

Drive an ATV

Effective July 1, 2015, the province implemented new changes to ORV and ATV on-road use. These changes include:

- Allowing more types of off-road vehicles (ORVs) and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) – including two-up ATVs, side-by-side ORVs and utility terrain vehicles (UTVs) – on the shoulder of public roads, where permitted
- Mandating that all riders — including drivers and passengers of all ages — wear an approved motorcycle helmet and use a seatbelt or foot rests, where applicable
- Children under the age of eight will not be allowed as a passenger on any ATV/ORV operating on-road
- Limiting the number of passengers to the number of available seating positions
- Requiring compliance labels on all ATVs/ORVs
- Clarifying access and exemptions for farmers and trappers and for Far Northern Ontario municipalities

For more information, visit [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

ATVs and other types of ORVs are popular year-round utility and recreational vehicles that can offer hours of enjoyment for outdoor enthusiasts, as long as you obey the law and follow safety precautions. This information will help you enjoy your ATV/ORV safely.

Smart Ride Safe Ride ATV/ORV Handbook

The *Smart Ride Safe Ride* handbook outlines the rules and requirements for ATVs and ORVs. It will tell you:

- where you can ride your ATV/ORV
- who can drive an ATV/ORV in Ontario
- the road rules you need to follow
- how to be a safe and responsible ATV/ORV rider

Read the [Smart Ride Safe Ride](#) handbook (PDF - 3.24 MB)

Test your [ATV Safety Knowledge](#)

For more detailed information on the legal requirements for driving an ATV/ORV in Ontario, consult the [Off-Road Vehicles Act \(ORVA\)](#) and [the Highway Traffic Act](#).

On-road riding

ATV/ORV requirements

Some ATVs/ORVs can travel along certain provincial highways and on municipal roads, if the municipality has a bylaw permitting on-road ATV/ORV use.

Only an ATV/ORV that meets the applicable standards can be used on the road. They must also meet other equipment-related requirements.

Please see questions 1 – 5 in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information about these types of vehicles and their requirements.

For the purposes of on-road riding, a **single-rider ATV** is a type of ORV that has:

- four wheels that contact the ground

- steering handlebars
- a seat that is straddled by the driver
- designed for a driver only and no passengers

For more information on the other permitted ORV types, visit [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Only an ATV/ORV that meets these standards can be used on the road. They must also meet other equipment-related requirements.

For more information about these requirements, visit [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Where to ride

Permitted ATVs/ORVs **can** travel on:

- Highways 500 to 899
- many 7000-series highways
- highways with low traffic volumes

For more information on where to ride, visit [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

ATVs/ORVs **cannot** travel on:

- 400-series highways
- the Queen Elizabeth Way
- sections of the Trans-Canada Highway

For a complete list of provincial highways where on-road ATV/ORV use is **permitted**, please refer to [Ontario Regulation 316/03, Schedule B](#) and for a list of provincial highways where on-road use is **prohibited**, please refer to [Ontario Regulation 316/03, Schedule A](#).

For a list of highways in Ontario where ATVs are prohibited from crossing, please check [Schedule 1 of Regulation 863 of the Off-Road Vehicles Act](#).

Who can ride

For on-road riding, a ATV/ORV driver must:

- be at least 16 years old
- hold at least a valid G2 or M2 licence
- wear an approved motorcycle helmet, securely fastened under the chin with a chin strap
- wear a seat belt, where provided
- travel at speeds less than the posted speed limit, as outlined below

For on-road riding, a *passenger* on a ATV/ORV:

- cannot be under the age of eight
- must wear a seat belt or use foot rests, when applicable
- must wear an approved motorcycle helmet, securely fastened under the chin with a chin strap

Rules of the road

ATVs/ORVs on the road must travel at speeds less than the posted speed limit:

- no more than 20 km/h on roads with a posted speed limit of 50 km/h or less
- no more than 50 km/h on roads with a posted speed limit greater than 50 km/h

Municipalities may set lower speed limits or additional rules for ATVs/ORVs.

ATVs/ORVs travelling along a road must:

- be driven in the same direction as traffic
 - travel on the shoulder - if the shoulder is unsafe or impassable or not wide enough, an ATV/ORV can be driven on the travelled portion of the road
 - have headlights and tail lights on
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Off-road riding

Your vehicle

For off-road riding, your ATV must be registered and display a rear licence plate (except in exempt areas like far northern Ontario). It must be insured under a motor vehicle liability policy.

These requirements also apply to other types of ORVs including two-up ATVs, side-by-side ORVs and utility terrain vehicles.

Who can drive

For off-road riding, an ATV/ORV driver must:

- be at least 12 years old, unless directly supervised by an adult or while driving on land occupied by the owner of the ATV/ORV
- carry the ATV/ORV's registration permit or a true copy

Drivers and passengers must wear an approved motorcycle helmet, securely fastened under the chin with a chin strap.

Where to ride –Crossing a Highway

The driver can directly cross a highway on an ATV/ORV where permitted *only if*:

- it is registered and displays a rear licence plate
- it is insured under a motor vehicle liability policy
- the driver is at least 16 years old and has a valid driver's licence of any class
- the driver and passengers are wearing approved motorcycle helmets, securely fastened under the chin with a chin strap

For a list of highways in Ontario where ATVs/ORVs are prohibited from crossing, please check [***Off-Road Vehicles Act***](#).

