



# *the* **HANDBOOK!** *of*

**IOWA**  
***All-Terrain Vehicle  
Off-Road Utility Vehicle  
and  
Off-Road Motorcycle  
Regulations***

**DNR**

July 2007 Edition

# Iowa Department of Natural Resources

## Our Mission:

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**To provide sustainable, responsible recreation opportunities for owners of registered all-terrain vehicles, off-road utility vehicles, and off-road motorcycles.**



**The material contained in this pamphlet is based upon the Code of Iowa and the Iowa Administrative Code but does not adhere to the legal text. For more complete information, please consult the Code and Administrative Code.**

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## **IOWA** ***All-Terrain Vehicle*** ***Off-Road Utility Vehicle*** ***and*** ***Off-Road Motorcycle*** ***Regulations***

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# Definitions



**All-terrain vehicle (ATV):** A motorized flotation-tire vehicle with not less than three and not more than six low-pressure tires, that is limited in engine displacement to less than 1,000 cubic centimeters and in total dry weight to less than 1,000 pounds and that has a seat or saddle designed to be straddled by the operator and handlebars for steering control.

**Dealer:** A person engaged in the business of buying, selling, or exchanging ATVs required to be registered under this chapter and who has an established place of business for that purpose in this state.

**Designated riding area:** An all-terrain vehicle riding area on any public land or ice under the jurisdiction of the Department that has been designated by the Department for all-terrain vehicle use.

**Designated riding trail:** An all-terrain vehicle riding trail on any public land or ice under the jurisdiction of the Department that has been designated by the Department for all-terrain vehicle use.

**Direct supervision:** To provide supervision of another person while maintaining visual and verbal contact at all times.

**Manufacturer:** A person engaged in the business of constructing or assembling ATVs required to be registered under this chapter and who has an established place of business for that purpose in this state.

**Non-ambulatory person:** An individual with paralysis of the lower half of the body with the involvement of both legs, usually caused by disease of or injury to the spinal cord, or caused by the loss of both legs or the loss of a part of both legs.

**Off-road motorcycle:** A two-wheeled motor vehicle that has a seat or saddle designed to be straddled by the operator and handlebars for steering control and that is intended by the manufacturer for use on natural terrain. "Off-road motorcycle" includes a motorcycle that was originally issued a certificate of title and registered for highway use under Chapter 321, but which contains design features that enable operation over natural terrain.

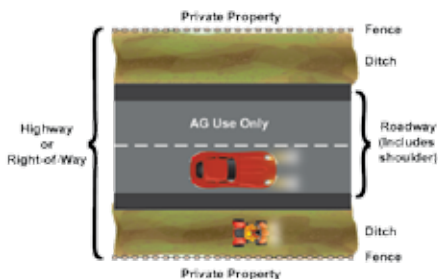
**Off-road utility vehicle:** A motorized flotation-tire vehicle with not less than four and not more than six low-pressure tires that is limited in engine displacement to less than 1,500 cubic centimeters and in total dry weight to not more than 1,800 pounds and that has a seat that is of bench design, not intended to be straddled by the operator, and a steering wheel for control.

**Operate:** To ride in or on, other than as a passenger, use or control the operation of an ATV in any manner, whether or not the ATV is moving.

**Public land:** Land owned by the federal government, the state, or political subdivisions of the state and land acquired or developed for public recreation pursuant to Section 321I.8.

**Railroad right-of-way:** The full width of property owned, leased or subject to easement for railroad purposes and shall not be limited to those areas on which tracks are located.

**Roadway:** The portion of a highway improved, designed, or ordinarily used for vehicular travel.



**Safety certificate:** An ATV safety certificate issued by the Iowa DNR or ATV Safety Institute to a qualified applicant who is 12 years of age or older.

**Special event:** An organized race, exhibition, or demonstration of limited duration which is conducted according to a prearranged schedule and in which general public interest is manifested.

**Street or highway:** The entire width between property lines of every way or place of whatever nature when any part thereof is open to the use of the public, as a matter of right, for purposes of vehicular travel, except in public areas in which the boundary shall be 33 feet each side of the center line of the road way.



## Operation Guide for All-Terrain Vehicles and Off-Road Motorcycles

- ◆ Resident-owned ATVs and off-road motorcycles must display a valid DNR registration. Nonresident-owned ATVs and off-road motorcycles must display a valid nonresident user permit.
- ◆ A person under 12 years of age shall not operate an all-terrain vehicle, including an off-road motorcycle, on a designated riding area or designated riding trail or on ice unless one of the following applies:
  - The person is taking a prescribed safety training course and operation is under the direct supervision of a certified all-terrain vehicle safety instructor.
  - ATV and off-road motorcycle riders under the age of 12 must be under the direct supervision of an adult possessing a valid drivers license. Direct supervision means maintaining visual and verbal contact at all times.
- ◆ ATV riders 12 through 17 years of age must have a valid safety certificate before riding on any public land or ice or land purchased with all-terrain vehicle registration funds.
- ◆ Riding double is prohibited on ATVs and off-road motorcycles (even on private property), unless the ATV and off-road motorcycle is designed and manufactured for two persons (most are not).
- ◆ Riding is prohibited in or on any park or fish and game areas except on designated all-terrain vehicle trails.
- ◆ Riding is prohibited in any tree nursery or planting in a manner which damages or destroys growing stock.
- ◆ Riding in wildlife areas is prohibited.
- ◆ Careless, reckless, or negligent operation is prohibited.



- ◆ Speed greater than reasonable or proper under all existing circumstances is prohibited.
- ◆ Riding while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or narcotics is prohibited.
- ◆ ATVs and motorcycles may not exceed an engine noise limit above 96 decibels as tested under SAE J1287.

### **All-Terrain Vehicles—Highway Use: Exemptions to Operation upon Roadways**

- ◆ **Agricultural Exemption:** Use must be for a valid agricultural purpose.
  - Operation must be between sunrise and sunset.
  - Operator must have a valid drivers license.
  - Machine must be operated at speeds under 35 mph.
  - An owner of land or the owner's family may operate an ATV or off-road motorcycle in the ditch area that is adjacent to their property (they must stop riding at the end of their property boundary).
- ◆ **Licensed Engineer or Surveyor Exemption:** The operation is incidental to the vehicle's use for the purpose of surveying by a licensed engineer or land surveyor.
- ◆ **Political Subdivision or Utility Exemption:** The ATV is operated by an employee or agent of a political subdivision or public utility for the purpose of construction or maintenance on or adjacent to the highway.
- ◆ **Providing Emergency Services Exemption:** The ATV is operated by an employee or agent of a public agency for the purpose of providing emergency services or rescue.
- ◆ **Trail Maintenance Exemption:** The ATV is operated for the purpose of mowing, installing approved trail signs, or providing maintenance on a snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle trail designated by the Department of Natural Resources.

## Iowa's All-Terrain Vehicle Education

Education is mandatory in Iowa for persons ages 12-17 who ride their ATVs on designated public land or land purchased with ATV registration funds.

- ◆ There is a cooperative program between the Iowa DNR and the ATV Safety Institute (ASI), a non-profit division of the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America.
  - ASI's ATV course may be offered free of charge by some distributors to individuals who purchase a new ATV and the purchaser's family members may attend too. If you are not eligible for free safety training, you can take an ASI course for a fee of \$75 if you are 16 or younger or for \$125 if you are over 16. This fee is collected by ASI and is used to provide continuing education to instructors, provide course materials for students, and support the course administration.
  - The course is approximately 4.5 hours in length. Students practice safety techniques with hands-on exercises covering starting, stopping, swerving, and riding over obstacles. Particular emphasis is placed on the safety.
  - The course also covers protective gear, environmental concerns, and local laws. Participants receive the **ATV RiderCourse® Handbook**, which reinforces the safety information and riding techniques covered during the course. The instructional materials, as well as the course curriculum, have been designed in consultation with the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).
  - To register for the ATV RiderCourse®, contact the ASI Enrollment Express hotline at **1-800-887-2887**. To speak with a national representative about ATV safety, call **1-800-852-5344**. For more information on the ASI ATV RiderCourse® and for interactive safety information, visit **[www.atvsafety.org](http://www.atvsafety.org)**.
- ◆ The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is developing a state-sponsored course, which should be available in late 2007. This course will supplement the ASI training. The DNR will post the availability of the state course on its website—**[www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov)**.



