

ACCC warns of dangerous quad bike practices

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The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is urging quad bike users to ride safely this Easter weekend after new research found unsafe riding practices are common. The consumer research of 125 recreational quad bike users was conducted in early March 2013 and commissioned by the ACCC.

“Injuries and deaths relating to quad bike use have significantly increased over the last few years. In 2012, there were 18 reported quad bike-related deaths,” ACCC Deputy Chair Delia Rickard said.

“Close to 30 per cent of these deaths were of children under 15 years of age, which is frightening considering that children should never be on a quad bike designed for adults.”

The research found that almost a quarter of users surveyed rode with someone accompanying them on the same bike. As most quad bikes are made for one person only, this practice can severely compromise user and passenger safety.

“Alarming, the study also found that one in six quad bike users rarely or never wear any personal protective equipment such as a helmet, eye protection and sturdy footwear,” Ms Rickard said.

Injury and death data showed an increase of incidents relating to recreational use, in comparison to work-related use such as farming and other agricultural activities.

“The consumer research highlighted that over one-third of quad bike users are self-taught and almost half have been taught by a family member, friend or neighbour. Users should be properly trained before riding a quad bike.”

“Although users perceived quad bike riding to be a dangerous activity, they also perceived it to be quite easy. This may contribute to some users becoming complacent about safety,” Ms Rickard said.

The results from the consumer research will assist in developing a long-term safety education program for recreational quad bike use while the ACCC continues to monitor the safety of the vehicle itself via in-depth performance testing.

“No matter how confident or experienced you are safe riding is always important so I urge you to follow these steps for a safe and injury-free Easter,” Ms Rickard said.

Quad bike safety steps:

Prepare safe

- Ensure you are properly trained before you ride a quad bike.
- Choose the right vehicle for your activity.
- Maintain the bike so it is in safe condition.
- Read the operator manual and observe the manufacturer's safety warnings and recommended use of the vehicle.

Wear safe

- Always wear a helmet.
- Wear protective clothing and gear such as goggles, long sleeves, long pants, boots and gloves/hand protection.

Ride safe

- Never let children ride quad bikes that are meant for adults.
- Do not carry passengers on quad bikes that are only meant for one person.
- Avoid riding on rough terrain or steep slopes.
- Never ride under the influence of alcohol/drugs.
- Ride on familiar tracks and beware of obstacles.
- Quad bikes are not all-terrain vehicles so they cannot go on all types of terrain.

Quad bike users can find these safety tips and further information at www.productsafety.gov.au/quadbikes.

For more information about product safety, visit www.productsafety.gov.au, call the ACCC Infocentre on 1300 302 502 or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/ACCCProdSafety.

You can also find product safety information via the ACCC's Product Safety Facebook Page and YouTube channel ACCC Product Safety.

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