



offroad-ed.com™

the **HANDBOOK!**

MASSACHUSETTS OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE LAWS

**and SAFE OPERATING
PROCEDURES
for OHVs**



Off-highway vehicles (OHVs) have been increasing in popularity over the past decade. As trails and recreation areas become more crowded, it's more important than ever for people to operate these vehicles safely and responsibly.

Sean's Law

On July 31, 2010 Governor Deval Patrick signed Sean's Law, in memory of my son Sean Kearney, who died from injuries he sustained while riding on an ATV at a friend's house in 2006. This law makes Massachusetts the toughest law in the nation regarding children's safety on Off-Road Vehicles.

We couldn't prevent Sean's death, but our intention is to prevent another child from being seriously injured. You can't regulate common sense, but you can create stricter laws, with tougher penalties. When it comes to our children's safety there are no second chances.



Katie Kearney

ATV Connection
www.atvconnection.com

ATV Safety Institute
www.atvsafety.org

ATV Source
www.atvsource.com

Motorcycle Safety Foundation
www.msf-usa.org

National Off-Highway Vehicle
Conservation Council
nOHVcc.org

Recreational Off-Highway
Vehicle Association
www.rohva.org

Tread Lightly!®
www.treadlightly.org

the
HANDBOOK!

of
MASSACHUSETTS
OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE
LAWS
and **SAFE OPERATING**
PROCEDURES
for **OHVs**

Published by Kalkomey Enterprises, Inc., 14086 Proton Road, Dallas, TX 75244,
214-351-0461. Printed in the U.S.A.

Copyright © 2014 by Kalkomey Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any process without permission in writing from Kalkomey Enterprises, Inc. Effort has been made to make this publication as complete and accurate as possible. All references contained in this publication have been compiled from sources believed to be reliable, and to represent the best current opinion on the subject. Kalkomey Enterprises, Inc. is not responsible or liable for any claims, liabilities, damages, or other adverse effects or consequences to any person or property caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly from the application or use of the information contained in this publication. P0214

 **kalkomey™**
www.kalkomey.com

Table of Contents

OHV Basics

Before You Ride

Getting To Know Your Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV)	4
Learning the Common ATV Parts	6
Learning the Common OHV Parts	8
Learning the Common UTV Parts	10
Using Protective Clothing and Gear	12
Inspecting Your OHV Before You Ride	14
Additional Gear	15

Riding Your OHV

Operating Your OHV	16
Using Correct Riding Techniques	18
Reading and Traversing Terrain	20
Riding on Different Types of Terrain	20

Kids on Wheels

Note to Parents: Is Your Child Ready to Ride?	22
Choosing an Appropriate OHV	22
Your Role as a Parent	22
Children Are at Risk	23

Off-Road Basics

Riding Safely

Be Prepared	24
What To Bring Along	24
Observing the Code of Safety	25

Using Courteous Trail Etiquette	25
Protecting the Environment	26

It's the Law!

Massachusetts Laws

Definitions	28
Massachusetts Recreation Vehicle Laws	29
Establishing the Off-Road Vehicle Program Fund	29
Respecting the Rights of Others	30
Registering Your OHV	31

Understanding Operator Requirements	34
Meeting OHV Equipment Requirements	36
Understanding Your Other Responsibilities	38
Operating Your OHV Legally	41

Designated OHV Parks and Trails	45
Trail Signs	inside back cover

Terminology Used in This Handbook

This handbook uses these three-letter acronyms to refer to vehicles.

- **ATV** All-Terrain Vehicle. A type of OHV with four low-pressure, knobby tires designed for riding on unpaved surfaces. ATVs are powered by gasoline engines and have handlebars for steering and a seat designed to be straddled by the rider.
- **OHM** Off-Highway Motorcycle. A type of motorcycle equipped for certain off-road sports. These motorcycles may or may not be “street-legal.”
- **OHV** Off-Highway Vehicle. A two-, four-, or six-wheeled vehicle that has a motor and is designed for riding on unpaved surfaces.
- **RUV** Recreation Utility Vehicles (ORVs, UTVs, or mule-type vehicles). Motorized flotation tire vehicles limited in engine displacement to less than 1,500 cubic centimeters and in total dry weight to not more than 1,800 pounds that have four or six low-pressure tires, a bench seat (not intended to be straddled by the operator), and a steering wheel for control.
- **UTV** Utility Terrain Vehicle. A type of OHV where the driver and a passenger can sit side-by-side in the vehicle. They are most commonly known as UTVs (Utility-Terrain Vehicle or just Utility Vehicle) or Side-by-Side Vehicles. UTVs are not designed for use on paved surfaces. UTVs have a steering wheel and at least four but not more than six low-pressure tires.

Before You Ride

Getting To Know Your Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV)

An OHV is not a toy. It's a vehicle built primarily for off-road recreation. OHVs can provide hours of safe, enjoyable off-road riding. But OHVs also can be dangerous if you don't understand your vehicle or know proper riding procedures.



- Because there are different types of OHVs and each has its own handling characteristics, it's important for you to study your owner's manual and understand how to operate your particular vehicle. For example, most OHVs have front and rear brakes, but some have linked brakes. You need to know the correct braking techniques for your vehicle.
- OHVs also use different transmissions, shifting mechanisms, throttle mechanisms, starting mechanisms, cooling systems, and axle designs.
- Controls and their locations also differ from one model to another. Learn to find each control without looking at it.

Above all, remember these facts.

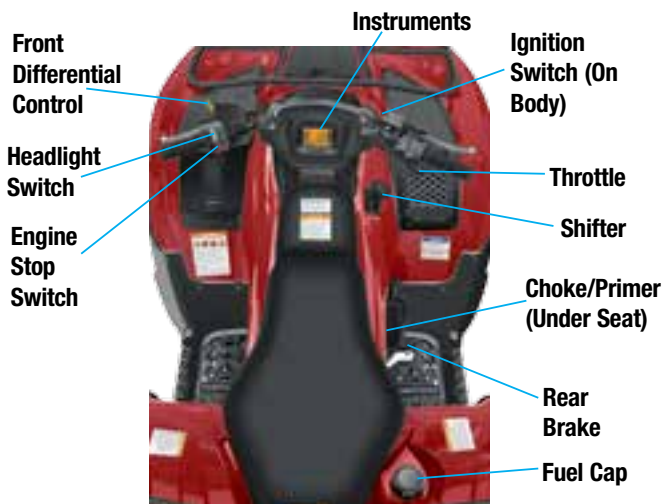
- OHVs are designed primarily for off-road use.
- Operating an OHV on paved surfaces can be hazardous because of handling issues.
- Riding on paved roads is a leading cause of OHV-related fatalities.
- Only carry a passenger if your machine is designed by the manufacturer to carry another person; most are not.