# Iowa's ATV Laws



## Enforcement

### Signal from Officer to Stop

A person, after having received a visual or audible signal from a peace officer to come to a stop, shall not operate an ATV in willful or wanton disregard of the signal or interfere with or endanger the officer or any other person's vehicle, or increase speed, or attempt to flee, or elude the officer.

### Reporting Accidents

If an ATV is involved in an accident resulting in injury or death to anyone or property damage amounting to \$1,000 or more, either the operator or someone acting for the operator shall immediately notify the county sheriff or another law enforcement agency in the state. The operator shall file with the Iowa DNR a report of the accident, within 48 hours, containing such information as the Department may require. Accident report forms can be obtained from county sheriff or department law enforcement personnel.

## Prosecution

Any person who shall violate any provision of this chapter or any regulation of the Department or Director of the Department of Transportation shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. **A person, regardless of age, may be prosecuted for violation of Iowa's ATV laws and regulations.**

## Liability

The owner and operator of an ATV is liable for any injury or damage occasioned by the negligent operation of the ATV.

# Registration of All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)

## Point of Sale Registration Requirement

- ◆ **Operation Pending Registration:** The commission shall furnish all-terrain vehicle (ATV) dealers with cards bearing the words “registration applied for” and space for the purchase date. An unregistered ATV sold by a dealer shall bear one of these cards, which entitles the purchaser to operate it for **45 days** immediately following purchase.

### Where to Register

- ◆ **Residents:** County recorder in county of residence.
- ◆ **Nonresidents:** Must purchase a nonresident user permit in lieu of a registration. The user permit is available at any county recorder office or electronic license vendor where hunting and fishing licenses are sold. The permit is valid for the current calendar year and costs \$15 plus writing fees.

### Registration Fees

- ◆ **Annual Registration Fee:** \$15. Annual registration runs from Jan. 1 - Dec. 31. After the first of September, any unregistered ATV may be registered for the remainder of the current year and the subsequent year for a fee of \$20.
- ◆ **Writing fee:** \$1.25 is charged by the county recorder for each registration.

### Other Fees

- ◆ **Transfer of Registration Fee:** \$15 plus writing fee.  
*(Registration transfers will be handled in the new owner's county of residence.)*
- ◆ **Duplicate Registration Fee:** \$5 plus writing fee.
- ◆ **Title Fee:** \$10

### Registration Renewal

**Where:** County recorder office in the county of residence.  
*(After September 1, 2007, owners can renew their ATV registrations at their county recorder for the 2008 calendar year using the electronic license system. Following this electronic renewal, owners can renew their registrations at any electronic license vendor where hunting and fishing licenses are sold.)*

- An all-terrain vehicle dealer shall make application and pay all registration fees on behalf of the purchaser of an all-terrain vehicle.
- Licensed ATV dealers are required by law to issue a “registration applied for” card with each machine to allow operation for **45 days** immediately following the date of sale until registration is received. All-terrain vehicles cannot be legally operated unless bearing a valid registration or “registration applied for” card.
- ◆ If the ownership of an ATV is to be transferred, the owner shall provide the purchaser with a bill of sale, registration certificate, and title. The new owner shall file an application for registration and title with the county recorder, in the county of their residence, within 30 days of purchase.
- ◆ The registration certificate shall be carried either in the ATV or on the person operating the machine.

## Exemptions to Registration

Registration shall not be required for the following ATVs.

- ◆ ATVs owned and used by the United States, another state, or a political subdivision of another state.
- ◆ ATVs being used for agricultural purposes (see exemptions on page 7).

**All-terrain vehicles used by private engineering or survey companies, utility companies, or snowmobile clubs providing trail maintenance must display a valid DNR registration decal.**

## Registration Decals

The decal shall be affixed to the rear of the ATV so that the decal is clearly visible. On an off-road motorcycle the decal should be affixed to the yoke of the steering column so that it is clearly visible. The decal must be placed on the yoke in a manner that does not obstruct the view of the vehicle identification number.



## Certificates of Title for ATVs

- ◆ The owner of an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) acquired on or after January 1, 2000, other than an ATV used exclusively as a farm implement, shall apply to the county recorder of the county in which the owner resides for a certificate of title for the ATV.
- ◆ A certificate of title shall contain the information and shall be issued on a form the Department prescribes.
- ◆ An owner of an ATV shall apply to the county recorder for issuance of a certificate of title within **thirty days** after acquisition. The application shall be on forms the Department prescribes and accompanied by the required fee. The application shall be signed and sworn to before a notary public or other person who administers oaths, or shall include a certification signed in writing containing knowledge, information, and belief, under penalty of

perjury. The application shall contain the date of sale and gross price of the ATV or the fair market value if no sale immediately preceded the transfer and any additional information the Department requires. If the application is made for an ATV previously registered or titled in another state or foreign country, the application shall contain this information and any other the Department requires.

- ◆ A manufacturer or dealer shall not transfer ownership of a new ATV without supplying the transferee with the manufacturer's or importer's certificate of origin signed by the manufacturer's or importer's authorized agent. The certificate shall contain information the Department requires. The Department may adopt rules providing for the issuance of a certificate of origin for an ATV by the Department upon good cause shown by the owner. The **dealer** shall submit all paperwork to the county recorder, not the customer.
- ◆ A dealer transferring ownership of an ATV under this chapter shall assign the title to the new owner, or in the case of a new ATV, assign the certificate of origin. Within **30 days** the dealer shall forward all moneys and applications to the county recorder.
- ◆ The county recorder shall maintain a record of any certificate of title which the county recorder issues and shall keep each certificate of title on record until the certificate of title has been inactive for five years. When issuing a title for a new ATV, the county recorder shall obtain and keep on file a copy of the certificate of origin.
- ◆ Once titled, a person shall not sell or transfer ownership of an ATV without delivering to the purchaser or transferee a certificate of title with an assignment on it showing the title in the purchaser or transferee. A person shall not purchase or otherwise acquire an ATV without obtaining a certificate of title for it in that person's name.

- ◆ All questions concerning bonding issues with machines with VIN numbers contact your local county recorder. Machines without VIN numbers contact your local conservation officer for questions concerning bonding.

## Title Fees, Surcharges, and Duplicates

- ◆ The county recorder shall charge a **ten dollar** fee to issue a certificate of title, a transfer of title, a duplicate, or a corrected certificate of title.
- ◆ If a certificate of title is lost, stolen, mutilated, destroyed, or becomes illegible, the first lienholder or if there is none, the owner named in the certificate, as shown by the county recorder's records, shall within **30 days** obtain a duplicate by applying to the county recorder. The applicant shall furnish information the Department requires concerning the original certificate and the circumstances of its loss, mutilation, or destruction. Mutilated or illegible certificates shall be returned to the Department with the application for a duplicate.
- ◆ The duplicate certificate of title shall be marked plainly "duplicate" across its face and mailed or delivered to the applicant.

## Transfer or Repossession

- ◆ If ownership of an ATV is transferred by operation of law, such as by inheritance, order in bankruptcy, insolvency, replevin, or execution sale, the transferee, within **30 days** after acquiring the right to possession of the ATV, shall mail or deliver to the county recorder satisfactory proof of ownership as the county recorder requires, together with an application for a new registration, title, and the required fees.
- ◆ If a lienholder repossesses an ATV by operation of law and holds it for resale, the lienholder shall secure a new registration and certificate of title, and shall pay the required fees.



