
ATV Helmet: Essential Wearing

Riding an ATV without wearing a helmet? You may as well go skydiving without a parachute.

When you're flying down the trails and come up against an unexpected obstacle, the only thing standing between you and irreparable injury (or even death) is a properly fitted and government certified helmet.

Buying an ATV helmet can be a daunting task, particularly if you're not exactly sure of what to look for. New riders often worry more about whether the color of the helmet coordinates with the ATV, than whether the helmet fits properly. Not smart. Choosing style over fit and construction can be a fatal mistake.

Poorly fitted ATV helmets tend to twist on the face, or become misaligned when you're riding bumpy terrain. The impact of an accident can actually dislodge a helmet and cause it to fly off of the victim's head, leaving him or her at risk of irreversible injury.

For a helmet to be effective, it must feel comfortable as you wear it. Snug, but not painfully tight, with just enough breathing space to keep you from feeling too claustrophobic. Try on the helmet before you buy it. Closed helmets are a little difficult to put on, because the padding that fits the helmet to your neck is obviously smaller than the total circumference of your head. If the helmet goes on too easily, it's not a good fit. Once you have completely fitted the entire helmet, it should feel comfortable.

Now, test it to be sure that it's not too loose. Move your head in every way. Nod up and down, and shake vigorously from side to side. Make sure that the helmet won't become misaligned, and take extra care to be sure that it won't ever obstruct your vision. Remember, when you're riding off road you'll be covering some bumpy terrain. If the helmet stays in place despite all of your head movements, then it should be a good fit for you. Try these steps with several helmets to ensure the best fit.

Another essential test to ensure a properly fitted helmet is the roll-off test. Wear it with all of the helmet straps securely fastened. Grab the rear lip at the back of your head, and try to roll the helmet forward vigorously off your head. If the helmet comes off, you'll need to keep searching.

Be sure that the helmet you choose is certified by the U.S. Department of Transportation. A DOT certification ensures that the helmet offers ample protection. Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard #218 requires that an ATV helmet must withstand a significant amount of impact, and features a fastening system that can also withstand significant force.

One good place to begin your search for a safe ATV helmet is AFX. This company's catalog features a number of quality ATV helmets in a wide selection of colors. Their helmets are made using high pressure injection molding, and have outstanding impact resilience. All of the face shields used for their helmets are compound curved, hard-coated and scratch resistant to ensure years of safety. AFX helmets have met or exceeded the DOT and ECE safety standards. To find out more about AFX ATV helmets, call 1-877-686-6477 toll free, or check their website at afxhelmets.com.

If you're thinking of buying a helmet just because the color matches your ATV, you need to give your head a shake. Try the headshake and roll off tests and make sure that your ATV helmet will provide the life saving protection you need.