



## Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Information guide – Rural series

### 6. Quadbikes

(also known as all-terrain vehicles (ATVs))

Quadbikes are a popular 'workhorse' on the farm. A large proportion of quadbike injuries result from sideways, backward and forward overturns. To reduce the risk of quadbike accidents, operators must be trained in safe rider practices.

Injury frequently occurs from the following:

- rider struck by an object (e.g. overhanging branch)
- rollover from striking an object or the terrain being too steep
- leg of rider or passenger caught in rear tyre, chain, etc.
- incorrect use of controls leading to feet being caught in tyres
- loads are too heavy, unequally distributed or not secured properly
- rider inexperienced with the effects of slope, speed or weight distribution, or
- poor maintenance of brakes and suspension.

#### Selecting a quadbike

Ensure you purchase a 'workhorse' quadbike designed for power, traction and stability, not a sports recreational model.

When choosing a quadbike for your property there are a number of factors you need to consider, including:

- intended use of the quadbike
- the type of terrain and ground conditions
- power and speed
- gear ratio, suspension and brakes
- centre of gravity
- drive mechanism
- seat carrying capacity, and
- reverse gear.

#### Operational safety

Ensure you follow general safety precautions:

- Read and follow all the manufacturer's operating instructions. The operator must follow operational rules.
- Nearly all quadbikes are designed for the operator only, as the added weight of passengers will complicate handling the quadbike on slopes, around curves and braking distances.
- Keep children away from adult-sized quadbikes and attachments.
- Ensure quadbike operators are correctly trained, including specialised training for particular tasks on the farm.
- Never allow anybody to operate a quadbike who has not had adequate training or may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Adjust all controls so they can be operated comfortably and safely while seated.
- Keep all guards in place, particularly foot plates.
- Adopt a 'dynamic' riding style by transferring your weight from side to side, forward and backwards to counterbalance the quadbike's directional mass.
- Ride at speeds slow enough to retain control over the unexpected.
- Reduce speed before turning or applying brakes.
- Identify visible hazards in the distance, such as rocks or stumps, low or fallen branches, fences and rough or unstable trail surfaces. Crumbling and slippery banks have also caused many overturns.

- Be wary of unexpected hazards, such as other riders and frightened animals.
- Descend slopes cautiously by keeping the quadbike in low gear and allowing the motor compression to act as a brake.

### **Fitting and using accessories**

- Fit the company's original equipment or after-market equipment according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- When fitting equipment, always use the mounting point or draw bar provided by the manufacturer. Incorrect attachments can increase instability and cause overturns.
- Do not alter the height of the mounting point or increase the towing capacity outside those provided by the manufacturer.
- When a powered implement is attached to the quadbike, ensure all guards are in place and that the machine can be comfortably operated from the seated position.

### **Load ratings**

Observe the manufacturer's specifications with regard to load rating of the quadbike, including the weight of the quadbike and rider, added weight to the front and rear carrier racks, as well as the weight of any towed load on the tow ball. Manufacturers make recommendations on the maximum loads that can be carried on front and rear carrier racks. Loading, and particularly overloading, the front and rear carriers increases the instability of a quadbike. Adhere to the manufacturer's specifications with regards to the towing capacity of quadbikes. Overweight loads can adversely affect braking and increase the risk of rollover.

### **Personal protection equipment (PPE)**

Wear PPE such as helmets, face shields, goggles, boots or shoes, gloves and appropriate clothing. In open terrain or continuous low speed operation, less protective or alternate clothing may be chosen after a risk assessment has been conducted. You should also be aware of solar radiation and the risk of dehydration.

### **More information**

Further information is available from [www.worksafe.qld.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au) or by calling the WHS Infoline on 1300 369 915.

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