circumstances would require you to wear a helmet as the operator then you, as a passenger, must wear a helmet. For example, a passenger riding on an ATV on land NOT under the management and control of their immediate family\* would be required to wear a helmet."

\* See "Definitions"

---

## Alcohol and Drugs

---

- It is illegal to operate an ATV/UTV under the influence of alcohol or other drugs while on any property that is open to the public (generally this means trails, routes, lakes/rivers or corridors). Being under the influence is a condition in which a person's ability to operate an ATV/UTV is impaired due to the consumption of drugs and/or alcoholic beverages to the extent that the person's decision making ability is negatively affected as well as their balance and reaction time.
- **No person may operate an ATV/UTV with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08% or more. In addition, a person can be also be arrested for operating under the influence with a BAC that is under .08%.**
- **No person may operate an ATV/UTV with any detectable amount of a restricted controlled substance in their blood.**

---

*Don't drink and ride. This can lead to crashes, injuries and death.*

*Practice "Zero Alcohol" which is a personal choice to wait until you are done riding for the day before consuming any alcoholic beverages, it's the smart choice!*

---

- **Implied Consent law**—You are required to provide a sample of your breath, blood or urine if an officer has probable cause to believe you are operating an ATV/UTV under the influence. By operating an ATV/UTV on areas open to the public you have automatically consented to provide a sample of your breath, blood or urine to an officer who requests the test. If you refuse to provide a breath, blood or urine sample, you will be charged with an additional violation.
- **Absolute Sobriety**—ATV/UTV operators may not have any amount alcohol in their system if they are under the age of 21.

---

## Where Can I Ride My ATV?

---

Most off-road trail riding opportunities are located on County owned land, with some also found on State and Federal lands. In most instances, ATV/UTV riding is strictly restricted to designated and marked ATV trails and routes only. Stay on the trails and routes, riding in illegal areas can close and/or restrict riding opportunities for everyone. Check with local County, State and Federal offices for special regulations.

### **ATV/UTV Trail Information Sources:**

- County Forestry Offices
- DNR website [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov), search keyword "ATV"
- U.S. Forest Service [fs.fed.gov](http://fs.fed.gov) website, search "Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest" and "Motor Vehicle Use Map"
- Dept. of Tourism [travelwisconsin.com](http://travelwisconsin.com) search keyword "ATV"
- Wisconsin ATV Association [watva.org](http://watva.org)
- Area Chamber of Commerce

### **ATV Trails**

All ATV trails are generally open to UTV unless specifically signed as closed to UTVs. Check with local authorities.

- An ATV trail is an off-road corridor identified by small (6"x6") brown signs with the white silhouette of an ATV and orange blazer (diamond) signs. Be careful as snowmobile trails also use the orange blazer to mark the pathway of a trail. If the brown and

white ATV sign is not present, then you are not allowed to ride an ATV on that trail.

- A trail is different than a route and will generally never be on a road or in a ditch. You are only likely to be on a road involving a trail when you cross the road at marked intersections. The county, town, city or village may designate corridors on land it controls to be used as ATV trails.
- Some trails may be designated as multiple use trails. On these trails, you could encounter other traffic such as horses, motorcycles, ATVs, UTVs and bicyclists.

Counties, towns, cities or villages may designate specific hours or times of the year when the trail is open or closed. Check locally for any special restrictions.

### **ATV Routes**

An ATV Route is a public roadway that is designated as being open to legal ATV/UTV use by local units of governmental Routes must be designated through passage of a local ordinance and posted with ATV Route (24" x 18") green signs with the white silhouette of an ATV along with appropriate directional arrows. All roads designated as ATV Routes must be signed at the beginning and end of a route and at such intervals that enable riders to follow the route. ATV Route ordinances must be filed with any law enforcement agencies that have jurisdiction over the roadway.

Official copies of all ATV Route ordinances must be filed with the Department of Natural Resources at:

#### **WI DNR**

ATV Safety Program  
101 South Webster Street LE/8  
Madison, WI 53707-7921

There is no residential access allowance that permits you to ride on a roadway from a dwelling to the nearest trail or route. You will need to haul your machine to the nearest legal access point.

For a complete list of roadways designated as ATV Routes, contact the local township office and/or County Highway Department.

---

## Public Roadway/Highway Use

---

- Do not assume that you can ride on or next to roads (ditches) the same way snowmobilers do. These general allowances do not exist for ATV/UTV operation.
- Operation on and around public roads is restricted and in most cases illegal.
- There is no residential access allowance that permits you to ride on a roadway from a dwelling to the nearest trail or route. You will need to haul your machine to the nearest legal access point.

### **You May Operate on Roadways in the Following Situations:**

- For agricultural purposes (see [“Agricultural Use” on p. 14](#))
- On an officially designated and signed ATV Routes
- On roads not seasonally maintained for roadway use, during the time in which no maintenance occurs and the road hasn’t been closed to ATV/ UTV use.
- To cross a bridge, culvert or railroad right-of-way when operating on a designated and marked ATV/UTV trail, ATV Route or private property with permission if you:
  - ◊ Determine the location is safe to cross
  - ◊ Come to a complete stop.
  - ◊ Yield to all motor vehicles and pedestrians.
- To cross a roadway while operating on a designated and marked ATV trail or private property with permission if you:
  - ◊ Cross in the most direct manner possible
  - ◊ Come to a complete stop. Yield to all motor vehicles and pedestrians.

A person may operate an all-terrain vehicle or utility terrain vehicle on the roadway or shoulder of any highway to cross a bridge that is 1,000 feet in length or less if the operation is in compliance with a county ordinance that applies to that bridge and a city, village, or town ordinance that applies to that bridge.

---

## Additional Roadway Restrictions

---

Check with local authorities regarding any locally enacted ATV/UTV ordinances which may be more restrictive than state law.

### **When legally operating on a roadway:**

- Operate at the extreme right side of the roadway surface.
- Left turns can be made from any part of the roadway surface as long as it’s safe.
- You must operate single file.
- You must have your head lamps and tail lamps on.

All children age 12-15 must be accompanied\* by an adult while operating on a designated ATV Route, regardless if they possess an ATV Safety Certificate.

**Exceptions:** Legal crossing and operation for agricultural purposes.

---

**NOTE:** No ATV operators under age 12 and no UTV operators under age 16 may operate on a public roadway for any reason.

---

\* See [“Definitions”](#)



---

## Unimproved Right-of-Way/Ditch Use

---

Operation on the unimproved right-of-way or ditch, outside the regular traveled portion of the road, is highly restricted and in most cases illegal. Many right-of-ways or ditch lines are privately owned, operation on private property without permission is trespassing.

### **You May Operate on Unimproved Right-of-Ways in the Following Situations:**

- **Town Roads** (examples: Maple Road, Hanson Lane, etc.)
  - ◊ On designated and signed ATV trails or routes or on private property with permission.
- **County Highways** (Highway C, Highway TT, etc.)
  - ◊ On designated and signed ATV trails or routes or on private property with permission. If operating on a trail or running parallel to the highway, you must be at least 10 feet from the roadway portion of the highway.
- **State Highway**—(Highway 8, Highway 141, etc.)—on designated and signed ATV trails or routes or on private property with permission. If operating on a trail or route running parallel to the highway, you must be at least 10 feet from the roadway portion of the highway.
- **Interstate Highway**—(I-90, I-41, I-39, etc.)—no operation allowed.