Learning the Common ATV Parts

All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are four-wheel vehicles **designed exclusively for use on off-road terrain, primarily for a single rider.**

- Your ATV may or may not have all the parts and controls shown in these illustrations. Also, their positions may vary from model to model.
- Consult your owner's manual to learn the specific parts, controls, and locations for your model.

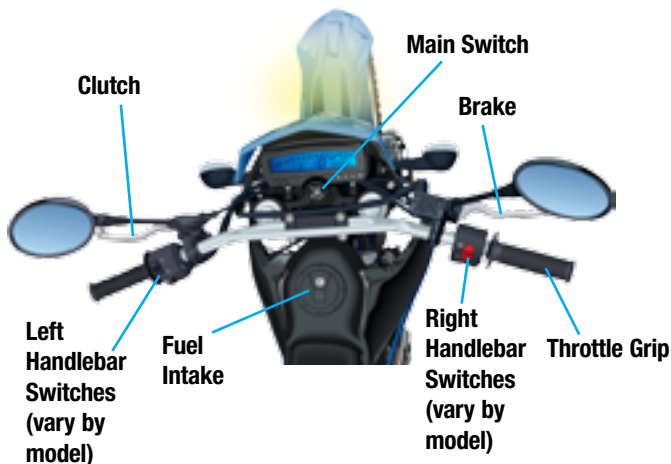




Learning the Common OHM Parts

Off-highway motorcycles (OHMs) are categorized by a number of off-road sports, the most notable being motocross, enduro, and dual-purpose.

- Your OHM may or may not have all the parts and controls shown in these illustrations. Also, their positions may vary from model to model.
- Consult your owner's manual to learn the specific parts, controls, and locations for your model.



**Spark
Arrestor/Muffler**

Fuel Tank

Footpeg



Headlight

**Fuel
Shut-Off
Valve**

**Air Cleaner
(under panel)**

Shifter

Footpeg

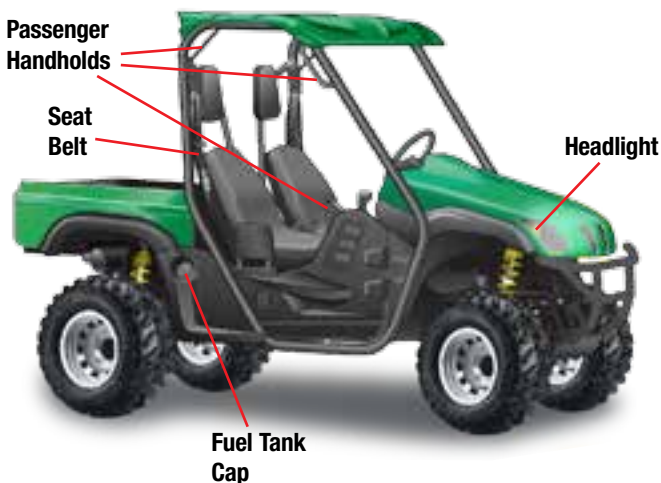
Sidestand

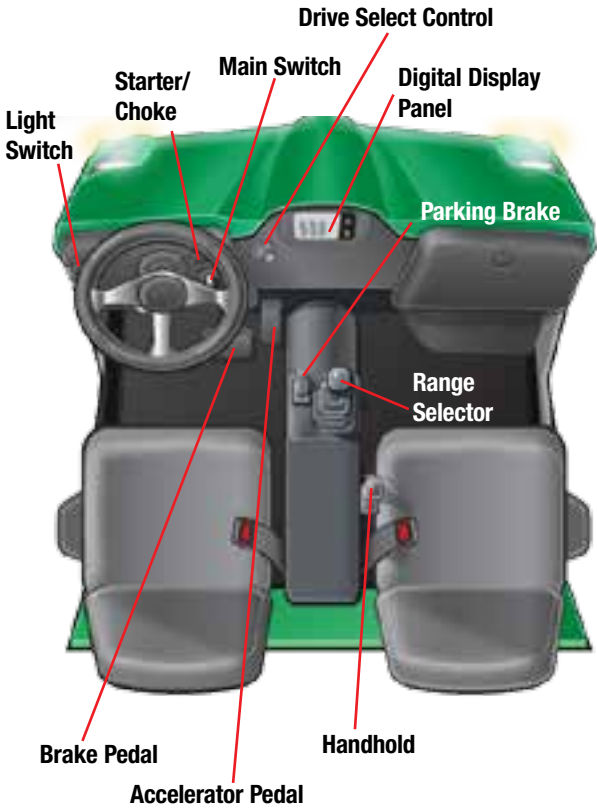


Learning the Common UTV Parts

UTVs are designed specifically for off-highway use and are not intended by the manufacturers to be operated on paved surfaces.

- Although UTVs have a roll cage, injuries from rollovers are an inherent risk of OHV use.
- All operators and passengers should always wear DOT–approved helmets and keep their arms and legs inside the UTV at all times.





(items and their positions vary by model)

Using Protective Clothing and Gear

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

Never operate an OHV without these essential items:

■ OHV helmet

- Helps prevent serious head injury.
- Should fit snugly and fasten securely.
- May be a full-face helmet or an open-face helmet plus eye protection.
- Add a stripe of reflective tape to make you more visible at night.
- Must be a U.S. Department of Transportation–approved crash helmet.

