

Learning from Ozzy Osbourne

The Black Sabbath lead singer suffered a serious all terrain vehicle (ATV) accident and was lucky to survive. Many don't. New ATV regulations are intended to reduce the risks

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New quad bike or all terrain vehicle (ATV) regulations (SI No. 619 of 2021) come into force on 20 November 2023. These regulations apply to all work sectors including agriculture.

The regulations require:

- 'That the operator of the all-terrain vehicle has successfully completed an all-terrain vehicle safety training course provided by a registered training provider to a QQI standard or equivalent.'
- 'That a risk assessment is conducted in accordance with section 19 of the Act'. The risk assessment requirement refers to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.
- The regulation also states that 'personal protective equipment is provided and worn by the operator of the all-terrain vehicle in accordance with Regulation 62'.
- Regulation 62 refers to the personal protective equipment requirements of Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Regulations 2007.

Compliance with a regulation is mandatory from the date they come into effect, so farmers with a quad should consider measures to comply with the regulations. Note that the regulations apply to all quad use, whether it is new or old.

ATV – utility and dangers

Quads are undoubtedly a super farm 'tool' and there are over 20,000 in use on Irish farms. They move fast, have the traction to climb hills and rough terrain, and can carry or tow limited amounts of farm materials.

These characteristics, can lead to danger and risk: The main dangers include losing control, overturning, striking an object at speed or being thrown from the ATV.

Over the 10 years (2013 to 2022), there have been 12 fatalities in agriculture associated with ATVs.

ATV controls and basic safety

Having all controls in good working order is vital for safe ATV operation.

Brakes are the first consideration. ATVs usually have front and rear brake levers on the right and left handle bars; a rear brake pedal near the foot rest; a rear parking brake lever located on the left handle bar or next to the rear brake pedal.

The throttle control is a thumb-operated lever. Other controls include an ignition switch, an engine cut off switch, a fuel valve, a choke, starter and reverse gear where fitted.

It is vitally important that you read your user manual and familiarise yourself with the operation of all controls before driving your quad.

ATV maintenance and pre-use checks

Maintaining your ATV in good condition and completing pre-use checks

is essential for safe use. Consult the operator's manual.

• **Damage:** check the vehicle for any physical damage.

• **Tyres:** visually check the tyre tread is adequate. Quad bike tyres are the large balloon type and operate on very low air pressure 3.5 to 6 PSI to allow the vehicle to travel easily on many types of surfaces. Use a gauge suited for measuring low pressures. A 1 PSI difference in pressure can cause ATV control problems.

• **Suspension:** check the suspension by manually bouncing the quad suspension. Generally it should be quite stiff.

• **Electrical:** check the electrical controls by pressing each button on the dash in sequence. Also check the emergency stop button.

• **Fuel level:** check your fuel level and, in the absence of a gauge, be careful of petrol fumes from the tank.

• **Oil:** check the engine and brake oil levels.

• **Controls:** check the controls and cables to make sure they are functioning properly.

• **Brakes:** check the brakes by applying them carefully at start-off (avoid sudden braking).

• **Water and cooling system:** check the coolant levels. If too low, this may indicate a leak or an overheating problem.





Training is now mandatory for quad drivers.

Active ATV riding

On sit-astride ATVs, in particular, the correct rider position is vital. The position of the rider on the machine needs to be changed depending on the terrain, direction of travel and motion.

Riders must have the physical ability to move and balance the momentum of the quad with their own body weight. Quads/ATVs have a large seat which is designed to allow the operator move body weight to control the vehicle.

Weight transfer is hindered when carrying passengers increasing the risks. Never carry passengers. Teagasc, in association with FBD Insurance and Farm Safety Partnership advisory committee to the HSA has prepared a short DVD on safe operation of an ATV as part of its Managing Safety on Farms series. This can be viewed online, by scanning the QR code using your smartphone camera.

Note that the ATV regulations to be implemented have specific requirements related to training and watching a video, on its own, does not meet these requirements.



Personal protective devices

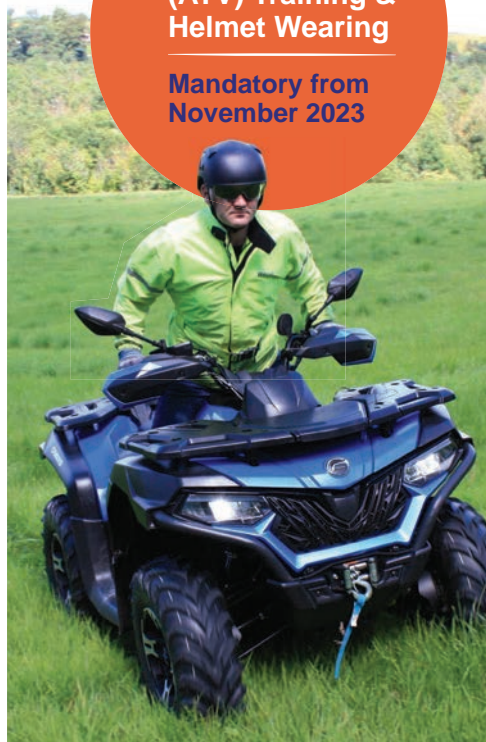
These are available on the market. Provided they have an EU CE mark, ATV owners can fit one if they consider that they provide additional protection.

Remember, Ozzy Osbourne was lucky. Don't leave your future to chance.

NEW!

Quad Bike (ATV) Training & Helmet Wearing

Mandatory from November 2023



HSA

An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta
Health and Safety Authority

A new requirement for all workplaces which will be mandatory from November 2023. All operators of Quad Bikes (ATVs), in all workplaces must have successfully completed a Quad Bike Training Course provided by a registered training provider to a QQI Standard or equivalent.

Examples of workplaces and activities include:

- Farms
- Construction sites
- Road maintenance
- Forestry & other land based industries

Health and Safety Authority
Tel: 0818 289 389
www.hsa.ie

From 20 November 2023 all such operators must wear appropriate head protection while operating a Quad Bike (ATV).

We advise quad bike (ATV) operators to seek out and successfully complete the level 5 QQI/or equivalent required training in advance of the legal deadline.

All operators of Quad Bikes (ATVs) are encouraged to undertake training as soon as possible and to wear appropriate personal protective equipment particularly a Quad Bike (ATV) helmet as recommended by the manufacturer or identified through risk assessment.

We advise all concerned to contact your local training providers to plan their training requirements.