## Security Interest

- ◆ A security interest created in Iowa in an ATV is not perfected until the security interest is noted on the certificate of title. To perfect the security interest, an application for security interest must be presented along with the original title. The county recorder shall note the security interest on the face of the title and on the copy in the recorder's office.
- ◆ The certificate of title shall be presented to the county recorder when the application for security interest or for assignment of the security interest is presented and a new or endorsed certificate of title shall be issued to the secured party with the name and address of the secured party on it.
- ◆ The secured party shall present the certificate of title to the county recorder when a release statement is filed and a new or endorsed certificate shall be issued to the owner. If the secured party loses the title, they may discharge the security interest by signing a notarized statement and sending it to the county recorder.

## Registration of Off-Road Utility Vehicles (ORVs)

- ◆ Off-road utility vehicles shall be considered all-terrain vehicles for the purpose of registration but are exempt from the dealer registration requirements and the titling requirements of Iowa Code Chapter 321I.
- ◆ A motorized vehicle that was previously titled or is currently titled under Chapter 321 shall not be registered or operated as an off-road utility vehicle.

### Where to Register

- ◆ **Residents:** County recorder offices or any electronic license vendor where hunting and fishing licenses are sold (effective August 15, 2007)
- ◆ **Nonresidents:** County recorder offices or any electronic license vendor where hunting and fishing licenses are sold

## Exemptions to Registration

Registration shall not be required for the following ORVs:

- ◆ ORVs owned and used by the United States, another state, or political subdivision of another state
- ◆ ORVs being used for agricultural purposes

**ORVs that are being operated under the provisions of 321.234A, by a licensed engineer, surveyor, utility, or snowmobile club providing trail maintenance, are required to display a valid registration decal. This includes an ORV that is being operated for recreational purposes in a right-of-way area adjacent to the owner's property line under 321.234A, subsection 3.**

## Registration Decals and Certificates for ORVs

- ◆ The decal shall be affixed on the rear of the ORV so that the decal is clearly visible.
- ◆ Registration certificates shall be carried either in the ORV or on the person operating the machine.

## Transfer of an ORV

ORV registrations are not transferable. In order to maintain a valid registration, the purchaser of a registered ORV must obtain a new registration.

## Operational Requirements for ORVs

- ◆ An operator of an off-road utility vehicle is subject to provisions governing the operation of all-terrain vehicles in Iowa Code Chapters 321.234A and 321I but is exempt from the safety instruction and certification program requirements of Sections 321I.25 and 321I.26.
- ◆ A person shall not operate an ORV on a designated riding area or designated riding trail unless the riding area or designated riding trail is signed by the Department as open to ORV operation.

## Safety Certificate Requirement for ATV Operation

- ◆ A person 12 years of age or older but less than 18 years of age shall not operate an all-terrain vehicle on public lands or ice or land purchased with all-terrain vehicle registration funds in this state without obtaining a valid safety certificate issued by the Department or ATV Safety Institute and having the certificate in the person's possession.
- ◆ A valid ATV safety certificate or license issued to a non-resident by a governmental authority of another state shall be considered a valid certificate or license in this state if the permit or license requirements of such governmental authority, excluding fees, are substantially the same as the requirements of this Act as determined by the Department.
- ◆ If you have any questions concerning this issue please call **515-281-3449**.

## Age Restrictions for ATV Operation

There are no age restrictions for operating an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) on private land. However, the following age restrictions apply to operation of ATVs on designated public lands and ATV Parks.

- ◆ **Under 12 years of age:** A person under the age of 12 shall not operate an all-terrain vehicle, including an off-road motorcycle, on a designated riding area or designated riding trail or on ice unless one of the following applies:
  - The person is taking a prescribed safety training course and operation is under the direct supervision of a certified all-terrain vehicle safety instructor.
  - ATV and off-road motorcycle riders under the age of 12 must be under the direct supervision of an adult possessing a valid drivers license. Direct supervision means maintaining visual and verbal contact at all times.
- ◆ **12 to 17 years of age:** Persons between the ages of 12 and 17, inclusive, may operate on designated public lands or ice or ATV parks if they have a valid ATV safety certificate.
- ◆ **Persons 18 or older:** Persons age 18 and up may operate on designated public lands or ice or ATV parks without a valid ATV safety certificate.

## Required Equipment on ATVs

- ◆ **Head Lamp and Tail Lamp:** Every ATV operated from sunset to sunrise shall display a lighted head lamp and tail lamp.
- ◆ **Brakes:** Every ATV shall be equipped with brakes which conform to standards prescribed by the director of transportation.
- ◆ **Mufflers:** ATVs and motorcycles may not exceed an engine noise limit above 96 decibels as tested under SAE J1287.

## Firearms on ATVs

A person shall not operate or ride an ATV with a firearm in the person's possession unless it is unloaded and enclosed in a carrying case. **However, paraplegics and single or double amputees of the legs may hunt from a motor driven land conveyance such as an all-terrain vehicle. "Paraplegic" means an individual affected with paralysis of the lower half of the body with the involvement of both legs, usually due to disease of or injury to the spinal cord.** [IAC 571-98.2(2)] Turkey and [IAC 571-106.7(4)] Deer

## Operation of ATVs

### General Regulations

It shall be unlawful for any person to drive or operate any ATV under any of the following conditions.

- ◆ On public land, with the exception as provided in Section 321.234A (see "public land" definition, page 5), or in specified areas permitted by the Department such as "ATV Parks" or "Designated Trails," which are designated and intended for use.
- ◆ At a rate of speed greater than reasonable or proper under all existing circumstances.
- ◆ In a careless, reckless, or negligent manner so as to endanger persons or property, or to cause injury or damage.
- ◆ Without a lighted headlight and taillight from sunset to sunrise and at such other times when conditions provide insufficient lighting to render clearly discernible persons and vehicles at a distance of five hundred feet ahead.
- ◆ While under the influence of intoxicating liquor or narcotics or habit-forming drugs.
- ◆ In any tree nursery or planting in a manner which damages or destroys growing stock.
- ◆ On any public land, ice, or snow, in violation of official signs of the Department prohibiting such operation in the interest of safety for persons, property, or the environment.

- ◆ In any park, wildlife area, preserve, refuge, or game management area, or any portion of a navigable stream or river identified by the Department in IAC Chapter 49.
- ◆ Upon an operating railroad right-of-way. This subsection does not apply to a law enforcement officer or railroad employee in the lawful discharge of their duties.
- ◆ Riding double is prohibited on ATVs and off-road motorcycles (even on private property), unless the ATV or off-road motorcycle is designed and manufactured for two persons (most are not). Designated ATV parks may have special restrictions on ATVs that are designed to carry a passenger. Operators must follow posted signs.

## Operating on Roads and Highways

A person shall not operate an all-terrain vehicle or off-road motorcycle upon roadways or highways (including the ditch area) except as provided in Section 321.234A (agricultural exemption) or on a designated and signed trail approved by the county board of supervisors.

## Operating on Trails and Private Land

ATVs may not be operated:

- ◆ On private property without permission.
- ◆ On snowmobile trails except where designated by the controlling authority and the primary snowmobile trail sponsor.

### Don't Trespass!

The operation of ATVs on private land is subject to trespass laws and permission must be obtained.

## Operation Prohibited in Streambeds

This section does not prohibit the use of ford crossing of public or private roads or any other ford crossing when used for: agricultural purposes, the operation of construction vehicles engaged in lawful construction, repair, or maintenance in a streambed, or the operation of motor vehicles on ice (see “motor vehicle” definition, page 4.)

- ◆ Except as provided above, a person shall **not** operate any motor vehicle in any of the following situations:
  - Any portion of a meandered stream.
  - Any portion of the bed of a non-meandered stream which has been identified as a navigable stream or river adopted by the Department and which is covered by water.
- ◆ The Department of Natural Resources shall adopt rules identifying the navigable streams and rivers in which a motor vehicle may be operated.

