

## IPC Adoption and Endorsement of the Canadian Paediatric Society Position Statement on Off-road vehicle use by children and adolescents: *Strategies to prevent injury*

### Summary:

The Injury Prevention Centre (IPC) has adopted and endorses the Canadian Paediatric Society Position Statement, 'Off-road vehicle use by children and adolescents: Strategies to prevent injury'. This well-researched document makes recommendations to industry, federal and provincial governments, and health care professionals aimed at reducing the number and severity of injuries associated with off-road vehicles (ORVs).

### Definitions:

Off-Road Vehicles (ORV) are a subtype of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) which are not fit for on-road use. The ORV subtype consists of All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) - also known as Quads, Side-by-sides (SxS), and the similar Utility-Terrain Vehicles (UTV).

On average each year, there are over 4,800 emergency department visits and approximately 13 deaths in Alberta as a result of an ATV-related injury.<sup>1</sup> Of particular concern in Alberta is the rate at which children and teens less than 16 years of age are killed in ATV / ORV related deaths. Over the 20-year period from 2002 to 2021, there were a total of 258 quad-related (ATV) deaths in Alberta; 13% of which were children aged 1 to 15.<sup>2</sup> Across Canada, children and adolescents account for as much as 35% of ORV-related deaths.<sup>3</sup>

Between 2012 and 2022, 6,452 children and adolescents across Canada were hospitalized (an average of 537 cases per year) and 230 died (an average of 20 deaths per year) due to ORV injuries.<sup>4</sup>

The current literature suggests that being younger than 16 years of age is an independent risk factor for loss of control causing crashes, especially when driving an adult-sized vehicle.<sup>5</sup>



## Not unique to Canada

Across Australasia where ATV use in agricultural workplaces parallels that of Alberta, existing legislation regulates the use of ATVs in the workplace by children under 16. To mirror existing legislation by WorkSafe NZ,<sup>6</sup> Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (Australia) introduced in 2024 the Workplace Health and Safety (Quad Bikes) Amendment Regulation which stipulates that adult-sized quad bikes in workplaces must be used by persons 16 years of age or above.<sup>7</sup>

It is estimated that over 30,000 Emergency Department visits, and over 100 pediatric deaths are attributed to ATV use annually in the US.<sup>8</sup>

A 2025 study by the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons identified a stabilization in the number of pediatric orthopaedic injuries in the decade from 2014 to 2023, following a decreasing trend the decade prior.<sup>9</sup> Their research derived a conclusion calling for stricter regulations, including speed restrictions, mandatory safety training, increased use of protective equipment, and a minimum operator age of 16 years.

Similarly, supported by a large-scale multi-decade body of evidence, the American Academy of Pediatrics has also produced a policy statement recommending that no child younger than 16 years should be permitted to ride an ATV.<sup>10</sup>

## Supplementary Recommendations

The IPC does support the CPS recommendations, however we also acknowledge that they may seem overly-restrictive in some contexts within Alberta. For parents weighing the risks of letting their child or youth ride an ORV, we offer the following recommendations that can help parents make informed decisions to reduce the risk of injury:

- Assess your child's maturity and ability to understand the various risk environments they will encounter such as hills, flat terrain, etc.<sup>11, 12, 13</sup>
- Ensure your child gets training in how to safely operate the ORV.<sup>11, 14, 15</sup>
- Ensure your child wears appropriate protective gear, helmet, boots, gloves, etc.<sup>11, 14, 15</sup>
- While the evidence currently is inconclusive, a youth size ORV that is more suited to height and weight of the child may be a way to mitigate some of the risks posed by the use of an a full sized ORV.<sup>11, 14, 15</sup>

Visit <https://cps.ca/en/documents/position/off-road-vehicle-use> to view the complete Position Statement of the Canadian Pediatric Society



## References

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