When legally operating alongside roadways during the hours of darkness, operation must be in the same direction as motor vehicle traffic in the nearest lane unless the trail or route is located at least 40 feet from the roadway or separated by a headlight barrier.

During daylight hours, you may travel in either direction regardless of the flow of motor vehicle traffic.

## Trail Signs

### Trail and Route signs are standardized across Wisconsin.

Be familiar with them before your ride. When a county, city, village or town creates a route, ATV route signs must be erected along with directional arrow(s), at the beginning of an all-terrain vehicle route and at locations and intervals necessary to enable all-terrain vehicle operators to follow the route. Only individuals authorized by a local municipality may post, remove or alter ATV signs. If you see a signing problem, contact the local municipality and/or ATV club representative immediately.



#### Diamond trail blazer

This type of sign is also used for snowmobile trails. In order for you to use a trail that is identified with this blazer, the trail must also be marked with the brown and white ATV sign.

---

## Speed Limits/Restrictions

---

You must slow your ATV/UTV to 10 mph or less:

- When you are riding within 100 feet of a person who is not on a motorized vehicle. This includes, but is not limited to slowing for anglers, hikers, bicyclists, joggers, horses, etc. as well as for other ATV/UTV operators standing along the trail.
- When you are riding within 100 feet of an ice fishing shanty while on the ice.
- When you are riding within 150 feet of a home or dwelling.
- You must obey the posted trail speed limits at all times.

**Exception:** The 10 mph speed limit doesn't apply while operating on legal ATV Road Routes, unless enacted by local ordinance.

- When operating on or along roadways you cannot exceed the posted roadway speed limits for motor vehicle traffic unless there is a specific speed limit posted for ATVs/UTVs.

### **Other ATV/UTV Restrictions**

- You must obey all regulatory signs, such as stop signs, yield signs and speed limit signs.
- You can't operate at speeds that are unreasonable or improper.
- You can't operate in a careless manner so that it endangers a person or property.
- You can't operate on public property in areas where such operation is prohibited by signage and/or local rule or law.
- You can't operate on private property without the permission of the owner or lessee. Failure to post the property does not give you the authority to ride there.

You can't allow a person to operate if they are:

- Prohibited by law.
- Has not obtained the required safety certificate (or underage).
- Incapable of operating because they are physically or mentally unable to exercise physical control over the speed or direction of the machine.
- Under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

You must stop your machine after being requested or signaled to do so by a law enforcement officer.

---

## Operation On and Around Waterways

---

You cannot operate an ATV/UTV in any navigable water, or on the exposed bed of any navigable water (including exposed lakebeds in front of your property) except:

- To cross a stream by use of a bridge, culvert, ford or similar structure provided the crossing is in the most direct manner practical.
- To launch or load a boat, canoe, or other watercraft in the most direct manner practical.
- To access the frozen surfaces of any navigable waters provided the crossing or access is in the most direct manner practical.

Machines operating on public, frozen waterways must display either valid Public Use Registration decals or a valid trail pass.

"Bed of a navigable water\*" means all of the area below the ordinary high water mark of a lake or stream. (During low-water periods, there may be several feet or more of exposed lake or streambed that is closed to ATV and other vehicular traffic)

---

## ATV/UTV Equipment Requirements

---

Your ATV must be equipped with at least a single white headlamp (two for UTVs) and a red tail lamp that must be activated during the hours of darkness or while operating on or along a roadway, even when crossing roads. It is recommended that you leave your lights on at all times for safety.

- Colored headlamp covers, lens covers or colored headlamp bulbs, are not legal to use when you are riding during the hours of darkness or while operating on or along a roadway, even when crossing roads. Under most circumstances you cannot use colored headlamp covers or bulbs.
- Your headlamp(s) must be able to illuminate any person or object at a distance of 200 feet in front of your machine.

Other auxiliary lighting is allowed as long as it doesn't interfere with legal lighting requirements. Red and blue lighting identifies emergency or law enforcement vehicles.

Your machine must be equipped with a tail lamp that is visible for 500 feet to the rear during the hours of darkness.

Your machine must be equipped with at least one brake, operated either by hand or by foot.

All UTV passengers must have their seatbelts fastened at all times.

It is illegal for a passenger to ride in or on any part of a UTV that is not originally designed or intended by the manufacturer to be used by passengers. It is not legal to operate with passengers in any after-market seating placed in the cargo area of a UTV.

---

## Exhaust and Noise Restrictions

---

- Your machine must be equipped with a functioning muffler that prevents unusual or excessive noises.
- No person may manufacture, sell, rent or operate an ATV/UTV in such a manner that noise emitted from the machine is louder than 96 decibels when measured on the "A" scale; measured in the manner prescribed in the reaffirmed 1998-07, Society of Automotive Engineers Standard J1287, entitled Measurement of Exhaust Sound Levels of Stationary Motorcycles.
- No one shall deny or refuse an inspection or testing of an ATV/UTV by any law enforcement officer who reasonably suspects a violation of an equipment requirement.
- Your machine must be equipped with a spark arrester at all times, even during the winter.

***No person may manufacture, sell, rent or operate an ATV/UTV that is louder than 96 decibels.***

Excessive or unusually loud machines are illegal and hurt Wisconsin's trail system. Do not increase your exhaust noise or operate with your exhaust system in excess of normal operation. Excessive noise threatens riding opportunities statewide.

---

## Accidents and Crashes

---

*If you are involved in a crash, the first thing to do is ensure you are okay and not going to be involved in another crash from oncoming traffic. You must provide help to anyone else who was involved.*

---

Any crash that results in an injury requiring treatment by a physician or a fatal incident must be reported as soon as possible to a Conservation Warden or other law enforcement officer. You must file a written report of the incident within 10 days to the DNR. The DNR Off-Highway Vehicle Incident Operator Report can be obtained by visiting the DNR website [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov), keyword search "crash" or sheriff's office.

---

## ATV/UTV Sanctioned Races

---

- During races, machines are not exempt from the requirements to be equipped with a spark arrester and a functioning muffler which restricts noise to 96 decibels or less.
- Machines are exempt from registration only if they are used exclusively for racing at a racing facility.
- During a race, parade, derby or exhibition you may ride on certain roads only if the road is blocked off by the county, town, city or village having jurisdiction. In addition:
  - ◊ No state trunk highway or connecting highway may be blocked off for an ATV/UTV event.
  - ◊ The county, town, city or village blocking the road(s) must notify the local police department and the county sheriff at least one week in advance.
- If you are the sponsor conducting a sanctioned race or derby on a raceway facility, you must:
  - ◊ Make provisions to keep spectators at least 100 feet away from race competitors on the frozen surfaces of public waters.
  - ◊ Give notice of the race or derby to the local Conservation Warden or law enforcement agency having jurisdiction.
- A sanctioned race or derby means a competitive event sponsored by a local unit of government, chamber of commerce, an ATV/UTV club, promoter, or similar organization.
- A raceway facility means an area, including a marked warm-up and testing area, specifically designated by a sponsor for the purpose of conducting a sanctioned race or derby for which any required local permits have been obtained.