## Special Events

- ◆ The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) may authorize the holding of organized special events (see “special event” definition, page 5) within the state. The DNR shall adopt rules relating to the conduct of special events held under DNR permits, designating the equipment and facilities necessary for safe operation of ATVs, and for the safety of operators, participants, and observers.

Residents participating in a special event **must** display a current registration on their ATV or off-road motorcycle. Non-residents **must** display a valid user permit on their ATV or off-road motorcycle.

- ◆ A special event for ATVs may include motorcycles upon payment of an entrance fee set by the organizer of the special event. The DNR may require part of the motorcycle entrance fee be credited to pay costs of ATV programs authorized pursuant to the Iowa Code, Section 321I.8.
- ◆ At least 30 days before the scheduled date of a special event, an application must be filed with the DNR. Applications may be obtained from the Conservation Officers or by writing the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034.

## Before You Ride

### Know Your All-Terrain Vehicle

All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are designed for both recreation and work. They can be great fun and can provide hours of safe off-road riding—but they should never be treated like toys. An ATV can be dangerous if you don't understand your vehicle or don't know proper riding procedures.

- ◆ ATVs differ from other vehicles in the way they handle. Routine turning or braking, if done improperly, can result in a sudden rollover.
- ◆ Different types of ATVs have their own handling characteristics. For example, some ATVs have separate front and rear brake controls, and some have a control that brakes both the front and rear wheels. You need to understand your ATV's braking system and know the safe way to come to a stop.



### Remember ...

- ◆ Before your first ride, take a safety course offered by the DNR or ATV Safety Institute.
- ◆ ATVs are designed exclusively for off-road use.
- ◆ ATVs can be difficult to handle on paved surfaces, so operating an ATV on pavement can be hazardous.
- ◆ Riding on paved roads is a major cause of ATV-related fatalities.



# Common ATV Parts



## What to Wear

By definition, off-road means “rugged,” so you should always wear clothing that combines both protection and comfort.

### Essential Clothing Items

Never operate an ATV unless you protect yourself from head to toe by wearing these items.

#### ◆ **Motorcycle helmet**

- Helps prevent head injuries. In an accident, you are five times more likely to have a serious head injury if you are not wearing a helmet.
- Full-face helmets offer the greatest protection and the most comfort.
- All helmets should meet U.S. Department of Transportation standards at a minimum—even better, they should be “Snell-certified.”

#### ◆ **Goggles** or other eye protection

- Prevent branches, road debris, and insects from hitting your eyes, which can distract or even blind you.
- For proper protection, use goggles or a face shield—do not use sunglasses alone.
- Choose high-impact eye protection made of hard-coated polycarbonate or stamped with the safety-approved markings VESC-8 (or V-8) or Z87.1.
- Wear tinted lenses appropriate for your lighting conditions—gray for sunny days, yellow for cloudy days, and clear for evenings and nights.

#### ◆ **Gloves**

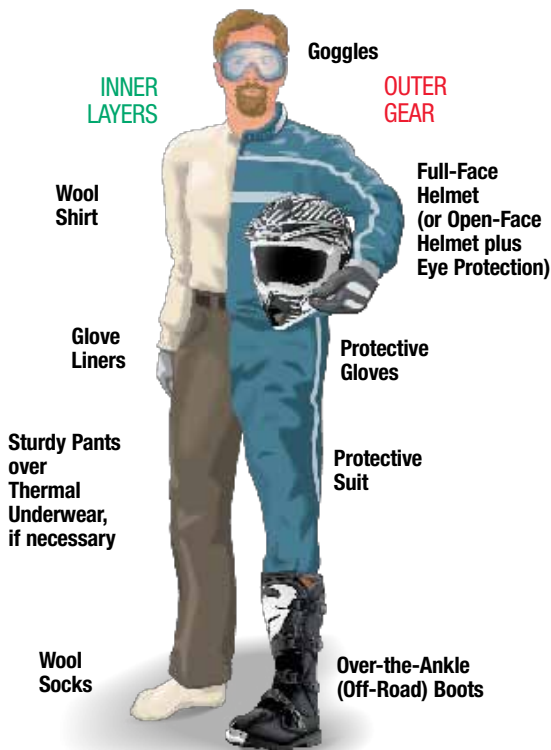
- Keep your hands warm in cold weather.
- Prevent soreness and fatigue.
- Protect your hands during a fall or if they scrape against a branch.
- Should have padding over the knuckles for the best protection.

◆ **Long pants and long-sleeved shirt or jacket**

- Protect against scratching from branches.
- For best protection, your gear should include:
  - Pants with kneepads
  - Chest and shoulder protectors

◆ **Boots**

- Heels help keep your feet firmly on the footrests.
- ATV boots are best because they protect lower legs also.



## Dress for Cold Weather

As with any outdoor winter recreation, you need clothing that will keep you warm and dry. Bear in mind that the “wind chill factor” can lower your temperature considerably. For example, suppose the thermometer reads 30° Fahrenheit. If you ride at 25 miles an hour, the wind chill temperature drops to 0° Fahrenheit.

	U.S. Customary Wind Chill Chart											
Estimated Wind Speed in MPH	Actual Thermometer Reading (°F)											
	50	40	30	20	10	0	-10	-20	-30	-40	-50	-60
	Equivalent Temperature (°F)											
Calm	50	40	30	20	10	0	-10	-20	-30	-40	-50	-60
5	48	37	27	16	6	-5	-15	-26	-36	-47	-57	-68
10	40	28	16	4	-9	-21	-33	-46	-58	-70	-83	-95
15	36	22	9	-5	-18	-36	-45	-58	-72	-85	-99	-112
20	32	18	4	-10	-25	-39	-53	-67	-82	-96	-110	-124
25	30	16	0	-15	-29	-44	-59	-74	-88	-104	-118	-133
30	28	13	-2	-18	-33	-48	-63	-79	-94	-109	-125	-140
35	27	11	-4	-20	-35	-49	-67	-82	-98	-113	-129	-145
40	26	10	-6	-21	-37	-53	-69	-85	-100	-116	-132	-148
(Wind speeds greater than 40 mph have little additional effect)	LITTLE DANGER*				INCREASED DANGER*				GREAT DANGER*			
	(for properly clothed person)				(for properly clothed person)							
*DANGER FROM FREEZING OF EXPOSED FLESH												

- ◆ Dress in layers, and wear gloves and a warm head covering under your helmet. Gloves with gauntlets will keep cold air from blowing up your sleeves. Do *not* wear a:
  - Scarf, which can get caught in the moving parts of your vehicle or in branches and bushes
  - Bubble-style face shield, which may frost over
- ◆ A snowmobile suit is a great outfit for ATV riders in cold weather. Clothing should fit snugly and still be comfortable. Clothing that's too loose can snag on your vehicle, twigs, and branches.

# Riding Your ATV

## Basic Operation

Before you do any serious off-road riding, you need to find a safe, unchallenging location where you can practice riding your new ATV and get comfortable operating it. The location should be large, open, flat, and free of hazards.

- ◆ **Starting the ATV:** Starting procedures vary from model to model, so consult your owner's manual. Typically, you need to:
  - Position the ATV in a safe direction and put the transmission in neutral or park.
  - Set the parking brake.
  - Turn on the fuel valve.
  - Make sure that the engine stop switch is in the "run" or "on" position.
  - Start the engine.
- ◆ **Adjusting Your Posture:** Correct riding posture matters. Like riding a bike, you need to shift your weight as you maneuver your ATV. Proper posture helps you move your body quickly when necessary and reach the controls easily.
  - Proper posture includes:
    - Head up and eyes looking ahead
    - Hands firmly gripping the handlebars
    - Feet on the footrests
  - Removing one hand or foot can reduce your ability to control the ATV or could cause you to lose your balance and fall off.
  - If you remove a foot from the footrest, your foot could come into contact with the rear wheels, causing an injury or accident.