■ Goggles or other eye protection

- Be aware that branches, road debris, and insects can hit your eyes and distract or even blind you.
- Do not use sunglasses, which do not provide adequate protection. Use goggles or a face shield.
- Choose high-impact eye protection that bears the marking VESC8 (or V-8) or Z87.1 or is made of hard-coated polycarbonate.
- Carry gray-tinted eye protection for bright days, yellow-tinted for overcast days, and clear for night rides.
- Make sure your eye protection is scratch-free, securely fastened, and well-ventilated to avoid fogging.

■ Gloves

- Keep your hands warm in cold weather.
- Prevent soreness and fatigue.
- Offer protection during a spill or collision with branches.
- Should be padded over the knuckles for the best protection.

■ Boots

- Heels prevent your feet from slipping off footrests.
- Off-road boots are best, protecting lower legs, ankles, and feet.

■ Long pants and long-sleeved shirt or jacket

- Protect you from scratches and extremes of weather.
- Provide the best protection with off-road riding gear that includes:
 - Pants with kneepads
 - Chest and shoulder protectors



Cold Weather Riding

In cold weather, clothing that works well for snowmobile riders is also ideal for most OHV enthusiasts.

- Clothing should fit snugly and still be comfortable.
- Clothing that's too loose can snag on your vehicle, twigs, and branches.

Inspecting Your OHV Before You Ride

Nothing spoils an outing faster than mechanical problems. In some cases, malfunctioning equipment also can cause injuries.

- Set the parking brake.
- Consult your owner's manual for items that may need to be lubricated, tightened, adjusted, aligned, or checked for wear.

Always Make a Pre-Ride Inspection



Key items include:

- Wheels and lug nuts
- Throttle
- Foot shifter
- Brakes
- Air Filter
- Drive chain or drive shaft
- Steering system
- Spark plugs
- Lights
- Engine stop switch
- Spark arrestor/muffler

Tires

OHV tires take a lot of punishment, so maintaining the correct tire pressure is critical.

- Consult your owner's manual for the recommended pressure.
- Check the tire pressure before each trip. Over- or under-inflated tires:
 - Can result in tire or wheel damage.
 - May change the handling characteristics of your OHV.
- For low-pressure tires, use a low-pressure gauge.
- Be sure all tires have the same pressure. Otherwise, vehicles may pull left or right.
- Check for damage that could cause an air leak.

Routine Maintenance

Off-road riding puts a strain on your OHV, so it's important to perform the scheduled maintenance recommended in your owner's manual. You can avoid a breakdown and possible injury.

Additional Gear

- Mechanical problems can occur at any time, so it's wise to carry the tool kit and owner's manual that came with your OHV.
- In addition, you should carry some spare parts and emergency items:
 - Cell phone
 - Electrical and duct tape
 - Extra key
 - Extra spark plugs—worn plugs are the number one cause of engine stalling
 - First-aid kit
 - Flashlight
 - Headlight and taillight bulbs
 - Knife
 - Sturdy tow rope or chain
 - Sunblock
 - Survival kit
 - 25 feet of nylon rope
- For longer trips, see “What To Bring Along” on page 24.

Riding Your OHV

Operating Your OHV

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

Starting the Engine

First, consult your owner's manual. Typically, you will:

- Point the OHV in a safe direction.
- 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.
- Put the choke in the “on” position if the engine is cold.
- Start the engine.

Adjusting Your Posture

- To make sure you can shift your weight quickly when necessary and reach the controls easily, always maintain proper posture:
 - Head up and eyes looking far ahead
 - Hands on the handlebars
 - Feet on the footrests, toes pointing straight ahead
- Removing one hand or foot can reduce your ability to control the OHV or could cause you to lose your balance and fall off.
- Removing your feet from the footrests or dragging your feet on the ground can result in serious injury if your feet get under the rear wheels.

Starting Off

After the engine is warmed up:

- If your vehicle has a sidestand, retract it.
- Apply the rear brake.
- Shift into gear.
- Release the parking brake.
- Release the rear brake.
- Apply the throttle slowly.



Shifting Gears

- There are different types of transmissions on OHVs, so read your owner's manual for instructions on shifting your model.
- If you have a manual transmission, always let off the throttle while shifting to prevent the front wheels from lifting.

Braking

- The proper braking method depends on whether your OHV has brakes in the front, rear, or both.
- Consult your owner's manual for correct braking procedures.

Parking

- Stop the OHV on a level surface, not on an incline.
- Stop the engine.
- Shift the transmission into neutral or park.
- Set the parking brake.
- If your vehicle has a parking mechanism, allow the drive train to lock.

Using Correct Riding Techniques

Turning

Consult your owner's manual for information on turning your OHV properly. In general, you should:

- Turn at low to medium speeds.
- Move forward on the seat and lean in the direction of the turn.
- Turn the handlebars while looking where you are turning.
- Speed up slightly as you come out of the turn.
- If an OHV starts to tip, lean your body farther into the turn and gradually 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 as described in your owner's manual. You could lose control of your OHV, or it could overturn.
- In general, you should:
 - Use good judgment. If the hill looks too steep for your OHV or your abilities, it probably is.
 - Start the climb by shifting into a lower gear. Speed up to maintain momentum.

**Proper Uphill
Riding Position**



- Move up on the seat and lean forward, or stand and position your torso over the front wheels.
 - Keep your weight uphill and your feet on the footrests.
- If you can't see what is on or over the crest of a hill, slow down until you have a clear view.

Riding Downhill

- Always carefully check the terrain before you start down any hill. Choose a downhill path that is as straight as possible with a minimum of obstacles.
- When going downhill, remember to:
- Shift your weight to the rear.
 - Maintain a low speed.
 - Use a lower gear.
 - Brake gradually.
 - Look ahead.



Proper Downhill Riding Position

Traversing a Slope

- You may encounter hills that are too steep to ascend or descend in a straight line. In that case, you may be able to drive across, or traverse, the slope at an angle. However, don't attempt to traverse a slope with surfaces that are extremely slippery, rough, or loose.
- When traversing, be sure to:
- Keep both feet firmly on the footrests.
 - Lean your upper body uphill.
 - Keep your speed steady.

Reading and Traversing Terrain

To ride safely, you need to be able to assess the terrain ahead of you and understand the capabilities of your machine.

