



Consumer Federation of America

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357 Off-Highway Vehicle Deaths Documented for 2015

This Holiday Weekend: Do Not Ride on Roads and Use Safe Riding Practices when Off-Road

Washington, DC—As the last long weekend of the summer season approaches, the Consumer Federation of America (CFA) and its off-highway vehicle safety coalition have documented 357 off-highway vehicle (OHV)¹ fatalities in 2015, from January 1 through August 31, 2015. While high, this number is not yet complete and will likely increase as additional information becomes available. The 357 OHV deaths include deaths that occurred on all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), recreational off-highway vehicles and utility task vehicles.

Critically, of the 357 documented crashes, 335 could be identified as on or off-road incidents. Of those fatalities 193, or 58%, took place on roads—a surface that OHVs are not designed for and cannot be safely operated on. “Though there has been a decade long trend toward states, counties and municipalities opening up roads to OHV use that does not mean it is a safe behavior—which these numbers prove,” said Michael Best, Senior Policy Advocate at the Consumer Federation of America.

It is dangerous to ride on roads of any type. Dr. Charles Jennissen, co-author of the recent study, *All-Terrain Vehicle Fatalities on Paved Roads, Unpaved Roads, and Off-Road: Evidence for Informed Roadway Safety Warnings and Legislation*, emphasizes that “ATVs are not safe on any public road surface, whether it is paved or gravel. Our research shows that 42% of the total 6,625 roadway deaths from 1982 to 2012 occurred on unpaved roads. Unpaved roads are not a safe alternative to driving ATVs on blacktop.”

¹ The OHV fatality statistics include deaths resulting from accidents on: all-terrain vehicles (ATVs have straddle seating and handlebars), recreational off-highway vehicles (ROVs have bucket or bench seating with a steering wheel and maximum speeds above 30 mph), and utility task vehicles (UTVs have bucket or bench seating with a steering wheel and maximum speed of 30 mph or less).

This holiday weekend parents should use caution when allowing their children to ride OHVs. CFA and its off-highway vehicle safety coalition have documented that 79 children under 16 years of age have lost their lives to OHV crashes so far this year.

“In addition to staying off of roads this Labor Day weekend, there are three additional critical safe riding practices to follow when riding OHVs,” said Rachel Weintraub, Legislative Director and General Counsel of Consumer Federation of America. “Never permit children younger than 16 years old to operate an adult-size OHV or any OHV that is too large and too powerful for them, always wear a helmet and other protective gear when riding an OHV and never allow more people on an OHV than it was designed to carry.”

CFA and its off-highway vehicle safety coalition compile data from news reports and other publicly available sources. While the death data are likely an undercount, they are the most up-to-date available for OHVs. To view CFA’s data, go to [LINK](#).

CFA is an association of more than 250 nonprofit consumer groups that was founded in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy and education.