---

## **ATVs/UTVs and Hunting, Fishing or Trapping**

---

ATVs/UTVs can be useful while hunting, fishing or trapping. Remember that off-trail/off-road operation is generally not allowed on publicly owned lands, even to retrieve game. Never enter areas that have been gated, cabled, posted or otherwise restrict ATV/UTV or motor vehicle use. Check with the appropriate property owner/manager for special regulations and/or permits.

### **Other restrictions:**

- All firearms (excluding handguns) must be unloaded when in or on any vehicle, except that a loaded firearm may be placed on, but not in, a vehicle which is stationary.
- All firearms, bows, and crossbows must be unloaded when in or on any motor driven boat while the motor is running.
- It is illegal to place, possess, or transport a cocked crossbow in or on a motorized vehicle unless it is unloaded and enclosed within a case.
- It is illegal to load a firearm other than a handgun while it is in a vehicle or to discharge any firearm, including handguns, in or from any moving or stationary vehicle except for certain disabled hunters with proper permits.
- Qualified disabled hunters with the permit authority to shoot from a stationary vehicle must have all firearms (other than handguns) unloaded while the vehicle is in motion.
- It is illegal to drive, pursue or harass any wild animal.

---

## **Disabled Operators**

---

If you hold a Class A or Class B disabled hunting permit, you may operate an ATV/UTV on the roadway portion of a highway (not an interstate) if you are traveling for the purposes of hunting that are allowed by the permit. All other ATV/UTV safety certificate and age restrictions apply.

No other special regulations exist for disabled ATV/UTV operators.

---

## **Liability of Landowners: 895.52 Wisconsin Statutes**

---

Landowners who allow ATV/UTV trails to cross their property are not required to keep the premises safe for recreational activities, to inspect the property, or to give warning of an unsafe condition, use, or activity on the property. They are generally held free of liability but there are a few requirements.

---

## Trails At Risk From Invasive Species

---

*INVASIVE SPECIES are taking over our parks and natural areas making it difficult to enjoy nature. You can play a critical role in slowing the spread of invasive species.*

---

### ***What ATV/UTV Users Need to Know About Invasives***

- Invasive species are non-native plants, animals, and diseases that can cause harm to the economy, environment, and human health.
- Invasive plants tend to reproduce and grow quickly making trails impassable. They affect wildlife shelter and food sources by reducing native plant populations which also leads to soil erosion.
- Invasive insects and diseases can kill trees.

### ***What Does This Have to do With ATV/UTV Users?***

- Invasive plant seeds, insects, and diseases can be moved on equipment, such as mud on tires or seeds with burs on clothes and shoes.
- Concerns about spreading invasive species may endanger access to lands and trails in the future.

### ***How Can ATV/UTV Users Help?***

- Learn to recognize invasive species.
- Wear clothing and footwear that do not attract seeds.
- Inspect and clean hair, clothing, shoes, and gear before and after recreating.
- Clean your ATV/UTV before and after use. Pay special attention to the tires, wheel wells and undercarriage.
- Properly dispose of soil, seeds, or plant parts from cleaning.
- Minimize soil disturbance; stay on designated trails, roads, and other developed areas.

---

*Avoid areas that are infested with invasive species:  
"When in doubt, stay out!"*

---

---

## **Enforcement, Penalties & Common Violations**

---

Any Conservation Warden, officer of the state patrol or inspector, county sheriff or municipal peace officer may enforce ATV/UTV laws. The fines for violating these laws range from \$150—\$2,000. You could also face up to one year in jail. Most of the ATV/UTV laws are safety related. Violating these laws oftentimes endangers others and reflects negatively on the entire ATV/UTV community.

### Top Ten Violations (not in order)

- Operate Without Valid Registration
- Operate Without Displaying Rear ID Plate
- Operate While Intoxicated
- Operate on Private or Public Property Without Permission Illegal Operation on or Near Highways
- ATV Equipment Violations
- Operate in a Careless Manner
- Owner Permitting Operation by Unauthorized Person
- Operate/Ride ATV Without Head Gear
- Operate Without a Valid Safety Certificate/Fail to Carry

### **Help Prevent Violations**

- Always conduct a pre-ride inspection to ensure your equipment is operating properly.
- Review the local, state and federal regulations of the area in where you plan on riding and ask questions if you are unsure of a regulation.
- Double-check to make sure you are carrying all your required paperwork.
- Slow down, ride sober and always wear a helmet.
- Ride only with safe, responsible and courteous operators
- Take an ATV Safety Course.

---

## **Motor Vehicle Trailer Information**

---

### **Title**

If the combined weight of an ATV/UTV, trailer and accessories is over 3,000 pounds, you will need to title the trailer with the Wisconsin DOT and equip the trailer with brakes.

### **Trailer lighting**

You cannot tow a trailer with a motor vehicle during the hours of darkness unless it displays the lighting equipment as prescribed in Section 347 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

### **Safety chains**

Safety chains are required on all towed vehicles and trailers. For further information contact the Wisconsin DOT.

---

## **ATV/UTV Trailer Information**

---

There are no specific regulations regarding towing trailers behind ATVs/UTVs. Trailers may not interfere with the legal lighting requirement for ATVs/UTVs. Towing trailers that create hazardous conditions for other operators and/or cause a crash may be result in the operator being found negligent.



---

## Winter ATV/UTV Use

---

Snowmobile trails are not automatically open to ATV/UTV use. In many cases it is illegal to operate on a snowmobile trail. Violating this law threatens current and future opportunities to have joint use trails. Check locally for special ATV/UTV allowances on county snowmobile trails.

- You must slow to 10 MPH or less when within 100 feet of an ice fishing shanty (ice shack) or person not on a snowmobile, ATV or other motorized vehicle.
- ATVs/UTVs modified with after-market tracks and or skis are not considered snowmobiles and cannot be registered or used as such. They may be operated on frozen waterways and private property with permission.
- Check with local law enforcement agencies, DNR offices or bait shops daily to get the most current information on ice conditions.

**No one expects to break through the ice, so be prepared by carrying the following equipment with you:**

- Life preserver or
- Length of rope
- Float coat
- Ice picks
- Ice creepers
- Cell phone

### **Flotation Requirements:**

Certain local units of government, such as Dane County, may have ordinances regarding the installation of floats on ATVs/UTVs as well as a permit. Please check locally for any such special requirements.

---

## ATVs/UTVs and Snow Removal

---

A person may operate an ATV with a snow removal device attached, for snow removal purposes and under the following restrictions:

- At a speed not to exceed 5 mph while on a public sidewalk
- At a speed not to exceed 15 mph while on or adjacent to a roadway
- Operation is allowed on all roadways where the motor vehicle speed limit is 45 mph or less
- Operation shall be restricted to the far right hand side of the road
- Operation is also allowed on roads that are legal and open ATV Routes
- Operators must be 16 years or older and if born on or after January 1, 1988 must also possess a valid ATV Safety Certificate.
- Operation is only allowed between October 1 and April 30 for the purpose of removing snow
- Operators may not travel at a distance greater than 2 miles from
- Their original starting or loading point
- Machines must display one or more illuminated, yellow lights that are flashing or rotating and visible for 360 degrees

### **Other Provisions:**

- A city, village, or town may enact an ordinance authorizing the operation of ATVs with snow removal devices (that are operating for snow removal purposes) on roads where the speed limit is greater than 45 mph, if the road is located within the territorial boundaries of that city, village, or town; regardless of who has jurisdiction over the particular roadway.