**Proper Level Riding Position**

- ◆ **Starting Off:** After warming up the engine, follow these steps.
  - Apply the rear brake.
  - Shift into gear.
  - Release the parking brake.
  - Increase the throttle slowly.
- ◆ **Shifting Gears:** Different types of transmissions are available, so read your owner's manual for instructions on your model. For manual transmissions, let off the throttle as you shift. This helps to keep you from "popping the clutch," which can cause the front of the ATV to flip backward.
- ◆ **Braking:** The proper braking method depends on whether your ATV has brakes in the front, rear, or both. Consult your owner's manual for the correct braking procedures.

## Riding Techniques

### Turning

Consult your owner's manual for information on turning your ATV. In general, when riding at low to moderate speeds, you should:

- ◆ Move your body forward and lean in the direction of the turn.
- ◆ Turn the handlebars while looking where you are turning.
- ◆ If the ATV begins to tip, lean farther into the turn and slowly reduce your speed.

LEAN INTO  
the TURN  
to counteract  
wheel-lift

LEANING OUT  
encourages  
tipping



### Riding Uphill

Climbing hills can be dangerous if you don't follow the proper procedures described in your owner's manual. You could lose control of your ATV or it could overturn. In general, you should:

- ◆ Use good judgment. If you think the hill is too steep to climb safely, don't attempt it. Instead, you may be able to traverse the slope.
- ◆ Before starting the climb, shift into a lower gear and increase your speed.
- ◆ During the climb, increase the throttle steadily to keep your forward momentum.
- ◆ Slide forward on the seat, or stand and lean forward.
- ◆ Always lean uphill while leaving your feet on the footrests.
- ◆ If you can't see over the top of the hill to check for obstacles, slow down until you can.

Proper Uphill  
Riding Position



## Riding Downhill

Before starting down a hill, select a route with a minimum of obstacles. Ideally, the route should require little or no turning. When riding downhill, remember to:

- ◆ Move back on the seat while leaving your feet on the footrests.
- ◆ Maintain a slow speed.
- ◆ Brake gradually.
- ◆ Stay in a low gear.
- ◆ Keep your eyes focused ahead.

**Proper Downhill  
Riding Position**



## Traversing a Slope

Some hills may be too steep to ride up or down in a straight line. If so, you may be able to ascend or descend the hill by riding across it at an angle—called traversing the slope. However, you should not attempt to traverse a surface that is extremely rough, loose, or slippery. When traversing, be sure to:

- ◆ Keep your feet on the footrests.
- ◆ Shift your weight to the uphill side.



## Kids on Wheels

### Is Your Child Ready to Ride?

- ◆ By Iowa law, a person under 12 years of age shall not operate an all-terrain vehicle, including an off-road motorcycle, on a designated riding area or designated riding trail or on ice unless one of the following applies:
  - The person is taking a prescribed safety training course and operation is under the direct supervision of a certified all-terrain vehicle safety instructor.
  - ATV and off-road motorcycle riders under the age of 12 must be under the direct supervision of an adult possessing a valid drivers license. Direct supervision means maintaining visual and verbal contact at all times.
- ◆ In Iowa, a person 12 years of age or older but less than 18 years must obtain and possess a valid safety certificate.
- ◆ To make an informed decision, parents must consider:
  - **Physical ability:** Can your youngster sit comfortably on the ATV and reach the controls easily?
  - **Motor skills:** Is your child's coordination adequate for the challenge of riding an ATV?
  - **Visual perception:** Does your child have good depth perception, peripheral vision, and the ability to judge distances?
  - **Maturity:** Will your youngster understand the risks involved in riding an ATV, make good decisions to avoid accidents, and drive responsibly?



### Age and Engine Size

For your child's safety and comfort, you should select an ATV with an engine size that is appropriate for his or her age.

## Be Prepared

Any time you venture into off-road terrain, some risk is involved. You could be stranded because of mechanical problems. You might be caught in unexpected severe weather. You might be injured, or you simply might lose your way. It's best to be prepared for any potential problems.

### Before You Leave ...

Tell someone where you plan to travel and when you will be back.

## What to Bring Along

- ◆ **Map and Compass:** Topographic maps provide the most useful information for navigating terrain because they show the area in three dimensions. Purchase a good orienteering compass and learn how to use it with a topographic map.
- ◆ **First-Aid Kit:** Carry a first-aid kit, and take a first-aid course so that you'll know how to respond in an emergency.
- ◆ **Survival Kit:** In addition to the items listed above, you should carry:
  - Waterproof matches
  - Hand axe
  - Flashlight
  - Signal flares
  - Tarpaulin
  - High-energy snacks such as candy bars
  - Emergency food and water (enough for one day for long day trips)



### ◆ Other useful items:

- Radio to hear about approaching storms
- Mobile phone and GPS unit

### Global Positioning System (GPS)

The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a navigation system based on a network of 24 satellites. Users with a GPS unit can determine their exact location (latitude and longitude) in any weather condition, all over the world, 24 hours a day.



### Safety Guidelines

- ◆ Read your ATV owner's manual to familiarize yourself with the vehicle's operation.
- ◆ Check the vehicle's mechanical condition regularly.
- ◆ Make sure the lights work properly.
- ◆ Wear a helmet and goggles (or a face shield) to prevent injuries from branches and road debris.
- ◆ Wear protective clothing suitable for the environment.
- ◆ Be aware of the terrain in the area you plan to ride.
- ◆ Check the weather conditions, particularly forecasts for snow or ice.
- ◆ Ride in a group of two or more—never alone.
- ◆ Respect people and animals you encounter.
- ◆ Don't remove the factory-installed air box or muffler.
- ◆ Know ATV regulations.

## Trail Etiquette

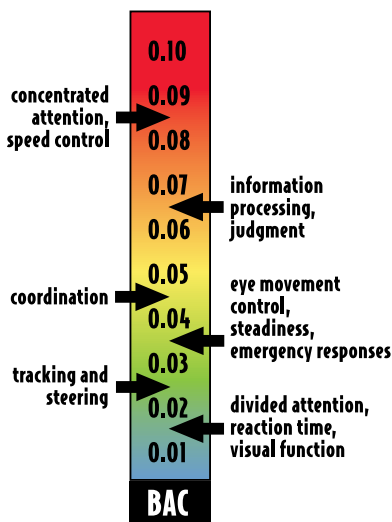
- ◆ Be courteous to other riders and hikers on the trail.
- ◆ Ride on the right side of the trail.
- ◆ Slow down when passing.
- ◆ Ride only where permitted.
- ◆ Leave gates as you find them.
- ◆ Yield the right-of-way to bikes, horses, and hikers.
- ◆ Report downed trees and trail maintenance needs to land managers.
- ◆ Report illegal riding.
- ◆ Carry out what you carry in.



## Alcohol and Drugs

- ◆ The effect of alcohol is increased by the natural stressors placed on your body while riding your ATV.
- ◆ Alcohol depresses the central nervous system, slows physical reaction time, and affects judgment. Most people become impaired after only one drink.
- ◆ Alcohol decreases your attention span and makes it difficult to perform multiple tasks. For example, it will be more difficult for you to keep track of other ATVs operating in your area. This could become critical if you are placed in an emergency situation and must make a sudden decision.

### Areas of Impairment Due to Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)



### Remember ...

Iowa law prohibits riding an ATV while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or narcotics.