- Stay on existing trails. Avoid dangerous terrain such as steep slopes, marshes, and swamps. Also, keep an eye out for large holes, ruts, bumps, debris, and other obstacles.
- Travel at speeds appropriate for the terrain, visibility, operating conditions, and your ability.
- Constantly scan the path ahead of you to pick the safest route around obstacles or hazards.
- Carefully approach hills, turns, and other obstacles.
- Be especially alert when traveling over unfamiliar terrain.



Riding on Different Types of Terrain

Snow

OHVs and all other wheeled vehicles are prohibited from using state snowmobile trails unless designated for OHV use.

- Ride only on firm snow or groomed trails where permitted by law. Riding on soft snow can damage the terrain.
- Watch for snow drifts. They may cause an accident or cause you to get stuck.

Sand Dunes

- Mount an antenna flag on your OHV so others can see you.
- Avoid riding on vegetation or wet sand.

Crossing Roads and Highways

- Because OHVs are designed for off-road use, they can be difficult to handle on paved surfaces. Riding on or crossing a road illegally or improperly is a leading cause of OHV rider fatalities.
- If you must cross a road, follow this safe procedure.
 - Stop at a right angle to the road.
 - Pick a crossing point where you have good visibility in both directions.
 - Bring your vehicle to a complete stop on the shoulder of the road.
 - Look both ways, and yield to oncoming traffic.
 - Proceed forward slowly because your OHV may be difficult to maneuver on pavement.
- Drive straight across the road.

Safety Tips

- Don't ride alone.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Don't operate tired.

ORVs legally operate on ORV trails.



Cars legally operate on roads.



Kids on Wheels

Note to Parents: Is Your Child Ready to Ride?

- If your child meets the age requirement (see pages 34-35) it's your job to assess whether he or she is truly ready to ride.
- To make an informed decision, you must consider several factors.
 - **Physical Development:** Can your youngster sit comfortably on the OHV and reach the controls easily?
 - **Motor Skills:** Is your child's coordination adequate for the challenge of riding an OHV?
 - **Visual Perception:** Does your child have good depth perception, peripheral vision, and the ability to judge distances?
 - **Social/Emotional Maturity:** Will your youngster understand the risks involved in riding an OHV, make good decisions to avoid accidents, and drive responsibly?

Choosing an Appropriate OHV

For your child's safety and comfort, it is recommended that you match your child with an OHV of a size, type, and engine size that is appropriate for his or her age group.

Your Role as a Parent

- You will be your child's teacher and safety advisor, so you must be familiar with your youngster's OHV. You will need to know the controls, handling characteristics, maintenance requirements, and proper riding techniques.
- Supervise your child during riding practice, and encourage good riding habits and appropriate behavior.

Children Are at Risk

Nationwide, statistics show that children under the age of 16 account for 40% of OHV accidents and fatalities. Several factors contribute to this risk.



■ **Lack of Visual Adult Supervision**

■ **Physical Factors:** A major

cause of accidents among juvenile riders is riding a machine that's too large for them to handle physically.

- **Leg Length:** When a child stands on the footrests, the top inseam of the pants should be a minimum of three inches above the seat. While seated, the thigh should be roughly parallel to the ground.
- **Foot Length:** A child should be able to reach the brake by rotating the foot on the footrest.
- **Arm Length:** When seated on the machine, a child's arms should be long enough to:
 - Turn the handlebars and maintain a firm grip.
 - Operate the throttle comfortably.
 - Operate the brake lever.
- **Strength:** A child must have the strength to operate the controls properly.

■ **Perceptual, Motor, and Maturity Factors:** Children up to age 16 are at risk when operating OHVs because they:

- Perceive distances to be greater than what they actually are.
- Have a shorter attention span than adults.
- React more slowly than adults.
- Take more risks—particularly males—and perceive less danger in those risks than adults.
- Try to imitate more complex maneuvers of parents or older friends.

Riding Safely

Be Prepared

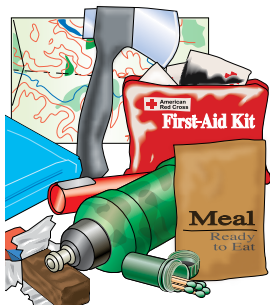
- Anytime you venture into off-road terrain, some risk is involved. You could become stranded because of mechanical problems; caught in unexpected, severe weather; or injured or lost.
- Other factors such as rough terrain, climate extremes, and remoteness, also increase the chance of accidents.

Before You Leave ...

Tell someone where and with whom you are riding 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 well-stocked first-aid kit. Take a first-aid course so that you'll know what to do in an emergency.
- **Survival Kit:** In addition to the items above, also carry:
 - Candy bars (or other high-energy food)
 - Emergency food and water (enough for one or two extra days)
 - Flashlight
 - Hand axe or saw
 - Signal flares
 - Tarpaulin
 - Waterproof matches
- **Other useful items:**
 - Radio for weather reports
 - Mobile phone and a GPS unit



Observing the Code of Safety

- Be sure your vehicle is in good mechanical condition.
- Familiarize yourself with your vehicle by reading your owner's manual.
- Wear protective clothing suitable for the environment.
- Use a helmet with goggles or a face shield to prevent injuries from twigs and road debris.
- Make sure the light system works properly.
- Don't remove the factory-installed air box or muffler.
- Know the terrain where you plan to ride.
- Be aware of the weather forecast, especially ice and snow conditions.
- Respect people and animals you encounter.
- Never venture out alone.

Using Courteous Trail Etiquette

- Ride only where permitted.
- Be considerate of others on the trail, and keep to the right.
- Always yield to uphill traffic.
- Slow down when someone is passing you.
- Yield the right-of-way to bikers, horses, and hikers.
- Leave gates as you find them.
- Report downed trees and trail maintenance needs to land managers.
- Report illegal riding.
- Carry out what you carry in.

Protecting the Environment

Tread Lightly!

The Tread Lightly! program supports recreationists by encouraging outdoor ethics. The word “tread” helps us remember to:

Travel responsibly on roads and trails or in permitted areas.

- Stay on designated roads. Don't blaze a new trail.
- Travel only in areas open to your type of vehicle.
- Drive over obstacles to avoid widening the trail.
- Cross streams only at designated crossings.
- Comply with all signs, and respect barriers.
- Don't mix riding with alcohol or drugs.