- ATVs/UTVs are required to have their headlamps on at all times while operating on any road. Headlamps must be able to illuminate an object at least 200 feet away. Tail lights must be visible from at least 500 feet away during the hours of darkness. Operators must be certain that their snow removal equipment does not interfere with these legal lighting requirements.
- ATVs/UTVs must have current Public Use Registration while operating on public roadways, public road right of ways or on public sidewalks.
- Helmets are required for all operator's under age 18, except while operating on lands under the ownership or management of their immediate family.\*

\* **See** *"Definitions"*

---

## Basic Safety Code

---

- Do not consume alcohol or take drugs prior to or during operation.
- Use a proper size ATV helmet, goggles, or visor that is at minimum, DOT certified.
- Slow down and don't cut to the inside of the trail at corners, it's dangerous and illegal.
- If you operate your machine at night, don't override your lights.
- Follow the manufacturer's recommendation and state laws regarding safe transport of passengers on your machine.
- Familiarize yourself with the area before you ride it. Have a map, GPS or smartphone app to assist you with safely navigating the trails.
- If traveling on the ice, check with local law enforcement, DNR or bait shops for the most current ice conditions.

---

*If you don't know the ice conditions, don't go.*

---

- Wear a long sleeve shirt and pants, gloves and have other appropriate clothing along depending on the weather.
- Always conduct a pre-ride inspection on your machine to make sure it is operating safely and legally.
- Know the weather forecast, especially the ice and snow conditions in the area.
- Always completely read the Owner's Manual before operating your machine.
- Always use the buddy system and ride with at least one other person.
- Plan your ride and ride your plan. Leave details of your trip location(s), approximate arrival time(s), who you are riding with, etc. at your home, hotel, cabin or other location where people will be able to find it in case of an emergency. Failing to stick with the details of your plan may result in lack of timely assistance or rescue if you need it.

---

## How Is the Wisconsin ATV/UTV Program Paid For?

---

You help fund the ATV/UTV program. When you register your machine or purchase a Trail Pass the fees are credited into a special account with the majority of the funds dedicated to the trail system. Other portions of the collected fees help manage law enforcement operations, the registration system, and other costs associated with running the ATV/UTV program.

In addition to the registration fees you pay, there are several other sources of revenue that are used by the ATV/UTV program.

One source of program income is derived from the state gasoline excise tax. Currently, there is a formula transfer of gasoline excise tax on 25 gallons of gasoline for every ATV/UTV registered by the end of each February. These funds are dedicated to the trails program.

Each year the Department of Natural Resources distributes the majority of the trail dollars to counties and other municipalities that participate in the ATV/UTV program through a grant process. These grants reimburse counties for the cost of trail maintenance. Grants are also awarded for infrastructure improvements such as trail or bridge rehabilitation and the development of new trails or intensive use areas.

### ***Who is involved?***

Conservation Wardens and sheriff patrols monitor ATV/UTV activities on trails, routes and corridors to ensure people are abiding by the rules. They offer riders assistance and are available to assist you with information about the trails. They also respond to crashes and search and rescue of lost and/or injured riders. You can help by respecting the rules and setting a good example for others to follow.

The Off-Road Vehicle Council was created in 1986 to help guide the Department with all matters related to ATVs/UTVs including the distribution of trail funds to counties. The Council is made up of 7 volunteers from various parts of the state. Council members offer recommendations to the Department on legislative issues, safety concerns and sponsor funding requests. In 2013, the council became Governor appointed.

# Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Laws

This pamphlet is not a complete set of OHM laws; however, it supplies the essential information. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions, contact the Department of Natural Resources or your local law enforcement authorities. Check with local governing agencies for local ordinances that may be more restrictive than state regulations.



**Helmets Save Lives. Wear  
it Wisconsin!**



The logo for the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, featuring a circular emblem with a deer on the left, a bird in flight in the center, and a bear on the right. The words "WISCONSIN CONSERVATION" are arched above the emblem and "CONGRESS" is written below it.	<p><b>Citizen Input in Conservation</b> Attend Spring Hearings and get Involved <a href="http://dnr.wi.gov/search">dnr.wi.gov search</a> "Conservation Congress"</p>
--	--



**Department of Natural Resources**

**P.O. Box 7921**

**Madison, WI 53707**

---

*For more info and safety information, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "OHM"*

---

**DNR Call Center**

1-888-936-7463

(7 a.m.–10 p.m. Seven days/week)

Live chat and e-mail service available.

The development and maintenance of Wisconsin's OHM trails is accomplished, in part, through the efforts of OHM club members and private citizens. Their volunteer time is spent performing the crucial tasks of maintaining, enhancing and expanding OHM trails. Please [\*consider joining a club\*](#). *For more info visit: [www.wohma.com](http://www.wohma.com)*

---

## OHM Contents

---

Definitions .....	41
Frequently Asked Questions.....	42
OHM Clubs/Organizations .....	43
What is considered an OHM?.....	43
OHM Registration .....	43
Dealer Requirements .....	45
Trade-In of Limited Use OHMs .....	46
Rental Requirements – Limited Use OHMs.....	46
Non-Resident Registration Options.....	46
General Safety Information.....	46
Driver’s License Requirement .....	46
OHM/ATV Safety Certification Courses .....	46
Customer ID numbers.....	47
Agricultural Use .....	48
Helmet Requirements.....	48
Alcohol and Drugs.....	49
Public Roadway/Highway Use .....	50
Unimproved Right-of-Way/Ditch Use .....	50
Where Can I Ride My OHM?.....	51
Speed Limits/Restrictions.....	52
Other OHM Restrictions.....	52
Operation On and Around Waterways.....	52
Equipment Requirements .....	53
Exhaust and Noise Restrictions.....	53
Accidents and Crashes .....	53
OHM Races/Events.....	54
Events on Frozen Waterways .....	54
OHMs and Hunting .....	54
Disabled Operators.....	54
Liability of Landowners.....	55
Winter OHM Use.....	55

# What's New?

The Off-Highway Motorcycle (OHM) Program is new in Wisconsin. The new OHM laws were signed into law on March 1, 2016 with an effective date of October 1, 2016. Review this section for all the new rules and regulations related to OHMs. For the most updated version of the regulations, view them online at [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov).

