

WS Directive

4.155 04/09/09

Off Highway Vehicles

1. PURPOSE

To provide safety and operator guidelines for use of Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs) . For the purpose of this Directive, All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs) and snowmobiles are considered OHVs.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This directive replaces WS Directive 4.155 dated 10/08/03.

3. POLICY

Each ATV, UTV, and snowmobile operator will comply with Federal, State and Local laws and regulations and will operate such motor vehicles in a safe manner consistent with this policy and attached Safety, Use and Operations guidelines (Attachment 1).

Government-owned, leased or privately owned (hired) ATVs, UTVs, and snowmobiles will be operated in compliance with all applicable policies and guidelines established for other Government-owned or leased motor vehicles. Government-owned ATVs, UTVs, and snowmobiles will be used for official purposes only and WS employees must obtain authorization from their supervisor prior to using privately-owned (hired) ATVs, UTVs, and snowmobiles.

All accidents involving ATVs, UTVs, and snowmobiles will be reported promptly to the first-line supervisor or other appropriate official, in accordance with the Marketing and Regulatory Programs Motor Vehicle Manual (November 2007).

A safety helmet is required for personnel using Government-owned or hired ATVs and UTVs, except when the maximum speed does not exceed 10 mph or the vehicle is equipped with seatbelts and roll cage. Helmets are not required for snowmobiles, but are highly recommended. Use of appropriate eye and hearing protection is strongly recommended. Unless designed to carry a passenger, Government-owned or hired ATVs and snowmobiles will not carry a rider other than the driver, except in emergencies. UTVs can carry passengers as long as not exceeding manufacturers' weight recommendations, except in emergencies. Transportation of firearms on ATVs, UTVs, and snowmobiles will be in compliance with applicable State and local laws and regulations and only if exercised in a safe and responsible manner.

Prior to ATV, UTV, and snowmobile travel, the operator will notify the district supervisor or other designee of general location of travel and expected return times, unless the operator is: 1) carrying a cell phone (and the full days' travel will remain within cell range/coverage) or a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) or equivalent location/tracking device, or 2) alternatively the

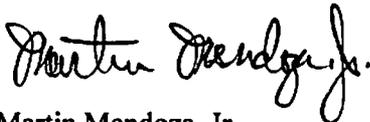
snowmobile operator contacts his/her first-line supervisor or designee prior to leaving to conduct the day's work tasks and provides the following information: the: 1) route, location or vicinity where snowmobiling will take place, 2) location of operator's parked truck and/or snowmobile trailer, and 3) approximate time the operator expects to return to duty station or enters cellular phone or VHF radio range. Snowmobiling will be conducted with a companion operator when travel is further than two linear miles from a vehicle, residence or open road, and communication via cell phone, VHF radio, or PLB is not available within the full day's travel. The operator will immediately contact his/her supervisor or designee to report that he/she has returned safely. If the supervisor does not receive this notification at the designated return time, the supervisor will immediately start search efforts for the operator.

Payment for ATV, UTV, and snowmobile hire will be determined by the State Director or Project Leader.

Additional guidelines for ATV, UTV, and snowmobile safety, use and operation are located in Attachment 1.

4. REFERENCE

Marketing and Regulatory Programs Motor Vehicle Manual (MRP 5400) (November 2007).



Martin Mendoza, Jr.
Acting Deputy Administrator

Attachment 1

Off Highway Vehicle Safety, Use and Operations Guidelines:

ATVs and UTVs:

- (1) Operators will:
 - (a) At a minimum, complete specialized safety training as recommended by the ATV and UTV manufacturer. Obtaining additional safety and operator's training, such as instructional DVDs, videos and locally-provided "hands-on" safety and operator's training is highly recommended.
 - (b) Follow all instructions included in the ATV/UTV operator's manual.
 - (c) Exhibit good judgment and proficiency in ATV/UTV use.
- (2) ATVs and UTVs will be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- (3) Protective clothing, such as leather or other heavy materials which protect arms and legs, should be worn to reduce injuries in the event of an accident. Gloves and leather high-topped boots are also recommended.
- (4) When a motor vehicle is used to transport an ATV or UTV, a stable ramp with appropriate weight limits, must be used for loading and unloading. ATVs and UTVs must be securely fastened to prevent shifting when being transported in a motor vehicle or trailer.
- (5) Loads carried on ATVs and UTVs must be securely fastened and not exceed the manufacturer's recommended weight limit.
- (6) ATVs will not be operated on pavement unless designed for such use.
- (7) Required Equipment. The following equipment/supplies/items must be carried on the ATV, UTV, and/or operator at all times when in use:
 - (a) Tool kit.
 - (b) Spare spark plug and wrench.
 - (c) First-aid kit.
 - (d) Owner's manual.
 - (e) Cell phone, portable VHF radio and/or PLB or other emergency communication or location/tracking device.
 - (f) Safety helmet if maximum speed will exceed 10 mph or no roll cage provided.
- (8) Recommended Equipment. The following equipment/supplies/items should be carried and maintained on the ATV/UTV:
 - (a) Fire extinguisher
 - (b) Tire Repair Kit and air pump or other tire inflation device.
 - (c) Tire sealant in all 4 tires to reduce potential flats.
- (9) Maintenance and Pre-Operating Check-List. Prior to operating an ATV or UTV, the following items should be inspected for working condition:
 - (a) Check tires for proper pressure, condition and wear.