# Designated OHV Parks

## Off-Highway Vehicle Riding Areas

- ◆ All ATVs and off-road motorcycles **must be registered** in order to ride in the following ATV Parks.
  - **Bluff Creek OHV Park:** Located in Mahaska County southwest of Oskaloosa. This is a 350-acre park with most of the area accessible for riding. The area is an abandoned coal mine that has been developed into a riding area.
  - **Gypsum City OHV Park:** Located in Webster County southeast of Fort Dodge. This is a 300-acre park with 15 miles of rolling hill trails and perimeter trails. The park also includes a 15-acre, 1.5-mile MX track, a .4-mile kids' track, and a beginner/safety training area.
  - **Lakeview OHV Park:** Located in Johnson County North of Iowa City. This is a 147-acre park with lots of dirt and sand trails with many hills. Future plans include a kids' track, an MX track, and an obstacle course.
  - **Nicholson-Ford OHV Park:** Located in Marshall County on the northwest side of Marshalltown. This is a 110-acre park with approximately 20 miles of tight, river-bottom, wooded trails.
  - **Rathbun OHV Park:** Located in Appanoose County, on the southwest arm of Lake Rathbun off of Highway 142. This is a 120-acre riding area located on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land.
  - **River Valley OHV Park:** Located along the Missouri River in Council Bluffs. This park is 200 acres in size and located off of the highway 275 bridge. Check out the website: [www.rivervalleytrailriders.com](http://www.rivervalleytrailriders.com)
  - **Riverview OHV Park:** Located on Hawthorne Street in Waterloo, Black Hawk County. This 180-acre park is

**Keep in mind ...**  
Operational  
rules are strictly  
enforced in  
OHV Parks.

surrounded by the Cedar River, which creates some nice riverside trails. There is a nice variety of riding throughout the park. The park now includes: two MX tracks, a flat track, a large parking lot, and other features.

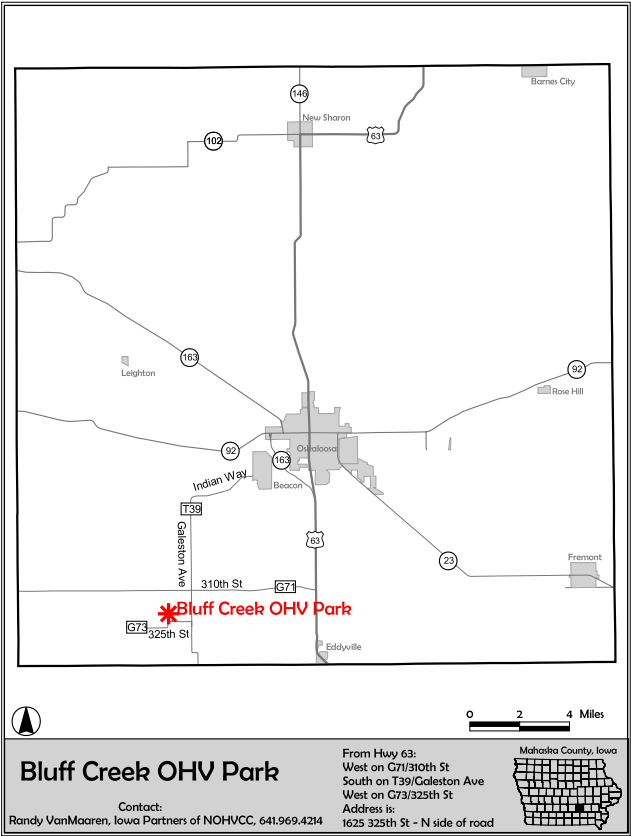
- **Tama County OHV Park:** Located in Tama County southwest of Tama. This is a 300-acre park with tight wooded trails with some hills. The park includes a 15-mile perimeter trail, a kids' track, and 23 campsites (10 with electric).

◆ For area maps of these riding parks, go to: [www.iowaohv.com](http://www.iowaohv.com)

## Park Operational Rules

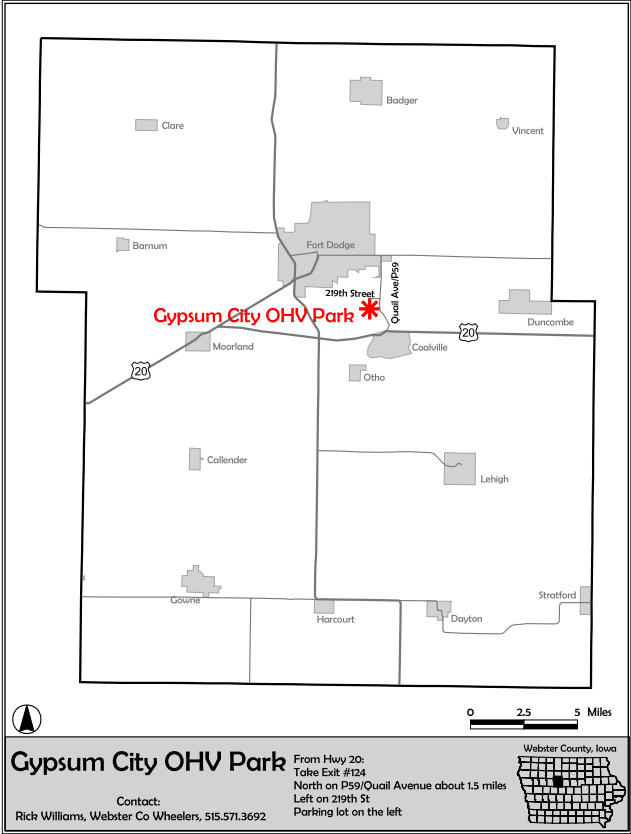
- ◆ Resident-owned ATVs and off-road motorcycles must display a valid DNR registration. Nonresident-owned ATVs and off-road motorcycles must display a valid nonresident user permit.
- ◆ Helmets are required for all riders (and passenger if passenger is permitted).
- ◆ ATV riders 12 through 17 years of age must have a valid safety certificate.
- ◆ ATV and off-road motorcycle riders under the age of 12 must be under the direct supervision of an adult possessing a valid drivers license. Direct supervision means maintaining visual and verbal contact at all times.
- ◆ Riding double is prohibited on all ATVs and motorcycles (except on ATVs that are designed by the original manufacturer to carry a passenger).
- ◆ Riding off-trail or in prohibited areas is illegal.
- ◆ Careless, reckless, or negligent operation is prohibited.
- ◆ Possession and consumption of alcohol in the riding park is prohibited.
- ◆ ATVs and motorcycles may not exceed an engine noise limit above 96 decibels as tested under SAE J1287.
- ◆ Only ATVs and off-road motorcycles, as defined under 321I, are permitted on OHV Park riding areas unless signed open to other use by the Department.