Respect the rights of others, including private property owners and all recreational trail users, campers, and others.

- Slow down around crowds and in camping areas.
- Never cross private land without permission.
- Yield the right-of-way when you meet others on the trail.
- If you meet a horse and rider, turn off your engine.
- Stay clear of wild animals, and avoid disturbing livestock.
- Minimize noise, and avoid creating dust.

Educate yourself by obtaining travel maps and regulations from public agencies, and knowing how to use and operate your equipment safely.

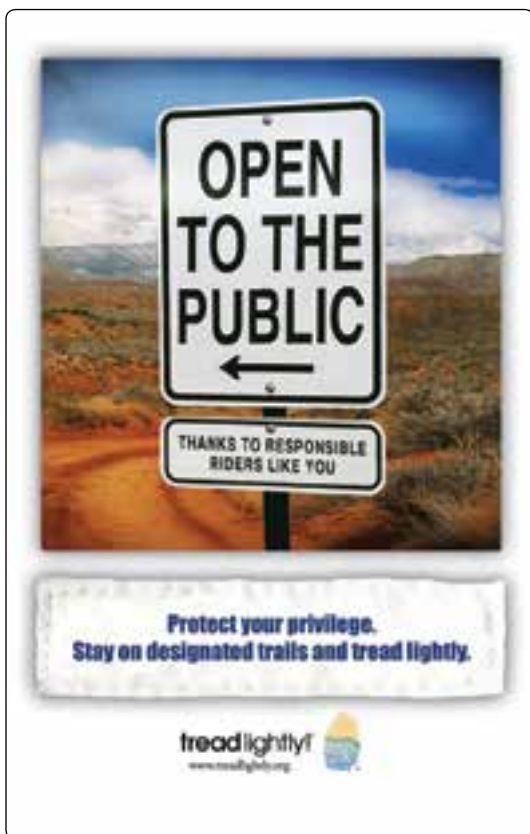
- Get maps that show the area where you plan to ride.
- Learn about regulations governing OHVs in the area.

Avoid sensitive areas such as meadows, lakeshores, wetlands, and streams. Stay on designated routes.

- Avoid sensitive habitats, including living desert soils, tundra, and seasonal nesting or breeding areas.
- Stay out of designated wilderness areas.

Do your part by leaving the area better than you found it, properly disposing of waste, minimizing the use of fire, avoiding the spread of invasive species, and restoring degraded areas.

- Practice minimum impact camping.
- Equip your vehicle with a spark arrestor.
- Before and after a ride, wash your vehicle to reduce the spread of invasive species.



Massachusetts Laws

Definitions

- In Massachusetts, the term off-highway vehicle (OHV), also known as a recreation vehicle, includes any motor vehicle designed or modified for use over unimproved terrain for recreation or pleasure while not being operated on a public way including, but not limited to, all-terrain vehicles, off-highway motorcycles, dirt bikes, recreation utility vehicles, and all registered motor vehicles.
 - Some Massachusetts laws apply to both recreation vehicles (OHVs) and snow vehicles (snowmobiles).
 - Some Massachusetts laws apply to recreation vehicles only or to snow vehicles only.
- A “recreation vehicle” has wheels. Recreation vehicles include ATVs, ORVs, UTVs, 4x4s, mule-type vehicles, dirt bikes, and off-highway motorcycles.
- According to Massachusetts law, “**recreation vehicles**” include:
 - **All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)**—motorized recreational vehicles designed or modified for travel on four low-pressure tires that have a seat designed to be straddled by the operator and handlebars for steering control
 - **Recreation Utility Vehicles (ORVs, UTVs, or mule-type vehicles)**—motorized flotation tire vehicles limited in engine displacement to less than 1,500 cubic centimeters and in total dry weight to not more than 1,800 pounds that have four or six low-pressure tires, a bench seat (not intended to be straddled by the operator), and a steering wheel for control
 - **Dirt Bikes (Off-Highway Motorcycles)**—lightweight motorcycles that are equipped with two in-line wheels and designed for operation on unpaved surfaces, dirt roads, and trails

Massachusetts Recreation Vehicle Laws

- On July 31, 2010, the Massachusetts legislature approved revisions to the Massachusetts Recreation Vehicle Laws. Included in the new provisions are:
 - Establishment of an OHV program fund to support improved riding opportunities and law enforcement efforts
 - Age restrictions for vehicle operators
 - Education requirements for OHV operators under 18 years of age
 - Increased penalties for illegal use of an OHV or snowmobile
- For more information, go to: www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXIV/Chapter90B/

Establishing the Off-Road Vehicle Program Fund

Legislation approved on July 31, 2010, established funding for various OHV and snowmobile programs.

- Revenues from OHV and snowmobile registration and operating fines will be paid into the fund to support safer operation and improved opportunities for enjoying off-road vehicles.
- Administered by the Executive Office of Energy and Environment Affairs, the fund will provide:
 - Increased law enforcement
 - Improved safety education for operators
 - Additional designated riding trails and improvements to existing trails

Respecting the Rights of Others

- Ethics cover behavior that has to do with issues of fairness, respect, and responsibility not covered by laws.
- The best way for Massachusetts OHV riders to protect their riding privileges is to show respect for landowners, the public, and the environment.
 - Never cross private land without permission.
 - Follow landowner restrictions regarding when and where you may ride.
 - Leave all gates as you found them, open or closed.
 - Prevent erosion and protect sensitive habitats such as ocean beaches, dunes, streams, and wetlands.
- Do your part to preserve the state's rich heritage of respect for property owners and the environment.



Registering Your OHV

Massachusetts Registration

- All OHVs operated on public or private property must be registered through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Those OHVs used exclusively for agricultural, forestry, lumbering, or construction purposes must apply for an exemption at MEP registration offices.
- Registrations are valid for two years for residents and one year for nonresidents.
- Out-of-state OHV registrations are not valid in Massachusetts.
- All newly acquired OHVs must be registered in person at one of our five registration offices or by mail. You will need to provide:
 - Manufacturer's Certificate of Origin (if vehicle was purchased new)
 - Bill of sale
 - Proof of payment of sales tax
 - Vehicle identification number
 - Required fee
 - Properly completed and signed application form
- Renewal and duplicate transactions are the only transactions that can be processed online at **www.sport.state.ma.us**.
- After receiving the appropriate documents and registration fee, the state will issue a registration number, an expiration decal, and a registration card containing the vehicle number.