## **General Overview:**

- All OHMs must be registered with the DNR if they are operated on private or public areas specifically open for public OHM use.
- Not all ATV trails and routes are open for legal off-highway motorcycle use. OHMs may only be used where their use is explicitly authorized. Previously open OHM areas should continue to remain open, however please check with local trail managers or local governments for any updates on OHM areas or local regulations. Also check with the Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association ([www.WOHMA.com](http://www.WOHMA.com)).
- Public areas previously open to OHMs may require that operators of OHM obtain a local OHM trail use sticker. This local sticker requirement would be in addition to DNR OHM registration and decal; please check with your local trail manager about any local OHM trail use sticker requirement.
- All OHM operators that are at least 12 years old and born *after* January 1, 1998, must have completed OHM Safety certification to operate an OHM on areas open to the public for recreational use. The DNR will be creating a combined online ATV/OHM Safety Certification training course for operators needing both certifications and an online OHM short-course for previous WI ATV Safety graduates that only need OHM Safety certification.



---

## Definitions

---

**Accident**—a crash involving an OHM is any accident (regardless of the number of vehicles involved) which results in a fatality or an injury that requires medical treatment by a physician.

**Accompanied**—subject to continuous verbal direction or control, but not necessarily on the same machine.

**Agricultural Purpose**—a purpose related to the transportation of farm implements, equipment, supplies, or products on a farm or between farms. Operation between a dwelling and a farm or piece of non-agricultural property does not meet this definition unless the dwelling is on the same piece of property as the farm.

**Designated Adult**—parent, guardian or adult designated by the parent or guardian.

**DNR**—Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

**DOT**—Department of Transportation.

**Highway**—all public ways, thoroughfares, and bridges on the same. It includes the entire width between the boundary lines of every way open to the use of the public as a matter of right for the purpose of vehicle traffic.

**Immediate family**—persons who are related as spouses, who are related as siblings, or who are related as parent and child.

**Limited use off-highway motorcycle**—an off-highway motorcycle that is not registered by the department of transportation for use on highways.

**Off-highway motorcycle corridor**—an off-highway motorcycle trail or other established off-highway motorcycle corridor that is open to the public for the operation of off-highway motorcycles for recreational purposes but does not include an off-highway motorcycle route.

**Off-highway motorcycle**—a 2-wheeled motor vehicle that is straddled by the operator, that is equipped with handlebars, and that is designed for use off a highway, regardless of whether it is also designed for use on a highway

**Off-highway motorcycle route**—a highway or sidewalk designated for recreational use by operators of off-highway motorcycles by the governmental agency having jurisdiction.

**Off-highway motorcycle trail**—a marked corridor on public property or on private lands subject to public easement or lease, designated for recreational use by operators of off-highway motorcycles by the governmental agency having jurisdiction.

**Roadway**—that portion of a highway between the regularly established curb line or that portion, which is improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicle travel excluding the berm or shoulder.

---

## Frequently Asked Questions

---

- Q.** Can my 10 year old ride their 50 cc OHM with me on a trail?
- A. Yes.** They must be accompanied by a designated adult at all times and the OHM must be registered.
- Q.** Can I still operate my DOT licensed dual-sport motorcycle on open public forest roads like I used to; without DNR registration?
- A. Yes.** As long as the forest road isn't a designated ATV trail that is closed to all motor vehicles and OHMs. If the forest road is an ATV trail that is open to OHMs, then your dual-sport motorcycle will also require DNR registration in order to ride on the trail.
- Q.** Can the DNR assist me with making my OHM street legal?
- A. No.** The Dept. of Transportation and the Dept. of Motor Vehicles regulate and license street legal motor vehicles. These agencies can assist you with questions regarding street legal equipment requirements.
- Q.** I have to complete OHM Safety Education before I can legally operate my OHM. A couple years ago I completed ATV Safety, does that qualify? Do I have to take the new ATV/OHM combination course?
- A. No.** Any WI ATV Safety Courses completed prior to October 1, 2016 did not contain any OHM safety training information and does not certify persons in OHM Safety. If you previously graduated from a WI ATV Safety Course, you are eligible to complete a free, OHM Safety mini-course available online at [www.atvcourse.com](http://www.atvcourse.com). If you need both ATV and OHM Safety certification, you may complete any approved WI online ATV/ OHM Safety combination course to become certified in both.

---

## OHM Clubs/Organizations

---

Please consider joining a club, your help is needed. By staying on the trail and obeying off-highway motorcycle laws, you show your respect for the hard work of the local clubs and/or trail managers.

---

### What is considered an OHM?

---

An off-highway motorcycle means a 2-wheeled motor vehicle that is straddled by the operator, that is equipped with handlebars, and that is designed for use off a highway, regardless of whether it is also designed for use on a highway.

---



*Trail motorcycle*



*Dual-sport motorcycle*

Trail or dirt bikes are a "limited use off-highway motorcycle" which means an off-highway motorcycle that is not registered by the Department of Transportation for highway use.

---

## OHM Registration

---

### **OHM Registration Requirements**

All OHMs must apply for Wisconsin public use registration if they are operated or intend to operate on designated OHM trails, areas that are specifically open to the public for recreational OHM use, designated and signed OHM road routes and while otherwise operating legally on or adjacent to public highways. OHMs do not require DNR registration if they are operating on private lands that are not held open to the public for recreational use of OHMs. Private use registration is required for OHM used for operating on roads for agricultural purposes.

All OHMs required to be registered in Wisconsin must:

- Display a current Wisconsin registration decal and carry the registration certificate, or
- Have a temporary operating receipt with the operator (valid until the decal and certificate arrives).

### **Registration Display**

The OHM registration decal must be affixed to the exterior of the OHM by its own adhesive and clearly visible to law enforcement at all times. Only one decal is issued to each OHM. The registration certificate must also be carried with the operator at all times and displayed to law enforcement upon request.

**LATE FEE:** There is a \$5.00 late fee charged for renewing your OHM registration after your current registration decal has expired.

### Registration Types

**Public Use**—Valid for legal operation on areas open to OHMs for public use, road routes and other legal roadway use as specified by law. Not valid for agricultural use. Valid for up to 2 years, beginning April 1st and expiring two years later on March 31st: \$30.00

**Private Use**—Valid for use exclusively on private lands owned by the applicant or by an immediate family member. This type of registration remains valid until ownership is transferred: \$15.00

**Private Use, Agricultural**—Valid for machines used for an agricultural purpose. Agricultural purpose includes a purpose related to the transportation of farm implements, equipment, supplies, or products on a farm or between farms. It is valid during operation on public roads for agricultural purposes, but is not valid for recreational operation on public lands open to OHMs. Owners may dual register their machines for public use also. This type of registration remains valid until ownership is transferred: \$15.00

**Free Registration Weekend. All ATVs, UTVs and OHMs are exempt from registration and trail pass requirements during the first full weekend in June. All other laws apply.**

---

## How do I Register my OHM?

---

**For more info Visit: [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search keyword "OHM registration."**

### Transaction Type

- New or transfers of existing Wisconsin registrations: may be done online, at a DNR Service Center or by mail.
- Application must be submitted within 10 days of purchase. Dealerships must submit application within 7 days of the sale.
- Renewals: may be done online, at any of our sales agents, at a DNR Service Center or by mail.
- Replacement: may be done online, at a DNR Service Center or by mail.

