

Health Unit Media Release

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HEALTH UNIT RECOGNIZES NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY WEEK WITH ALL TERRAIN VEHICLE (ATV) SAFETY MESSAGES May 15th – 21st

National Road Safety Week is an enforcement driven initiative designed to increase public compliance with and awareness of safe driving measures and ultimately to save lives. **The Leeds Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit has chosen this week to highlight the importance of safe driving practices while operating ATV's.**

In Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Counties, there were a total of 280 reported ambulatory ATV related injuries between 2002 and 2006 (*Ministry of Health and Long-term Care - Provincial Health Planning Database*). **Males aged 16-49 account for 65% of these injuries and are therefore the focus of an upcoming educational campaign in June** (*Ministry of Health and Long-term Care - Provincial Health Planning Database*).

Injuries can commonly be attributed to speed, inexperience, improper apparel, non-helmet use and alcohol. Most injuries however, are predictable and preventable by following these clear, simple positive SMARTRISK messages (www.smartrisk.ca).

Look First

- Ride in designated areas only and be respectful of the environment and landowners.
- Be courteous to other trail users and yield appropriately.
- Take extra care on rough terrain. Be aware of rollover hazards.
- Be cautious at all railway crossings.

Wear the Gear

- Always wear an approved government helmet, eye protection (goggles or face shield) and protective clothing (boots, gloves, pants, long-sleeves).
- Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for passengers. They can affect stability and control of the ATV.
- Carry a cell phone for emergency use.

Get Trained

- Take an approved ATV training course.
- Be familiar with Ontario's Legislation and Regulations. (<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/dandv/orv.htm>)
- Keep your ATV well maintained and conduct pre-ride inspections to check oil and gas levels, brakes, lights and winch.
- Drive responsibly and follow the area bylaws and speed limits.

Drive Sober

- Alcohol, drugs, medications, fatigue and distractions can all impair your judgement, coordination, and reaction time. Be fully attentive to the demands of ATV driving.
- For more information on the legal consequences of impairment and operating an off-road vehicle refer to www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/dandv/orv.htm

By following these clear simple positive messages more ATV users will be able to explore the outdoors while staying safe!

For more information, call the Health ACTION Line at 1-800-660-5853 or 613-345-5685 or for more information on road safety go to the website at <http://www.healthunit.org/injury/default.htm>.

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Contact:

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