# Bluff Creek OHV Park

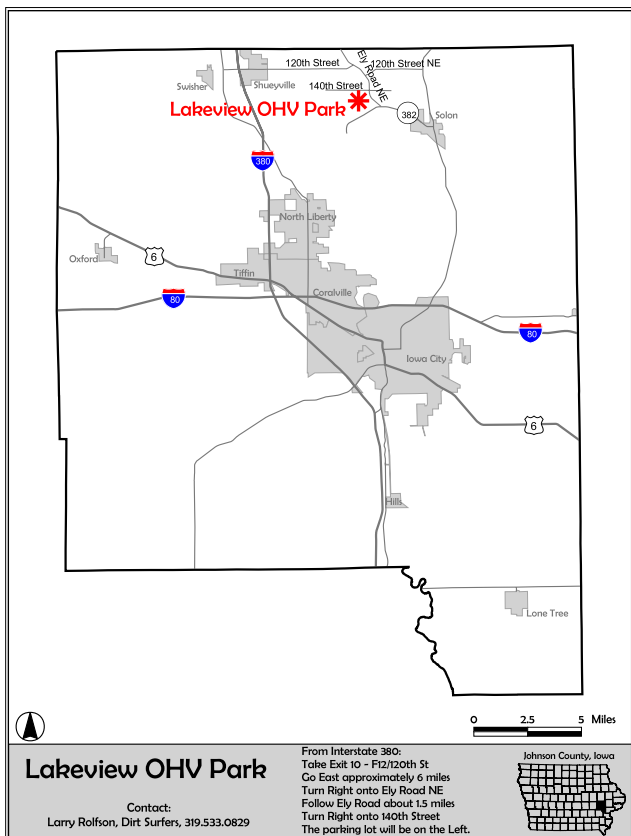




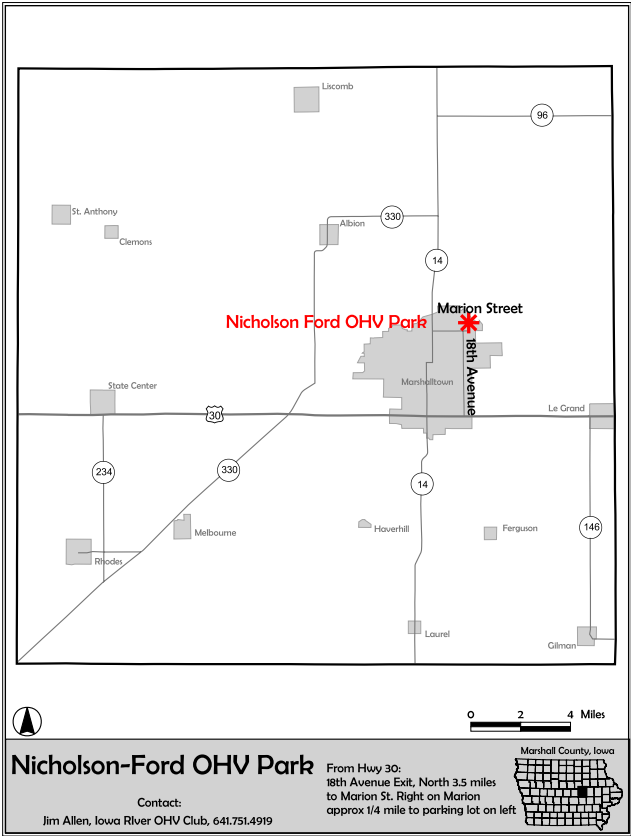
# Gypsum City OHV Park



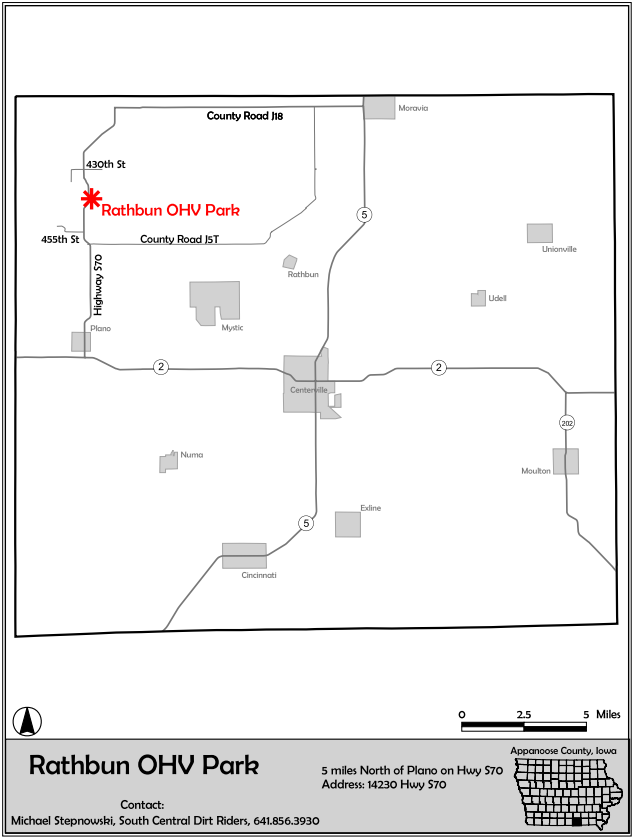
# Lakeview OHV Park



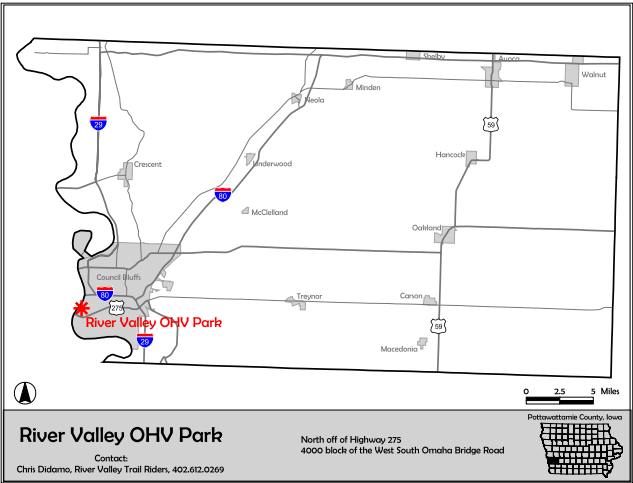
# Nicholson-Ford OHV Park



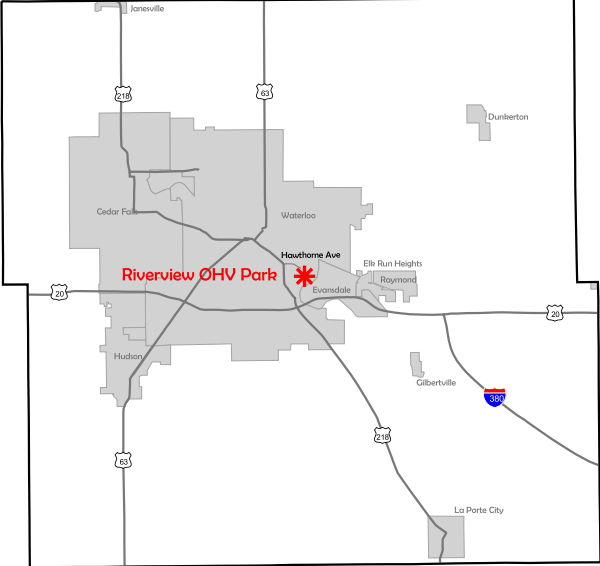
# Rathbun OHV Park




# River Valley OHV Park



# Riverview OHV Park





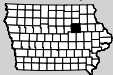
02.55 Miles

## Riverview OHV Park

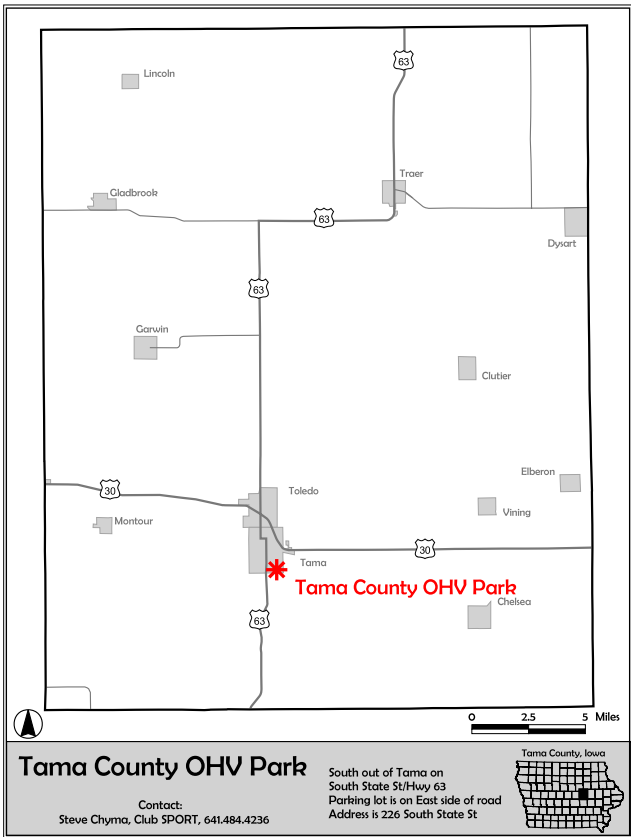
Contact:  
Shawn Hoaglan, Trail Blazers, 319.334.6807

Hwy 218 to Hawthorne Ave  
Take Hawthorne East  
Turn immediately to the Right & then Left  
(to jog around Peoples Appliance)  
3 blocks to the parking lot

