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Marathon County Sheriff's Office Joins the Wisconsin DNR in Urging ATV/UTV Operators to Prep for a Safe Season

Marathon County, WI (May 21, 2026) – With Spring weather finally here and Summer on our doorstep, the Marathon County Sheriff's Office joins many of you who are ready to get out and enjoy time on our local ATV/UTV Routes and Trails.

As riders prepare for the start of this year's summer season, we want everyone to have a fun and safe experience here in Marathon County while on their ATVs or UTVs. We would like to echo the recent news release from the Wisconsin DNR issued on May 15, 2026, and encourage all riders to earn their ATV/UTV safety certification by completing an approved course.

"Marathon County has seen it's share of significant ATV/UTV crashes." Said Lieutenant, Michael Van Offeren, "In the last five years there have been nine crashes involving other motor vehicles on public roadways, resulting in four people being injured. As most of our ATV use is on ATV Routes, on public roadways, ATV/UTV safety while with other road users is our primary concern.

"ATVs operated on private land must be done so safely as well." Said Lt. Van Offeren, "In the last five years there have been 17 reported ATV crashes resulting in 12 people being injured. Though those numbers are higher compared to on roadways, the types of injuries were far less severe. At the end of the day, we want people to return home to their families with enjoyable stories to tell, instead of a hospital night stay."

To view statistics including the [2024 Recreation Vehicle Annual Report](https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/ATV/CrashInfo) on the DNR's ATV crash incident webpage at: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/ATV/CrashInfo>

Anyone operating an ATV/UTV at least 12 years of age and born on or after January 1st, 1988, are required to complete a state DNR-approved safety education course. They must also carry proof of the certification while riding on all public trails, routes, and private lands not owned by them or immediate family. Those who are passengers on an ATV/UTV, but do not operate it, would also benefit from



taking the ATV safety class, but it is not required. For more information on the regulations and to sign up for an ATV safety class, please visit the DNR's website at: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/atv>

Participants of the ATV Safety Class have their choice of online or in-person classes. Parents are urged to join their children at the safety classes. Some insurance companies even offer a discount to parents who have the safety certificate. For those interested in in-person classes please remember the following:

- In-person classes fill up fast, so please check the DNR website often.
- Classes are geared for students ages 11 and up. However, students of any age can sign up. Refunds are not given if a student is unable to pass the class.
- Many in-person classes are completed in just two days or over one weekend.

NEW LAWS FOR ATVs/UTVs:

- Both Operators and passengers are all required to wear a seatbelt in a UTV.
- Intentionally causing damage with an ATV or UTV can cost you more than a fine – up to three times the cost to repair the damage.
- ATV/UTV Operators may not tow objects bearing any person on a trail or route. Towing people on ice is limited to 10 mph.
- UTVs now have window tint restrictions.