- (b) Examine axle nuts for tightness and are secured with a cotter pin.
- (c) Be sure all brakes are working properly before riding. Check the cables and linkages for smooth operation and ensure that the locking-lever is working properly for locking brakes.
- (d) Check the throttle for smooth operation and that it snaps back to the idle position when released.
- (e) Examine the foot shifter to ensure it is firmly attached and positioned in a way that shifting is comfortable.
- (f) Check the light switch, rear and head lights, and the ignition and kill switches for proper working condition.
- (g) While the engine is off, check the oil and fuel for level and leaks.
- (h) Check the chain for proper adjustment and excessive wear, or the drive shaft for proper oil level and any leaks.
- (i) Check grease zerts, if applicable, and lubricate if necessary.

Snowmobiles.

- (1) All operators will be familiar with the operator's manual and be proficient in the skills necessary to safely operate a snowmobile as follows:
- (a) Operators must follow the manufacturer's safety information/training recommendations which may include reviewing 1) the operator's manual, and 2) owner's instructional DVD that is normally provided with the purchase of new snowmobiles. Obtaining additional safety and operator's training, such as instructional DVDs, videos and locally-provided "hands-on" safety and operator's training is highly recommended.
 - (b) Snowmobiles will be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
 - (c) Snowmobiles must be securely fastened to prevent shifting when transported in a trailer or motor vehicle.
 - (d) Snowmobiles should not be operated at night, in very low-light conditions or in dense fog unless operating in these conditions is absolutely critical to completing the mission.
 - (e) Operators should be familiar with areas they will be traveling and be aware of boundary fences, dangerous obstructions and other obstacles. Traveling on ice should only be done when absolutely necessary and then only with extreme caution. A U.S. Coast Guard Approved Personal Floatation Device is highly recommended when traveling over ice.
 - (f) The operator should be familiar with the warning signs and first-aid treatment for hypothermia, frostbite, shock and cardiac arrest.
- (2) Required Equipment. The following equipment/supplies/items must be carried on the snowmobile and/or operator at all times when in use:
- (a) Spare spark plugs and spark plug tool.
 - (b) Tool kit.
 - (c) Extra drive belt.
 - (d) Starting fluid.
 - (e) Owner's manual.
 - (f) First-aid kit.
 - (g) Appropriate protective clothing designed for snowmobiling or winter use (wind

- (h) **proof and water repellent clothing is recommended).**
Cell phone, portable VHF radio and/or PLB device or other communication or location/tracking device.

(3) Recommended Equipment. The following equipment/supplies/items should be carried and maintained on the snowmobile:

- (a) **Emergency Survival Kit (survival blanket, folding saw, extra tools, maps, extra clothing, emergency shelter, mirror or reflective metal, etc.)**
- (b) **Safety helmet with appropriate visor, goggles or face shield.**
- (c) **Flashlight with extra batteries.**
- (d) **Fire extinguisher.**
- (e) **Matches in waterproof containers or other fire making material.**
- (f) **Additional first-aid supplies.**
- (g) **Snowshoes.**
- (h) **A one-day supply of food.**
- (i) **GPS unit.**

(4) Maintenance and Pre-Operating Check-List. Prior to operating a snowmobile, the following items should be inspected for working condition:

- (a) **Check and fill all fluid levels: fuel, injection oil, coolant, brake fluid, chain case oil, etc.**
- (b) **Check and replace the drive belt, if necessary.**
- (c) **Brake adjustment.**
- (d) **Check head lamp and brake light.**
- (e) **Check fan or water-pump belt, if applicable.**
- (f) **Check throttle cables and lubricate or replace, if necessary.**
- (g) **Inspect the track for tears, missing lugs or track clips, and inspect the sliders, idlers, and rear suspension for condition.**
- (h) **Inspect the skis and runners for condition.**
- (i) **Check exhaust springs and mounts.**
- (j) **Check grease zerts, if applicable, and lubricate if necessary.**

(5) Use of firearms from a snowmobile is authorized if permitted by State and local laws and regulations and only if exercised in a safe and responsible manner.