

# Keeping It R.E.A.L. Ready to Engage in ATV Learning

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## Situation

According to the Shepherd Center, in 2014, ATV accidents caused an estimated 674 deaths, and in 2015, there were over 97,000 ATV-related, emergency department-treated injuries in the United States. An estimated 28 percent of these involved children younger than 16 years of age. There is also research that suggests that youth are at a disproportionately higher risk of injury when using an ATV and that, young age and lack of appropriate safety equipment and training were major risk factors for the likelihood of severe ATV-related injury. Additionally, in a study conducted by Iowa State, it was found that nearly 75% of students surveyed had access or exposure to an ATV, and that most ATV riders participated in risky behaviors. Some experts suggest that focusing on educational programs that increase safety practices and reduce risky behavior can be beneficial to reducing ATV-related injuries.

Very little information concerning Georgia youth and their knowledge of ATV safety exists, and there are currently no comprehensive ATV safety courses offered in the state of Georgia.

## Response

In order to properly address ATV safety training areas, a needs assessment was conducted using data collected from 301 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade Pulaski County, Georgia 4-Her's during a regularly scheduled 4-H club meeting. The target audience of 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade 4-Her's was selected primarily as a convenience sample, but research has shown that the decision to target the youngest convenient audience of ATV users may have an increased impact. This study sought to discover whether a need existed for an ATV safety course among Pulaski County, Georgia 4-Her's, and if so, what ATV safety knowledge areas were most lacking. The survey instrument focused on proper ATV size, helmet usage, riding with or as a passenger, on-road usage, and safe riding techniques. After all data collection had taken place, each participant was given a numerical score based on their response to questions focused on knowledge of ATV safety. Criteria for future ATV programming was established using the results of the needs assessment.



*Demonstrating the importance of proper ATV size with Dr. Nick Fuhrman and Pulaski County 4-Her Georgia Lynn Porter*



*Pulaski County 4-Hers demonstrating proper ATV size, safety equipment, and safe riding technique.*

## Results

13.6% of participants demonstrated a passing knowledge of ATV safety. Of those with a passing score, 19 were male, and 19 were female, demonstrating that there was no gender bias related to the participants' knowledge of ATV safety. A total of 137 participants scored at least 50% (5 or above), demonstrating that 45.5% of participants were at least somewhat knowledgeable about ATV safety. 62% of participants indicated that they had not previously attended an ATV safety training course. When asked "If there was an ATV safety class offered in Pulaski County, would you attend it?" only 16.4% of respondents replied that they would not be interested in attending. The need demonstrated by the participant's knowledge assessment scores, as well as their indicated willingness to participate in a locally offered ATV safety course demonstrate an opportunity for an ATV safety course to be offered by Pulaski County Extension.

## Moving Forward

In an effort to bring attention to the need for an ATV safety program, the agent collaborated with Dr. Nick Fuhrman to produce a segment of "Ranger Nick" for the Georgia Farm Monitor. This segment was re-broadcast on RFD TV to an estimated 2 million viewers. In-school ATV safety seminars at future Farm-Day events and 4-H summer day camps, as well as hands-on ATV safety training at future field day events have been planned by the Agent. Collaboration with ATV manufacturers and dealers, as well as partnering agencies such as Georgia Farm Bureau and Georgia Department of Natural Resources will be sought for these events. Additional research in the form of post-training assessments will be conducted in order to determine program impact and the opportunity to improve future ATV safety programming.