### Where can I Register?

---

*NOTE: If you are registering your OHM, you will need to provide the make, model, year, cc size, and Vehicle Identification Number.*

---

- **Online**—Visit [GoWild.WI.Gov](http://GoWild.WI.Gov) to complete your new, transfer, renewal and replacement transactions.
- **Sales Agents**—More than 1,000 sales agents provide registration renewal service only.
- **Service Center**—DNR Service Centers provide full registration service for new, renewal, replacement and transfer of OHMs. Verify service center hours before visiting.
- **By Mail**—After completing all requested information on the application form, make a photocopy, and mail the original application and appropriate fees to the address provided on the form. Customers who submit their application and payment by mail will have to wait until they receive their materials in the mail before they can operate their OHM in public areas open to OHM use.

### **Temporary Operating Receipt**

Customers who submit registration applications and payment at a DNR Service Center, online or at a sales agent will receive a temporary operating receipt that allows for immediate operation until the registration decal and certificate is received. Customers who submit their application and payment by mail will have to wait until they receive their materials in the mail before they can operate.

---

## **Registration Exemptions**

---

### **Registration is not required if:**

- The OHM displays an approved registration decal required by a federally recognized American Indian tribe or band.
- The OHM displays a commercial registration plate or sign attached in the manner authorized by law.
- The OHM is operated exclusively for racing on a raceway facility or as part of a special off-highway motorcycle event as authorized by law.
- The OHM is present in this state, for a period not to exceed 15 days, and is used exclusively as part of an advertisement being made for the manufacturer of the off-highway motorcycle.

---

## **Commercial Registration**

---

### **OHM dealer definitions and requirements**

**Commercial Certificate**—Every person who is an OHM dealer, engaged in business within this state shall register with the department and obtain a Commercial OHM certificate.

*A commercial dealer certificate and three registration decals and certificate cards will be issued.—\$90.00*

**Additional Commercial Decals/Cards**—Additional registration decals and certificate cards can be ordered with original and renewal Commercial Certificate applications.

*A current Commercial Certificate holder may also order additional registration decals (\$30) and certificates (\$5).*

**Commercial Decal Display**—Commercial dealers will create or purchase their own plates to display their commercial decals upon. The registration period will begin on April 1 or the date of issuance/renewal and end on March 31 of the 2nd year.

---

## **Dealer Requirements**

---

### **Dealer registration**

OHM dealers and engaged in business in this state must register with the DNR and obtain a commercial certificate. The DNR will issue three commercial decals. The decals must be attached to a plate or sign (any type or size) that is clearly displayed and mounted to each OHM that you offer for sale or otherwise allow to be operated as part of your business. Additional decals can be purchased from the DNR. Dealers cannot operate on temporary operating receipts. OHMs can only be operated legally when the commercial decal is displayed. Commercial registrations expire every two years. Commercial Fee: \$90. Additional Decal Fee: \$30

### **Sales by Dealers**

If the OHM is intended to be operated in areas open for public use, road routes and other legal roadway use as specified by law, dealers shall require the purchaser of each OHM to complete an application for registration, collect the fees and submit everything to the DNR within 7 days unless it is exempt from registration. The dealer may then issue the purchaser a signed copy of the application which they can operate with.

### **Trade-In of Limited Use OHMs**

A dealer cannot accept a limited use OHM for trade-in unless it's currently registered with the DNR or exempt from registration.

### **Rental Requirements—Limited Use OHMs**

- Instruct first time (new) operators on how to operate the OHM.
- Restrict rental or lease of OHMs to persons age 12 or older.
- Verify that all riders and operators under 18 years of age have a helmet to use.
- Provide clean, usable helmets available for rent to any operator or passenger under 18 years of age that may be on the OHM.

---

## **Non-Resident Registration Options**

---

A non-resident trail pass is not available at this time. All non-resident OHM owners must purchase Wisconsin Public Use registration to operate on OHM routes or areas held out to the public for the recreational use of off-highway motorcycles.

---

## **General Safety Information**

---

Off-highway motorcycles (OHMs) take specialized skills to operate safely. Riders should seek out training from experienced operators and practice in controlled settings. The use of these machines by children should be highly controlled and supervised. Use of safety equipment such as helmets, eye protection, chest protectors, arm and leg protection and off-road footwear is recommended and in some instances required by law.

---

## **Driver's License Requirement**

---

An operator of a limited use OHM does not need a driver's license if they are legally operating on a public highway, such as on a designated OHM Route, certain crossings, etc. (See Public Roadway/Highway Use). Operators of DOT licensed OHMs must have a valid driver's license to operate on all public roadways.

---

## **OHM/ATV Safety Certification Courses**

---

- An Internet OHM Safety certification mini-course is available for current graduates of a Wisconsin ATV Safety Course. This course is available at [www.atvcourse.com](http://www.atvcourse.com).
- An Internet OHM/ATV combination course is available to certify operators in **both** courses. These courses are available at [www.atvcourse.com](http://www.atvcourse.com) and [www.offroad-ed.com](http://www.offroad-ed.com).

---

## OHM Safety Certification Requirements

---

Wisconsin ATV Safety certification does not meet the OHM Safety requirement. An additional OHM short course must be completed by current Wisconsin ATV Safety graduates in order to obtain OHM Safety certification.

All OHM operators at least 12 years of age and born *after* January 1, 1998 must possess a valid Wisconsin ATV/OHM combination safety certificate or valid certificate from another state or province.

Operators must carry proof of certification while operating and display it to a law enforcement officer upon request. Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) certificates do not satisfy this requirement in Wisconsin.

### **Safety Certification Exemptions**

- Children under the age of 12 may operate an OHM on off road trails, frozen waterways and private property if they are accompanied by a designated adult (parent, guardian or other adult designated by the parent or guardian).
- Children age 12 and older are not required to possess a safety certificate while operating on frozen waterways.
- Safety certification is not required on private property unless the private property is held open to the public for the recreational use of off-highway motorcycles.
- Children under the age of 12 may operate a non-DOT licensed OHM at a sponsored OHM event if:
  - ◊ The child is wearing an approved helmet with chin strap fastened.
  - ◊ The child is accompanied by a designated adult.

Customers must have a valid DNR Customer ID number to complete a safety course. This ID number is also used to purchase hunting and fishing licenses.

---

## Customer ID numbers

---

You can obtain a DNR Customer ID number by:

- using the [DNR web site](#).
- calling DNR Customer Service from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. at 1-888-936-7463
- visiting a [DNR Service Center](#) during their regularly scheduled hours.

---

## Agricultural Use

---

“Agricultural purpose” means a purpose related to the transportation of farm implements, equipment, supplies, or products on a farm or between farms. Operation between a dwelling and a farm or piece of non-agricultural property does not meet this definition unless the dwelling is on the same piece of property as the farm.

The following laws apply *specifically* to OHMs legally registered for “Private–Agriculture” and displaying the registration decal; while being legally used for an “agricultural purpose.”

- OHM operators may operate on roadways while transporting farm implements, equipment, supplies, or products on a farm or between farms in the following manner:
  - ◊ At the extreme right side of the roadway, except for left turns.
  - ◊ With headlight(s) and taillight(s) activated and visible.
  - ◊ Obeying the roadway speed limit.
- Helmets are not mandated for agricultural use.
- OHM operators age 12 and born after 1-1-98 may operate on roadways if they possess a valid ATV/OHM Safety Certificate.
- OHM operators under age 12 may not operate on roadways.
- OHM operators under age 12 may operate on private lands if they are under the supervision of an adult.