**Registration
decal for left
and right side of
vehicle**



- For questions regarding OHV registration:
 - Contact your local Massachusetts Environmental Police office.
 - Call **617-626-1610**.
 - Visit the Registration Bureau website at: **www.mass.gov/ole**

Registration Numbers and Decal

It is illegal to operate unless in possession of the OHV registration decals and card.

- The registration card must be carried on the vehicle and made available for inspection by law enforcement officers and property owners.
- The registration number and expiration decal must be displayed as follows.
 - Number must be painted or applied as a decal or sticker to both sides of the forward half of the OHV. On dirt bikes only, the registration number may be placed on the upper fork tubes, fuel tank, or front fender of the vehicle.
 - Number must be clearly visible and not obstructed.
 - Number must be at least three inches high and at least one-half inch wide.
 - Number's color must contrast sharply with its background.
 - Number must be maintained in a legible condition at all times.
 - The expiration decal must be affixed to the registration number decal or sticker on the left side of the OHV. The left side is determined from the viewpoint of the operator when seated and facing forward.



Understanding Operator Requirements

Age Restrictions

- **Persons under the age of 16½** may operate a recreation vehicle across a public way **only if** the operator is directly supervised by an adult. The public way and the crossing must be marked and approved for recreation vehicle use.

A supervising adult must be at least 18 years of age and sufficiently close to the operator at all times to maintain both visual contact and verbal communications with the operator. Supervising adults will be held responsible for any operational offenses by the person they are supervising.

- **Persons 14 to 16 years of age** may operate an all-terrain or recreation utility vehicle **only if**:
 - The engine capacity is no greater than 90 cubic centimeters *and ...*
 - The operator is directly supervised by an adult.
- **Persons 10 to 14 years of age** may operate an OHV **only if** participating in a sanctioned race, rally, or organized event.
 - The engine capacity of the OHV must be no greater than 90 cubic centimeters.
 - The race, rally, or organized event must be approved by a municipal permitting authority.
 - OHV operation in preparation for the sanctioned event is allowed up to 21 days prior to the event.
 - During preparation and at the event, persons 10 to 14 years of age must be supervised by an adult at all times.
- **Persons under 10 years of age**:
 - May not operate a recreation vehicle, other than a dirt bike, under any circumstances.

- May operate a dirt bike that is appropriate for the child's size and age only if the child is participating in a sanctioned race, rally, or organized event.
 - The race, rally, or organized event must be approved by a municipal permitting authority.
 - For persons under 10 years of age, dirt bike operation in preparation for the sanctioned event must take place on private property.
 - During preparation and at the event, persons under 10 years of age must be supervised by an adult at all times.

A municipal permitting authority is:

- The chief of a municipal police department *or* ...
- A designee of the chief *or* ...
- The municipal official responsible for public safety.

Safety Education Requirements

- All recreation vehicle operators **under 18 years of age** must complete an approved recreation vehicle safety and responsibility course.
- Operators required to take a safety course must carry proof of successful completion of the course.
 - The course includes one mandatory, in-person session.
 - If the recreation vehicle operator is **under 16 years of age**, the parent or guardian must attend this session also.
- To find out more about the education requirements, visit:
www.mass.gov/ole



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Off Highway Certificate

Joey Rider

Male
Eye: Blue
Hair: Blonde
DOB: 7/28/1999

Course Provider:
Valid From: 4/26/2012
Card Number: 241

Safety Education and Registration Exemptions

- The Director of the Office of Law Enforcement, Massachusetts Environmental Police, may exempt a participant of a sanctioned event who is not a resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts from the recreation vehicle safety education and registration requirements.
- To find out more about the non-resident exemption process contact the Massachusetts Environmental Police Boat & Recreation Vehicle Safety Bureau at **508-564-4961**.

Meeting OHV Equipment Requirements Requirements for Riders

- Before an OHV may be operated in Massachusetts, the vehicle and its riders must have the required equipment.
- Anyone operating, riding on, or being towed by an OHV must wear a helmet that is properly fitted and fastened. The helmet must:
 - Be designed for motorized vehicle use.
 - Have a safety-approved label from the United States Department of Transportation (DOT).



Requirements for Vehicles

Before an OHV may be operated in Massachusetts, the vehicle must have the required equipment.

- **Brakes:** An OHV must be equipped with an adequate braking system.
- **Lights:** An OHV must be equipped with at least one headlight, a red taillight, and a red rear reflector.
 - Lights must be displayed between sunset and sunrise.
 - Lights must be displayed when visibility is less than 300 feet due to snow, fog, or other unfavorable conditions.
- **Trailers:** If a trailer is attached to an OHV, the trailer must have a red rear reflector.
- **Spark Arrestor:** An ATV, recreation utility vehicle, or dirt bike must be equipped with an adequate spark arrestor.

Noxious Fumes and Noise Limits

- It is illegal to emit noxious fumes or excessive noise from your OHV. An OHV must be equipped with an adequate muffler.
 - For OHVs manufactured **on or after January 1, 1998:** The engine noise level may not exceed 96 dbA when measured from a distance of 20 inches.
 - For OHVs manufactured **before January 1, 1998:** The engine noise level may not exceed 101 dbA when measured from a distance of 20 inches.
- It is illegal to use a muffler cutout, bypass, straight pipe, or similar device on an OHV.

Understanding Your Other Responsibilities

Operating Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs

- Massachusetts law prohibits anyone from operating an OHV while under the influence alcohol or drugs.
- Under Massachusetts law, you are “under the influence” if you:
 - Are **21 years of age or older** and have a blood alcohol concentration of **0.08%** or higher as determined by a chemical test or analysis of your breath.
 - Are **under 21 years of age** and have a blood alcohol concentration of **0.02%** or higher as determined by a chemical test or analysis of your breath.
- Those convicted of operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs will:
 - Receive a fine of not less than \$500 nor more than \$5,000 *and ...*
 - Have their OHV registration revoked *and ...*
 - Have their motor vehicle driver's license suspended.