Exemptions

Exemptions can be found in the [***Ontario Regulation 316/03***](#).

Effective July 1, 2015, farmers and trappers and public work employees are exempt from ATV/ORV width and weight restrictions while performing commercial duties.

Additionally, municipalities in Far Northern Ontario may prohibit the use of ATVs/ORVs on certain roads.

Be a safe and responsible rider

- take an ATV/ORV safety course and learn to ride from an expert

- know your ATV/ORV and read its operator's manual before you ride
- graduated licensing requirements apply to young and novice drivers when driving on-road
- do a pre-ride inspection and check oil, gas and other fluid levels, lights, brakes and tire pressure
- stay in control – never ride beyond your skill level or abilities
- always ride according to trail, road and weather conditions
- use extreme caution when turning, crossing, climbing and descending hills – always cross obstacles using the proper technique
- drive sober – it's against the law to drive while impaired by alcohol or drugs – they will affect your judgement and slow your reaction time
- ride with others and always let someone know where you're going and when you expect to return
- be responsible and courteous, and respect others on the trail
- ride in designated areas only
- preserve the environment and keep noise levels low

Drive an ATV

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1 : What types of ORVs and ATVs can operate on-road?

Effective July 1, 2015, more types of ORVs and ATVs are allowed on some provincial highways and municipal roads, where permitted. These vehicles include:

- Single-rider ATVs
- Two-up ATVs
- Side-by-Side ORVs
- Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs)

Q2 : What are the requirements for riding ORVs on-road?

ORVs that meet the requirements under **Section 1** of the *Highway Traffic Act (HTA)* **Regulation 316/03** and **Section 10** of the regulation may operate on permitted provincial highways and municipal roads where a by-law permits their use.

- Check **Section 1** of the regulation to find out if your ORV or ATV is eligible for on-road use.
- Check **Section 10** of the regulation for specific industry standards and equipment requirements.

Please check your ORV's compliance label to ensure that the manufacturer certifies it meets one of the following standards outlined below. **An ORV that does not meet any of these standards is restricted to off-road use only.**

- If manufactured after **December 31, 2001**, the ORV must meet the equipment configuration and performance requirements outlined in **at least one of the following applicable standards:**
 - ANSI/SVIA-1-2001, entitled American National Standard for Four Wheel All-Terrain Vehicles — Equipment, Configuration, and Performance Requirements

- ANSI/SVIA 1-2007, entitled American National Standard for Four Wheel All-Terrain Vehicles
- ANSI/SVIA 1-2010, entitled American National Standard for Four Wheel All-Terrain Vehicles
- ANSI/ROHVA 1-2011, entitled American National Standard for Recreational Off-Highway Vehicles
- COHV 1-2012, entitled Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council Standard for Four Wheel All-Terrain Vehicles
- COHV 2-2012, entitled Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council Standard for Recreational Off-Highway Vehicles
- ANSI/OPEI B71.9-2012, entitled American National Standard for Multipurpose Off-Highway Utility Vehicles
- COHV 3-2013, entitled Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council Standard for Multipurpose Off-Highway Utility Vehicles
- ANSI/ROHVA 1-2014, entitled American National Standard for Recreational Off-Highway Vehicles

Learn more about the [COHV Voluntary Standards](#).

Q3 : What is a two-up ATV?

A two-up ATV is designed for a driver and one passenger only; must have a seat designed to be straddled by the passenger while sitting facing forward behind the driver; and, foot rests for the passenger that are separate from the foot rests for the driver.

All ATVs must display an overloading warning label and a manufacture compliance label in plain view.

Please check your ATV compliance label to ensure the manufacturer certifies it meets one of the standards for this type of ATV.

Q4 : What is a side-by-side ORV?

A side-by-side ORV is a type of ORV that must have:

- four or more wheels that contact the ground
- a steering wheel
- seats that are not designed to be straddled
- has an engine displacement equal to or less than 1,000 cubic centimetres
- a weight of 1,700 kilograms or less
- an overall width of 2.03 metres or less (excluding mirrors)
- a roll-over protective structure
- a handle or device that an occupant can grasp
- a seat belt for each seating position
- a rear view mirror

All ORVs must display a manufacture compliance label in plain view.

Please check your ORV's compliance label to ensure the manufacturer certifies it meets one of the standards for this type of ORV.

Q5 : What is a utility terrain vehicle (UTV)?

A UTV is a type of ORV that must have:

- four or more wheels that contact the ground
- a steering wheel
- seats that are not designed to be straddled
- a minimum cargo capacity of 159 kilograms
- a weight of 1,814 kilograms or less
- an overall width of 2.03 metres or less (excluding mirrors)
- an occupant protective structure
- a handle or device that an occupant can grasp
- a seat belt for each seating position
- a rear view mirror

All UTVs must display a manufacture compliance label in plain view.

Please check your UTV's compliance label to ensure the manufacturer certifies it meets one of the standards for this type of UTV.

