

## ACICR Adoption and Endorsement of the Canadian Paediatric Society Position Statement on Preventing Injuries from All-Terrain Vehicles

The Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research has adopted and endorses the Canadian Paediatric Society Position Statement (IP 2004-01) Preventing injuries from all-terrain vehicles. This well researched document makes recommendations that will reduce the number and severity of injuries associated with all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). In 2003 there were 4,458 emergency department visits in Alberta as a result of an ATV-related Injury.

Of particular concern in Alberta is the rate at which children and teens less than 16 years of age are killed in ATV related deaths. While in Canada children and adolescents account for almost 25% of ATV-related deaths<sup>1</sup>, in Alberta this vulnerable age group accounts for 38% of all ATV deaths<sup>2</sup>. Legislation restricting the operation of ATVs by individuals less than 16 years is needed immediately in Alberta.

Young passengers are also at great risk. This information along with the recommendation children should never ride as passengers on ATVs needs to be disseminated by all stakeholders.

The use of alcohol prior to use of an ATV is also related to an elevated risk of injury or death in Alberta. Alcohol was involved in 41% of ATV-related deaths that occurred in Alberta between July 1999 and May 2004<sup>3</sup>. Increased awareness of the dangers of alcohol and ATV use and increased enforcement of the Criminal Code of Canada that prohibits the operation of an ATV with a BAC level of greater than 0.08 is recommended.

The ACICR supports all of the CPS recommendations<sup>4</sup> as listed here:

- Children younger than 16 years of age should not operate all-terrain vehicles.
- Children should never ride as passengers on all-terrain vehicles. The majority of ATVs are designed for a single rider. Never carry a passenger of any age on an ATV unless the manufacturer specifies that a passenger is allowed.
- All-terrain vehicle drivers should always wear a government-approved helmet (such as a helmet meeting the Canadian Standards Association, Department of Transportation/Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard, Snell or American National

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Paediatric Society website <http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/keepingkidssafe/ATV.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Office of the Medical Examiner, Province of Alberta

<sup>3</sup> Office of the Medical Examiner, Province of Alberta

<sup>4</sup> Canadian Paediatric Society website <http://www.cps.ca/english/statements/IP/IP04-01.htm>

Standards Institute motorcycle helmet standards), eye protection, and appropriate clothing (boots, gloves, long pants).

- All-terrain vehicle drivers should not operate the vehicle after drinking alcohol or at night.
- All-terrain vehicle drivers should complete an approved training course, such as the Canada Safety Council's ATV Rider's Course.
- Provinces and territories should harmonize off-road vehicle legislation, including the following elements: minimum operator age of 16 years; restriction of passengers to the number for which the vehicle was designed; compulsory helmet use with no exemptions; mandatory training, licensing and registration; and ban the use of three-wheeled vehicles.
- All-terrain vehicle manufacturers should investigate potential improvements in vehicle design, including rollover protection, seatbelts, speed governors and other engineering modifications that could enhance the safety of these vehicles.

Further support of legislative changes to protect users of ATVs has been stated in a letter dated July 7, 2006 by the Alberta Medical Association to The Honourable Ty Lund, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation.

To view the complete Position Statement of the Canadian Pediatric Society, please visit <http://www.cps.ca/english/statements/IP/IP04-01.htm>.