Preventing Theft

- Always keep your OHV owner information in a safe place, separate from your vehicle.
- Report thefts to your local police department. Give law enforcement officers:
 - Your registration information
 - Your vehicle identification number (VIN), which consists of 17 alpha-numeric characters
 - A description of your vehicle
- The police will forward your information to the Massachusetts Environmental Police, Theft Division, for follow up.

Responding After an Accident

- If you are involved in an accident, you must:
 - Stop immediately and render aid *and* ...
 - Give the other party your name, address, and the registration number and owner's name of the OHV you're riding.
- The driver of an OHV involved in an accident (or parent if the operator is under the age of 18) must notify a law enforcement officer immediately and file a written report if the accident resulted in:
 - Injury *or* ...
 - Death *or* ...
 - Property damage of \$50 or more.
- Accident report forms may be obtained from www.mass.gov/ole.

**RECREATION/SNOW VEHICLE
OPERATOR ACCIDENT REPORT**

Massachusetts Environmental Police
Boat & Recreation Vehicle Safety Bureau
5205 Ent Street, Buzzards Bay, MA 02542-9998
(508) 564-4961 • FAX: (508) 564-4964

COMPLETE BOTH
SIDES, SIGN AND
FORWARD TO THE
BOUNE ADDRESS

DATE OF ACCIDENT		TIME		GENERAL INFORMATION				ACCIDENT TYPE		
MO	DAY	YEAR	AM	PM	VEHICLE TYPE		1. Prop. Damage	2. # of Passes		
					2 Wheel	4 Wheel	3. # Injured	4. # of Vehicles		
LOCATION (Object) - Include nearest tree, building & property number					LOCATION (Address) - City or Town and County				Was accident investigated by officer?	
WEATHER					VISIBILITY		TYPE OF TERRAIN		If Yes, check box below:	
Clear Cloudy Rain					Snow Sleet Ice		Barren Dirt Road Approved Trail		State Local MEP	
Other Conditions Affecting Accident					Air Temperature		Air Temperature		Air Temperature	
VEHICLE #1 - YOUR VEHICLE										
Registration Number		Make		Type		Color		Identification No.		
Engine Make		Engine Type		Engine H.P.		Engine Serial No.		Year Built		
Name and Address of Operator				Operator Experience		Operator Training		Recommendation		
Operator Lic. # (S.S. #)				Age		This Vehicle (hrs.)		Formal Course		
Name and Address of Owner				Operator Telephone #		Total (hrs.)		Other		
Owner Lic. # (S.S. #)				Age		Nature of Estimated Damage		Property Damage		
Insurance Co.				Owner Telephone #		Insurance Co.		Owner Telephone #		
VEHICLE #2 - OTHER VEHICLE										
Registration Number		Make		Type		Color		Identification No.		
Engine Make		Engine Type		Engine H.P.		Engine Serial No.		Year Built		
Name and Address of Operator				Operator Experience		Operator Training		Recommendation		
Operator Lic. # (S.S. #)				Age		This Vehicle (hrs.)		Formal Course		
Name and Address of Owner				Operator Telephone #		Total (hrs.)		Other		
Owner Lic. # (S.S. #)				Age		Nature of Estimated Damage		Property Damage		
Insurance Co.				Owner Telephone #		Insurance Co.		Owner Telephone #		
PEDESTRIAN DATA - Complete only if Pedestrian was Involved in Accident										
WHAT WAS PEDESTRIAN DOING? Walking With Traffic (includes riding) Walking Against Traffic (includes riding) Not in Path of Traffic										
Crossing Intersection Crossing Not at Intersection Crossing On/Off Vehicle										
Pushing Vehicle Working on Vehicle Other										

Enforcing Laws and Regulations

- All Massachusetts law enforcement officers enforce OHV laws and regulations. In the performance of their duties, enforcement officers may enter upon and pass through or over private lands or property.
- An enforcement officer may require an OHV operator to produce:
 - The personal identification and address of the operator
 - The vehicle registration certificate
 - A safety permit proving successful completion of an approved recreation vehicle safety and responsibility course
- An operator who violates OHV laws and regulations may receive fines and/or other penalties for:
 - Operating recklessly or negligently
 - Leaving the scene of the accident without stopping and giving his or her name, address, and vehicle registration number to others involved in the accident
 - Operating in a manner resulting in the serious injury or death of another person
- No one 18 years of age or older who has custody or control of an OHV may knowingly permit a person under the age of 18 to operate the recreation vehicle in violation of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 90B. You may not use lack of ownership in the OHV or not knowing the actual age of the operator as a defense to a violation.

Operating Your OHV Legally

Protecting the Environment

It is illegal to operate an OHV in a way that causes damage to the environment, including operating on or in the following areas:

- A reforested or planted area in a way that damages growing stock
- An ocean beach or sand dune in a way that destroys, damages, or breaks down the beach, dune, or dune grass
- A wetland (such as a bog, marsh, or swamp) in a way that damages wetland plants, if the area has been designated as a protected wetland
- Waters of the Commonwealth
- Designated priority habitats
- Lands used for public water supply purposes
- Historic or archaeological sites



Avoiding Illegal Operation of an OHV

It is illegal to operate an OHV:

- In a manner which presents a substantial risk of injury or loss of life.
- In a manner which causes damage to public or private property.
- On privately owned land unless:
 - The operator has written permission from the property owner *or* ...
 - The operator has valid proof of current membership in a club, association, or other organization that has permission from the property owner *or* ...
 - The property owner has posted notice of areas for designated use *or* ...
 - The property is owned by an immediate family member of the operator.
- Unless all persons riding on the OHV or being towed are wearing the required helmet.
- While under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- With a firearm, rifle, or shotgun on board your OHV, unless the firearm is unloaded and cased.
- In a way that harasses or chases deer or other wildlife, or within 300 yards of a deer yard.
- Between sunset and sunrise or when visibility is less than 300 feet, unless displaying the required lights.
- If the vehicle is leaking fuel or does not have the required equipment.

