



What Have You Done to Save a Life Today?



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Do It in the Dirt!

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Let's face it, as children we loved playing in the dirt. It was built somewhere into our childhood DNA to become "one" with the stuff of which our world is made. As the years have passed, many of us have added a little "gusto" to our play by riding dirt bikes or all-terrain vehicles. And while coming home covered in dirt can be fun, coming home covered with scrapes and bruises — not to mention broken bones — isn't. Fortunately, it's possible to keep Murphy's law — "If anything can go wrong, it will" — at bay, during your outdoor fun. Here's some information to help you stay safe.

Dirt Bikes

One of the great things about motorcycles is there is a design to do just about anything that's possible on two wheels. For example, dirt bikes have specially designed frames, suspensions, engines and transmissions intended to send you flying over jumps and racing across sand, dirt and rocks. But it takes more than just having the right machine; you also need to the right skills. That's where the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's day-long DirtBike School comes in. There MSF-certified instructors who will teach you the basics — such as starting, turning and

stopping — and also hone your off-road riding skill, including the proper standing rider posture, crossing over obstacles and what to do when you've lost momentum going uphill. Motorcycles and riding gear are provided, important plusses for students who are just starting out with riding. For more information on the course and where you can go to take it, visit <http://www.dirtbikeschool.com/>.

Here are a few tips from the MSF to make your dirt bike experience safe and enjoyable:

- Always perform a pre-ride inspection of your motorcycle. Consult your owner's manual.
- Ride in the company of others so you can assist each other in the event of trouble.
- Wear bright-colored clothing to increase visibility to others.
- Carry a first-aid pack and tool/repair kit with you.
- Carry some snacks and drinking water.
- Don't let youngsters or shorter adults ride motorcycles that are too tall or powerful for their capabilities.
- Check the practice area for potential hazards. Watch for hidden obstacles in sandy, snowy or muddy conditions.
- Except for dual-purpose machines, off-highway motorcycles are not designed for use on pavement. They should never be ridden on the highway or any public roadways.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Avoid following too closely behind another rider and restricting your visibility.
- Don't mix alcohol or other drugs with riding.
- Do not carry passengers.
- Wear proper protective clothing. This includes a Department of Transportation-approved motorcycle helmet, boots, gloves, eye protection, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Note: For off-road riding, the Army requires both dirt bike and ATV riders to also wear knee and shin guards and padded full-finger gloves.

ATVs

Some folks, whether they're hunters, farmers, sportsmen or ATV racers, choose to go off road on four wheels. And while ATVs are heavier than motorcycles, they're also fun to race and can perform chores beyond a motorcycle's capacity. Their unique capabilities require unique safety training, available through the All-Terrain Vehicle Safety Institute's ATV RiderCourse. This half-day course, much like the MSF's DirtBike School, provides riders with the skill set needed to successfully navigate off-road terrain. And, although you will have to provide your own riding gear and, at some locations, ATVs, there are some built-in incentives. Riders who complete the course and then buy an ATV may be entitled to a full refund of the course's cost along with additional manufacturer incentives. For information on the ATV RiderCourse along with a free online E-Course, visit <http://www.atvsafety.org/>. You can also call (800) 887-2887 for information.

The ATV Safety Institute offers the following "golden rules" to help make your day on a four-wheeler a safe and enjoyable one:

- Always wear a DOT-compliant helmet, goggles, long sleeves, long pants, over-the-ankle boots and gloves.
- Never ride on paved roads except to cross when done safely and permitted by law — another vehicle could hit you. ATVs are designed to be operated off-highway.
- Never ride under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Never carry a passenger on a single-rider ATV, and no more than one passenger on an ATV specifically designed for two people.
- Ride an ATV that's right for your age.
- Supervise riders younger than 16; ATVs are not toys.
- Ride only on designated trails and at safe speeds.

The Army has an important stake in its Soldiers, Family members and Civilians and has dedicated online resources to help keep them safe on motorcycles and ATVs. Visit the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center Website <https://safety.army.mil/> and look under the “Privately Owned Vehicle Safety” bar; there you will see a special heading for motorcycle safety.



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