---

## Helmet Requirements

---

Please set a good example for children and others by always wearing a helmet whether you’re legally required to or not.

### **Helmet save lives! Wear it Wisconsin!**

All OHM operators and passengers under the age of 18 are required to wear a minimum DOT-approved ATV or motorcycle helmet while on trails and areas held open to the public for recreational OHM use including OHM road routes. Bicycle helmets do not meet this requirement.

#### **Helmet Exceptions**

Helmets are not required in the following situations:

- While operating on private property that is not held open to the general public for recreational OHM purposes.
- While operating for agricultural purposes.
- While operating for the purpose of hunting and fishing.
- If the operator or passenger is age 18 and older.

#### **Helmet for Passengers:**

If circumstances would require you to wear a helmet as the operator then you, as a passenger, must wear a helmet. For example, a passenger riding on an OHM on private property that is held open to the public for recreational OHM use would be required to wear a helmet.



---

## Alcohol and Drugs

---

- It is illegal to operate an OHM under the influence of alcohol or other drugs while operating on any trail, corridor, route or any other area (public or private) that is held open to the public for OHM; whether a fee is charged or not.
- Being under the influence is a condition in which a person is rendered incapable to operate an OHM safely due to the consumption of drugs and/or alcoholic beverages.
- No person may operate an OHM with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08% or more. In addition, a person can also be arrested for operating under the influence with a BAC that is under .08%.
- No person may operate an OHM with any detectable amount of a restricted controlled substance in their blood.

**Implied Consent law**—You are required to provide a sample of your breath, blood or urine if an officer has probable cause to believe you are operating an OHM under the influence. By operating an OHM on areas open to the public you have automatically consented to provide a sample of your breath, blood or urine to an officer who requests the test. If you refuse to provide a breath, blood or urine sample, you will be charged with an additional violation.

**Absolute Sobriety**—OHM operators may not have any amount alcohol in their system if they are under the age of 21.

Don't drink and ride. This can lead to crashes, injuries and death. Practice "**Zero Alcohol**" which is a personal choice to wait until you are done riding for the day before consuming any alcoholic beverages, it's the smart choice!

---

## Public Roadway/Highway Use

---

Do not assume that you can ride on or next to roads (ditches). Unless your OHM is currently licensed with the Department of Transportation, operation on and around public roads is restricted and in most cases illegal.

There is no residential access allowance that permits you to ride on a roadway from a dwelling to the nearest trail or route. You will need to haul your machine to the nearest legal access point.

### **You May Operate on Roadways in the Following Situations:**

- While operating on legally designated and signed OHM road routes. A local ordinance must exist and DOT standard OHM route signs must be properly posted.
- To cross in the most direct manner practicable, if the crossing is made at a place where no obstruction prevents a quick and safe crossing, and if the operator stops and yields the right-of-way prior to crossing. **NOTE: The OHM must be crossing from one legal area to another.**
- To cross a bridge, culvert or railroad right-of-way when operating on a designated and marked OHM trail, route or private property with permission if you cross at a place where no obstruction prevents a quick and safe crossing, and if the operator stops and yields the right-of-way prior to crossing.
- Operation is on the roadway or shoulder of a state trunk highway to cross a bridge that is 1,000 feet in length or less if there is a county ordinance and a city, village or town ordinance adopted which allows crossing of a bridge within their territorial boundaries, except that no crossing is allowed on interstate and defense highways.
- Operation is on a roadway which is not maintained, or is only minimally maintained, on a seasonal basis for motor vehicle traffic. Such operation is authorized only during the seasons when no maintenance occurs and only if the roadway is not officially closed to off-highway motorcycle traffic.
- The OHM is registered for private-agricultural use and the OHM is being operated for an agricultural purpose on a farm or between farms. Operation must be on the extreme right side of the roadway, except for when left turns may be safely made.
- Other special exceptions may apply.

### **Additional Roadway Restrictions**

Check with local authorities regarding any locally enacted OHM ordinances which may be more restrictive than state law.

### **Unimproved Right-of-Way/Ditch Use**

Operation on the unimproved right-of-way or ditch, outside the regular traveled portion of the road, is highly restricted and in most cases illegal. Many right-of-ways or ditch lines are privately owned, operation on private property without permission is trespassing.

*You may operate on unimproved right-of-ways, outside the shoulder, in the following situations:*

**Town Roads**—(Maple Road, Oak Lane, etc.) On officially designated OHM trails or routes or on private property with permission.

**County Highways**—(Highway C, Highway AB, etc.) On officially designated OHM trails, OHM routes or on private property with permission. If operating on a trail or running parallel to

the highway, you must be at least 10 feet from the roadway portion of the highway. **NOTE: Local route ordinances must specifically direct OHM operators to ride in the unimproved right-of-way which is uncommon.**

**State Highway**—(Highway 8, Highway 141, etc.)—On officially designated OHM trails or routes or on private property with permission. If operating on a trail or route running parallel to the highway, you must be at least 10 feet from the roadway portion of the highway. Travel in the median is prohibited other than when legally crossing.

**Interstate Highway**—(I-90, I-41, I-39, etc.)—No operation allowed.

#### **Travel Adjacent to Roadways**

- When legally operating alongside roadways during the hours of darkness, operation must be in the same direction as motor vehicle traffic in the nearest lane unless the trail or route is located at least 40 feet from the roadway or separated by a headlight barrier.
- During daylight hours, you may travel in either direction regardless of the flow of motor vehicle traffic.
- A person legally operating an OHM adjacent to a roadway must obey the motor vehicle speed limit of the adjacent roadway.

---

## **Where Can I Ride My OHM?**

---

Most off-road trail riding opportunities are located on County and Federal owned lands, with some also found on State lands. In most instances, OHM riding is strictly restricted to trails and routes specifically open for recreational use of OHMs. Check with local, County, State and Federal offices to ensure that trails and/or routes are legally open to OHM use. **NOTE: OHMs licensed for street use may operate in all areas open to other licensed motor vehicles.**

#### **OHM Trail Information Sources:**

- County Forestry Offices
- DNR [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) search keyword "[OHM](#)"
- U.S. Forest Service [fs.fed.gov](http://fs.fed.gov) website, search "Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest" and "Motor Vehicle Use Map"
- Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association [wohma.org](http://wohma.org)

#### **Off-Highway Motorcycle Trails**

- All ATV/UTV trails are closed to OHM use unless specifically opened for their use. Check with local authorities.
- An ATV trail is an off-road corridor identified by (6"x6") brown signs with a white silhouette of an ATV and orange trail blazer (diamond) signs.
- Some trails may be designated as multiple use trails. On these trails you could encounter other users such as horses, ATVs, UTVs, hikers and bicyclists.

#### **OHM Routes**

An OHM Route is a public roadway designated as open to non-street legal OHMs (limited use OHMs) through enactment of an ordinance by local units of government. OHM Routes must be posted with OHM Route signs (24"x 18") which are green with the white silhouette of an OHM. For a complete list of roadways designated as OHM Routes, contact the local township office and/or County Highway Department.