Obeying Speed and Distance Requirements

It is illegal to operate an OHV:

- At speeds that are unsafe for the operating conditions
- Within 150 feet of an occupied residence:
 - With permission from the owner or other authorized person that is given to the operator, a club, an association, or another organization
 - Without permission *only* when the OHV is:
 - Experiencing an emergency *or ...*
 - Directly departing from or returning to that occupied residence *or ...*
 - Being operated on adjacent property where the operator has permission to ride

If you encounter bikers, horseback riders, hikers, or others, you must:

- Immediately slow to a minimum safe operating speed.
- Give the person the right-of-way.
- Pass only when it can be done with complete safety.
- Wait until you are at least 50 feet away from the person before accelerating.

Operating on Roads and Public Ways

- Recreation vehicles may not be operated on:
 - Any public way unless the road is marked and approved for use by recreation vehicles, even for crossing
 - A controlled-access highway, even for crossing
- When crossing an approved public way, operators:
 - Must come to a complete stop prior to entering the roadway for crossing.
 - Must yield the right-of-way to oncoming traffic.
 - Shall begin a crossing only when it can be executed safely.
 - Must cross in the most direct manner as close to a perpendicular angle as possible.

Operating in State Parks and Forests

- Within Massachusetts state parks, reservations, and forests, OHVs may be legally operated only on:
 - Designated trails *and...*
 - During specific riding seasons and conditions.
- Operators should be familiar with Massachusetts trails restrictions.
 - OHVs may be operated on Massachusetts OHV trails during daylight hours only (from sunrise to sunset).
 - OHVs may not be operated on Massachusetts OHV trails during the winter. The annual riding season for OHVs:
 - Begins no earlier than May 1 *and...*
 - Ends no later than the last Sunday in November.
 - Persons under 12 years of age may not operate an OHV on OHV trails within Massachusetts state parks, reservations, and forests.
 - Vehicles over 1,000 lbs. (such as recreation utility vehicles, pickup trucks, and SUVs) are prohibited from all OHV trails **at all times**.
- To find a list of state trails that allow OHVs, visit **www.mass.gov/dcr** and click on Activities.
 - To be sure trails are open before you go riding, call the Department of Conservation and Recreation at **617-626-1250**.
 - Designated trails are marked with a sign at the trailhead and with orange or yellow trail blazers.

The U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and other federal and state land managing agencies determine where OHV use is permitted on their lands. The operator is responsible for knowing which routes are open to OHVs.

Designated OHV Parks and Trails

Western Massachusetts

These four forests are open to OHV use through the partnership of the Berkshire Trails Council and local OHV clubs who help to maintain the trails for all visitors. OHV trails in Western Massachusetts are challenging and only suitable for the intermediate to expert rider. For more detailed information, trail maps, and directions, go to www.mass.gov/dcr/forparks.htm

- **Beartown State Forest** (Lee, Great Barrington and Monterey) 413-528-0904 - Approximately 25 miles of OHV trails suitable for motorcycles or ATVs.
- **October Mountain State Forest** (Lee, Lenox, Washington and Becket) 413-243-1778 - Approximately 30 miles of OHV trails suitable for motorcycles or ATVs.
- **Pittsfield State Forest** (Pittsfield, Lanesboro and Hancock) 413-442-8992 - Approximately 14 miles of OHV trails suitable for motorcycles or ATVs. A daily permit is required for ATV and motorcycle riding in Pittsfield State Forest; see the permitting process on this page for details.
- **Tolland State Forest** (Tolland, Sandisfield and Otis) 413-269-6002 - Approximately 15 miles of OHV trails best suited to MGL c. 90 registered motorcycles (motorcycles registered and equipped to ride on public roads). Many Tolland trails merge with public ways where ATV use is prohibited; ATV riders will find more suitable trails in Beartown, October Mt. and Pittsfield State Forests.

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

Southeastern Massachusetts

These two forests are open to OHV use through the partnership of the Pilgrim Sands Trail Riders and King Philip Trail Riders who help to maintain the trails for all visitors. For more detailed information, trail maps, and directions, go to www.mass.gov/dcr/forparks.htm.

- **Freetown-Fall River State Forest** (Freetown and Fall River) 508-644-5522 - Approximately 25 miles of single track trails for the expert rider. Motorcycles only.
- **F. Gilbert Hills, Wrentham and Franklin State Forests** (Foxboro, Wrentham and Franklin) 508-543-9084 - Approximately 8 miles of single track motorcycle trail in each of the three forests. Best suited to intermediate to expert riders. Motorcycles only.

NOTES



NOTES



ORV Trail Signs



OHV Trail
Marker



Restricted



Trail Sign



Warning Sign



Warning Sign



Warning Sign



Trail Blazer



Directional
Blazer



ATV Route
Sign



ATV Route
Arrows



Chevron



Trail
Intersection



Warning
Sign



Stop Ahead



Stop



Right or
Left Turn



Snowmobiling
Allowed



No
Snowmobiling



Do Not
Enter



Slow



MASSACHUSETTS ENVIRONMENTAL POLICE DIRECTORY

Enforcement

Radio Communications Center
24 hour dispatch
251 Causeway Street
Boston, MA 0214
1-800-632-8075
617-626-1665

Coastal Bureau
30 Shipyard Drive
Building 45
Hingham, MA 02043
781-740-1163

Inland Bureau
183 Milk Street
Westboro, MA 01581
508-366-6537

Boat & R.V. Registration and Titling Bureau

Main Office – Boston
251 Causeway Street
Boston, MA 02114
617-626-1610
Fax: 617-626-1630

Hyannis
60 Perseverance Way
Hyannis, MA 02602
508-771-8382

Fall River
218 S. Main Street
Fall River, MA 02721
508-679-8287

Worcester
67 Millbrook Street
Worcester, MA 01605
508-753-0603

Springfield
165 Liberty Street
Springfield, MA 01103
413-733-1642

Find out more about OHV safety and registration information.
Contact the Boat & OHV Safety Bureau at **www.mass.gov/ole** or
call **508-564-4961**.

