

The ABC's of a Successful ATV Safety Program

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In today's agricultural industry, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) have become indispensable tools for managing a wide variety of operations where their versatility is invaluable. Since their introduction in the 1980s, ATVs have revolutionized farm work, offering a faster and more efficient way to navigate challenging terrains, transport supplies, inspect crops, and perform other vital tasks. Their ability to access hard-to-reach areas has made them a favorite among agricultural operations, enabling greater productivity.

However, their widespread use also brings significant risks, including rollover incidents, collisions, and operator injuries. These hazards underscore the importance of understanding how to operate ATVs safely, adhering to regulatory requirements, and implementing effective safety measures. By combining proper training, maintenance, and protective equipment, agricultural operations can harness the benefits of ATVs while minimizing the potential dangers with their use.

THE LAW

ATVs used for agricultural operations are subject to different regulations compared to recreational use. Recreational use falls under California Vehicle Code 38503, enforceable by local law enforcement and the California Highway Patrol. For agricultural operations, jurisdiction falls to Cal/OSHA, guided by the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 8, Section 3664, which specifies operating rules for agricultural equipment. For detailed information, visit [CCR Title 8, Section 3664](#).

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF AN ATV SAFETY PROGRAM

CCR, Title 8, Section 3664 outlines safety directives for operating equipment. A written ATV safety program must include safe operation guidelines, maintenance protocols, pre-inspection checklists, required personal protective equipment (PPE), and emergency response protocols. Employees must be trained in these components and educated on ATV operation.

KEY ELEMENTS OF AN ATV SAFETY PROGRAM

To ensure safe ATV operation as outlined in CCR, Title 8, Section 3664, avoid operating near ditches, embankments, holes, or steep slopes, and reduce speed on turns, slopes, or rough surfaces. Always maintain situational awareness, especially near row ends, roads, and trees, and operate smoothly without jerky movements. Passengers are not allowed, and equipment must only hitch to approved drawbar and hitch points. When stopped, secure brakes and engage park locks. Operators should conduct daily pre-inspections using a checklist to assess tires, wheels, controls, cables, lights, oil, fuel levels, brakes, and emergency kits, documenting issues for supervisors to review and address promptly. Employers must provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including a U.S. DOT-approved helmet, eye protection, gloves, boots, long-sleeved clothing, and high-visibility gear, ensuring all PPE is provided at no cost to employees.

NOW WHAT?

Before the busy season, take time to implement a comprehensive ATV safety program. California leads the nation in annual ATV fatalities, highlighting the risks of inadequate safety measures. Protect your employees by prioritizing safety now. For more information, contact AgSafe at agsafe.org or 209.526.4400.

Note: *This is not a complete list of elements. A complete ATV safety program must include company-specific protocol, hazards, unique identifiers, and other applicable processes unique to each individual operation.*