Q6 : What types of roads can ORVs and ATVs use?

On selected provincial highways identified in **Schedule B of HTA Reg. 316/03**.

On municipal roads where a by-law permits their use. Municipalities may also create rules to specify the months and/or hours that ATVs and ORVs can operate on their roads.

ORVs may not operate on provincial highways and roads identified in **Schedule A of HTA Reg. 316/03**.

If there is no municipal by-law then operation of an ORV, ATV and UTV is prohibited.

If in doubt, check with the municipality first before riding.

Q7 : Where should ORVs be driven on-road?

Along the shoulder of the roadway in the same direction of traffic.

If the shoulder is obstructed or if there is no shoulder, ride as close to the right of the road as possible.

If the ORV is too large to fully operate on the shoulder of a roadway with all tires on the shoulder, the ORV may ride on the roadway as close to the right of the road as possible.

Q8 : Do municipalities have to pass by-laws to allow ORVs on their roads?

Yes. Unlike the snowmobile framework, municipalities must **opt-in** to the ORV framework. This means they may pass a by-law to allow these additional types of ORVs on their roads, but municipalities are not required to pass a by-law.

Existing by-laws may need to be amended to allow these additional types of ORVs on municipal roads.

If a by-law does not exist then ORV operation is not allowed.

If in doubt, check with the municipality first before riding on their roads.

Q9 : What are the rules to drive an ORV on-road?

Only those with a minimum G2 or M2 licence may operate an ORV on highways and municipal roads where permitted.

Operators must wear an approved motorcycle helmet that is securely fastened under the chin with a chin strap.

Graduated Licensing System requirements apply to young and novice drivers when driving on-road.

The driver must carry the registration permit or a true copy (i.e. photocopy of both front and back of the permit).

Q10 : Are there age restrictions for passengers riding on-road?

Yes. Children under the age of eight are not permitted to be a passenger on an ORV that is operating on-road.

This requirement aligns with existing *Highway Traffic Act* seat belt rules.

Q11 : What are the new operator and rider requirements?

Where applicable, the existing operating requirements for single-rider ATVs have been transferred to these additional types of ORVs.

There are new rules that include:

- If the vehicle was manufactured with seat belts, everyone must buckle up.
- If the vehicle has passenger foot rests, the passenger must be able to reach these foot rests.
- The number of occupants is limited to the number of available seating positions.
- No passengers under the age of 8 are allowed and additional passenger restrictions apply if the driver is a young and novice driver with a minimum G2 or M2 licence.
- All riders – drivers and passengers – must wear an approved motorcycle helmet.

Q12 : What type of insurance is required to operate on-road?

The ORV must be insured under a motor vehicle liability policy that complies with the *Insurance Act* and with section 2 of the *Compulsory Automobile Insurance Act*.

Q13 : What are the requirements for an ATV's overloading warning label?

ATVs, including single-rider and two-up ATVs, manufactured after December 31, 2001 must display an overloading warning label placed on the ATV at the time of original manufacture to show the maximum weight capacity as outlined in **Section 11** of the regulation.

This label must be displayed in plain view and not altered or damaged.

Q14 : What are the requirements for an ORV's compliance label?

All ORVs manufactured after December 31, 2001 must display a compliance label placed on the vehicle at the time of original manufacture to show the manufacturer's certification that the vehicle meets one of the specified vehicle standards identified in the regulation under **Section 10** of the regulation.

This label must be displayed in plain view and not altered or damaged.

Q15 : How will on-road operation be enforced?

There will be an **education period** in place from **July to September 2015** to allow the public and riding community to adjust to these changes.

This allows stakeholders, the broader public and riding community to familiarize themselves with the changes prior to Part I tickets being issued for new offences specific to these additional types of ORVs.

During this public education period, police officers may still issue tickets for traditional HTA offences (e.g., speeding, disobeying traffic signals, etc.) and lay charges for new offences through a summons.

Full enforcement is expected by **September 2015**.

Q16 : Why has on-road access been extended to Crown land roads within municipalities?

Currently, as part of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's (MNRF) *Public Lands Act Free Use policy*, ORVs are permitted to operate on Crown land.

These changes clarify that MNRF is the road authority for roads on Crown land administered under the *Public Lands Act* (PLA) and determine ORV access to Crown land roads.

These changes also extend to allow the governing body of provincial parks and conservation reserves to determine ORV access to roads under their jurisdiction.

Q17 : What changes have been made to the farmer and trapper exemption?

All existing exemptions remain under **Section 27** of the regulation.

The new changes now allow farmers and trappers to use ORVs of any size while carrying out their commercial duties.

Q18 : What changes have been made to the public works exemption?

All existing exemptions remain under **Section 28** of the regulation.

The changes now allow public works employees, as defined in the regulation, to use ORVs of any size while carrying out their commercial duties.

Q19 : What changes have been made to the Far Northern Ontario exemption?

All existing exemptions remain under **Section 29** of the regulation.

The changes have returned local decision-making to municipalities in Far Northern Ontario which allow them to determine ORV use on their roads.

These municipalities may now pass by-laws restricting ORV use on their roads.