Black Hawk County, Iowa



# Tama County OHV Park



# Conservation Officers

Adair	Eric Sansgaard.....	712-520-0303
Adams	Andrea Bevington.....	712-520-0508
Allamakee	Bill Collins.....	563-380-0801
	Vicky Hanson.....	563-380-0800
Appanoose	Randy McPherran.....	641-777-2164
	Dallas Davis.....	641-777-2163
Audubon	Brian Smith.....	712-250-0061
Benton	Brett Reece (West ½).....	641-751-0931
	Ron Lane (East ½).....	319-350-2871
Black Hawk	Aron Arthur.....	319-939-4448
	Mike Bonser.....	319-240-5034
Boone	Mark Edwards.....	515-290-0177
	Bill Fribley.....	515-290-0527
Bremer	Vacant.....	319-939-4448
	Mike Bonser.....	319-240-5034
Buchanan	Scott Kineth.....	562-920-0566
Buena Vista	Brent Koppie.....	712-260-1010
Butler	Greg Woodley.....	319-240-8033
Calhoun	Nathan Hauptert.....	712-330-8462
Carroll	Dan Pauley.....	515-370-0422
Cass	Eric Sansgaard.....	712-250-0303
Cedar	Shawn Meier.....	319-530-6121
Cerro Gordo	Randy Schnoebelen.....	641-425-0822
	Ben Bergman.....	641-425-0828
Cherokee	Brent Koppie (East ½).....	712-260-1010
	Chad Morrow (West ½).....	712-260-1023
Chickasaw	Al Baxter.....	319-240-6662
Clarke	Craig Roberg.....	641-414-2174
Clay	Gary Biederman.....	712-260-1004
Clayton	Jerry Farmer.....	563-880-0422
	Burt Walters.....	563-880-0108
Clinton	Luke Webinger.....	563-357-1078
Crawford	Gary Sisco.....	712-420-1486
Dallas	Craig Lonneman.....	515-238-5005
Davis	Matt Rush.....	641-777-7805
	Bob Stuchel.....	641-777-2169
Decatur	Craig Roberg.....	641-414-2174
Delaware	Scott Kineth (West ½).....	563-920-0566
	Aric Slotterdyk (West ½).....	319-350-2863
	Mike Oувerson (East ½).....	563-590-1944
	Andrew Keil (East ½).....	563-590-1945
Des Moines	Les Nieland (West ½).....	319-759-1957
	Paul Kay.....	319-759-0751
Dickinson	Jeff Morrison.....	712-260-1017
	Gary Owen.....	712-260-1018



Dubuque	Mike Ouverson.....	563-590-1944
	Andrew Keil .....	563-590-1945
Emmet	Gary Koppie .....	712-260-1009
Fayette	Dave Elledge.....	563-380-0497
Floyd	Eric Johnston.....	319-240-9174
Franklin	Greg Woodley.....	319-240-8033
Fremont	Marlowe Wilson .....	712-520-0506
Greene	Dan Pauley .....	515-370-0422
Grundy	Jeremy King .....	641-751-5246
Guthrie	Brian Smith.....	712-250-0061
Hamilton	Chuck Humeston .....	515-571-7060
Hancock	Ken Lonneman.....	641-425-0823
Hardin	Chuck Humeston .....	515-571-7060
Harrison	Dave Tierney.....	712-249-2015
Henry	Les Nieland.....	319-759-1957
Howard	Al Baxter .....	319-240-6662
Humboldt	Matt Bruner .....	515-571-0127
Ida	Dan Mork.....	712-260-1016
Iowa	Brad Baker.....	319-430-1630
Jackson	Mike Macke .....	319-480-0397
	Jeff Harrison .....	563-543-5259
Jasper	Kirby Bragg.....	641-521-2003
Jefferson	Chris Flynn.....	641-919-9115
Johnson	Brad Baker.....	319-430-1630
	Erika Billerbeck.....	319-330-9710
Jones	Mike Macke .....	319-480-0397
	Jeff Harrison .....	563-543-5259
Keokuk	Jacob Fulk .....	319-653-1636
Kossuth	Virginia Ashby .....	712-260-1003
Lee	Joseph Fourdyce.....	319-470-0788
Linn	Aric Sloterdijk .....	319-350-2863
	Ron Lane .....	319-350-2871
Louisa	Larry Dessner .....	563-260-1225
Lucas	Kyle Jensen .....	641-414-2175
Lyon	Greg Harson.....	712-260-1006
Madison	Craig Lonneman .....	515-238-5005
Mahaska	Mike Ryan .....	641-660-0741
Marion	John Mertz .....	641-891-2004
	Jason Sandholdt .....	641-891-2005
Marshall	Jeremy King .....	641-751-5246
Mills	Michael Miller .....	712-520-0121
Mitchell	Eric Johnston.....	319-240-9174
Monona	Gary Sisco .....	712-420-1486
Monroe	Dallas Davis.....	641-777-2163
	Randy McPherren .....	641-777-2164
Montgomery	Deb Howe.....	712-520-0507
Muscatine	Tom Campbell.....	563-260-1223
O'Brien	John Sells (West ½) .....	712-260-1019
	Gary Biederman (East ½) .....	712-260-1004
Osceola	Greg Harson.....	712-260-1006

Page	Deb Howe.....	712-520-0507
Palo Alto	Gary Koppie .....	712-260-1009
Plymouth	Chad Morrow .....	712-260-1023
Pocahontas	Nathan Hauptert.....	712-330-8462
Polk	Brandon Bergquist.....	515-238-5006
	Jeff Swearngin.....	515-238-4849
Pottawattamie	Andrea Bevington.....	712-520-0121
	Doug Clayton .....	712-520-5570
Poweshiek	Mike Ryan .....	641-660-0741
Ringgold	Marc Roberg.....	641-414-2173
Sac	Dan Mork.....	712-260-1016
Scott	Ed Kocal .....	563-349-8953
	Terry Nims .....	563-349-9418
Shelby	Dave Tierney.....	712-249-2015
Sioux	John Sells.....	712-260-1019
Story	Bill Fribley.....	515-290-0527
	Mark Edwards.....	515-290-0177
Tama	Brett Reece.....	641-751-0931
Taylor	Andrea Bevington.....	712-520-0508
Union	Marc Roberg.....	641-414-2173
Van Buren	Chris Flynn.....	641-919-9115
Wapello	Matt Rush.....	641-777-7805
	Bob Stuchel .....	641-777-2169
Warren	Craig Cutts.....	515-238-4847
Washington	Jacob Fulk .....	319-653-1636
Wayne	Kyle Jensen .....	641-414-2175
Webster	Matt Bruner .....	515-571-0127
Winnebago	Matt Washburn .....	641-425-0821
Winneshiek	Brian Roffman.....	563-380-0496
Woodbury	Steven Griebel .....	712-260-1005
	Stacey Sisco .....	712-260-1028
Worth	Matt Washburn .....	641-425-0821
Wright	Ken Lonneman.....	
641-425-0823		

## Recreational Safety Officers

NW - District 1	Marty Eby .....	712-260-1036
NE - District 2	Pat Jorgensen.....	319-240-8640
SW - District 3	Dale Anderson .....	712-250-0302
SE - District 4	Ken Kenyon .....	563-357-1812
NC - District 5	Jeff Barnes .....	515-290-4907
SC - District 6	Allen Crouse .....	515-238-4955

# ORV Trail Signs

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Trail Marker



Restricted



Trail Sign



Trail Blazer



Directional  
Blazer



ATV Route Arrows



Caution  
Signs



Stop Sign



Chevron

## ATV Trail Difficulty Signs



Easiest



More Difficult



Most Difficult

# Iowa Department of Natural Resources



**DNR ATV/Licensing Staff**.....515-281-5918

ATV titling and registration questions

County Recorder Liaison

**Iowa OHV Association**.....712-358-1870

[www.iowaohv.com](http://www.iowaohv.com)



**Visit our website:  
[www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov)**

**Everything you want to know  
about what's going on outdoors in  
Iowa is just a click away.**