---

## Speed Limits/Restrictions

---

You must slow your OHM to 10 mph or less:

- While operating on frozen waterways within 100 feet of a person who is not on a motorized vehicle or an ice shanty.
- While operating on a trail within 100 feet of a person who is not on a motorized vehicle, such as bicyclist, hikers and other riders standing along the trail.
- When you are riding within 150 feet of a home or dwelling.\*
- Obey the posted trail speed limits at all times.

---

**Exception:** *The 10 mph speed limit doesn't apply while operating on roads designated as OHM Road Routes, unless restricted by local ordinance. This rule doesn't apply to DOT licensed OHMs.*

---

- When operating on trail adjacent to roadways riders must obey the posted roadway speed limit unless there is a specific speed limit posted for OHMs.

### Other OHM Restrictions

#### It's unlawful to:

- Operate at speeds that are unreasonable or improper.
- Operate in a careless manner so that it endangers another person or property of another.
- Operate on public property in areas where such operation is prohibited by signage and/or local rule or law.
- Operate on private property without the permission of the owner or lessee. Failure to post the property does not give you the authority to ride there.
- Fail to stop after being requested or signaled to do so by a law enforcement officer.

---

## Operation On and Around Waterways

---

You cannot operate an OHM in any navigable water, or on the exposed bed of any navigable water (including exposed lakebeds in front of your property) except:

- To cross a stream by use of a bridge, culvert, ford or similar structure provided the crossing is in the most direct manner practical.
- To launch or load a boat, canoe, or other watercraft in the most direct manner practical.
- To access the frozen surfaces of any navigable waters provided the crossing or access is in the most direct manner practical.

"Bed of a navigable water" means all of the area below the ordinary high water mark of a lake or stream. During low-water periods, there may be several feet or more of exposed lake or streambed that is closed to ATV and other vehicular traffic.

---

## Equipment Requirements

---

No one may operate a “limited use” OHM during the hours of darkness unless it is equipped with a white headlamp and a red tail lamp that are activated. It is recommended that you leave your lights on at all times for safety.

Equipment requirements for limited use OHMs do not apply while operated with permission on private property that is not open to the public.

- Colored headlamp covers, lens covers or colored headlamp bulbs are not legal to use when you are riding during the hours of Darkness.
- Limited use OHM headlamps must be able to illuminate any person or object at a distance of 200 feet in front of your machine.
- The tail lamp must be plainly visible from a distance of 500 feet away.

---

**Note:** *Other auxiliary lighting is allowed as long as it doesn't interfere with legal lighting requirements. Red and blue lighting identifies emergency or law enforcement vehicles.*

---

- The limited use OHM must be equipped with at least one brake, operated either by hand or by foot.
- The limited use OHM must be equipped with foot rests or pegs for the operator and any passenger.

---

## Exhaust and Noise Restrictions

---

- Limited use OHMs must be equipped with a functional muffler that prevents unusual or excessive noises except for OHMs propelled by electric power.
- No person may operate a limited use OHM in such a manner that noise emitted from the machine is louder than 96 decibels.
- Limited use OHMs must be equipped with a spark arrestor at all times, even during the winter.

Excessive or unusually loud OHMs hurt Wisconsin's trail system. Do not increase your exhaust noise or operate with your exhaust system in excess of the legal sound limits. Loud pipes threaten riding opportunities statewide.

---

## Accidents and Crashes

---

If an operator of an off-highway motorcycle is involved in an accident that occurs on public and private areas open for public OHM use and that results in the death of any person or in the injury of any person on public land that requires treatment by a physician, the operator of each off-highway motorcycle involved in the accident shall give notice of the accident to a conservation warden or local law enforcement officer as soon as possible. The crash victim, or other witness if victim is incapable, must file a written report of the incident within 10 days to the DNR. [Official DNR Operator Crash Report forms](#) can be obtained by visiting the DNR website at [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov), a DNR Service Center or sheriff's office. Reports may be completed and submitted online from the DNR website.

---

## OHM Races/Events

---

### **Machines are exempt from registration only if they are used:**

- Exclusively for racing at a racing facility or during a special event.
- During a special event, such as a race or parade, limited use OHMs may be operated on certain roads only if the road is blocked off by the unit of government having jurisdiction. No state trunk highway or connecting highway may be blocked off.
- The unit of government blocking the road(s) must notify local law enforcement at least one week in advance.

### **Events on Frozen Waterways**

#### **Races or derbies are exempt from speed restrictions on the public frozen waterways under the following conditions:**

- The event is sponsored by a local unit of government, club or other entity,
- Is approved by the local unit of government, and
- The sponsor marks the track/race areas to warn spectators from entering.

### **All Sponsored Special Events**

- Operators age 12 and above are exempt from the safety certification requirement while operating at sponsored, special events if the operator is:
  - ◊ Operating a limited use OHM
  - ◊ Wearing approved protective headgear
  - ◊ Accompanied by a designated adult

---

## OHMs and Hunting

---

- It is illegal to drive, pursue or harass any wild animal.
- All firearms (excluding handguns) must be unloaded when in or on any vehicle, except that a loaded firearm may be placed on, but not in, a vehicle which is stationary.
- It is illegal to place, possess, or transport a cocked crossbow in or on a motorized vehicle unless it is unloaded and enclosed within a case.
- It is illegal to load a firearm other than a handgun while it is in a vehicle or to discharge any firearm, including handguns, in or from any moving or stationary vehicle except for certain disabled hunters with proper permits.
- Qualified disabled hunters with the permit authority to shoot from a stationary vehicle must have all firearms (other than handguns) unloaded while the vehicle is in motion.

---

## Disabled Operators

---

If you hold a Class A or Class B disabled hunting permit, you may operate a limited use OHM on the roadway portion of a highway (not an interstate) if you are traveling for the purposes of hunting that are allowed by the permit. All other safety certificate and age restrictions apply.

---

## Liability of Landowners

---

**895.52 Wisconsin Statutes** Landowners who allow OHM trails to cross their property are not required to keep the premises safe for recreational activities, to inspect the property, or to give warning of an unsafe condition, use, or activity on the property. They are generally held free of liability. For complete information, review sec. 895.52 in its entirety.

---

## Winter OHM Use

---

OHMs may operate on public frozen waterways, private property and other public lands open for their use in the winter.

- All children are exempt from the safety certification requirement while recreationally operating on public frozen waterways.

### ***OHM-Snow bikes***

- OHMs modified with an after-market track and ski are not considered snowmobiles and cannot be registered or used as such. They may be operated on frozen waterways and private property with permission.
- Factory snow bikes that are manufactured with a track and ski do meet the definition of a snowmobile and require snowmobile registration.

## Helmets Save Lives. Wear it Wisconsin!



This pamphlet is not a complete set of OHM laws; however, it supplies the essential information. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions, contact the Department of Natural Resources or your local law enforcement authorities. Check with local governing agencies for local ordinances that may be more restrictive than state regulations.

	<p><b>Citizen Input in Conservation</b> Attend Spring Hearings and get Involved <a href="http://dnr.wi.gov">dnr.wi.gov</a> search "Conservation Congress"</p>
---	---