

Safety Alert of THE MONTH

PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS IN BC'S FOREST INDUSTRY

June 2014

Here's a scenario many of us may find familiar – you and your partner arrive at the start of the deactivated road between you and your day's work. You turn the truck around, get out, stretch your limbs, look in the back of the truck, and...

"Susan, I thought we put the ramps in here! "

"We did. We put them in right after we loaded the quads. Maybe I didn't tie them in properly, and they bounced out at the 52 km cattle guard."

"The crew is expecting us first thing this morning, so I'm not going back! Let's wrestle the quads off the truck. We can find the ramps on the way home."

"I don't know, Tim. Let's stop and think about this for a minute."

Every year, forestry workers suffer abrasions and bruises, strains and sprains, and very serious injuries while operating ATVs. Injuries, property damage and lost time caused by improperly loading or unloading of ATVs can be just as serious as the results of ATV crashes and rollovers. Consider the tips below. Invest a few minutes to set yourself up for successful field days or recreation.

Choosing the Right Equipment

- Choose a low deck height. A purpose-built trailer with a between-the-wheels deck has a wider axle stance, providing a lower centre of gravity for better handling and rearward visibility. A flat deck on a pickup is lower than an over-the-box deck, minimizing the distance you or your ATV can fall if your procedure "goes sideways".
- Look for "drive-on / drive-off" configurations. Ramps that attach to either side of the deck (or front and rear) avoid the need to back down the ramps. This capitalizes on every rider's superior forward visibility and balance control (compared to backing) and reduces risk of critical errors.
- Built-in ramps are there when you need them. Better yet, built-in one-piece / folding ramps avoid risks associated with improperly aligned or insecure two-piece ramps.
- Use a ramp system that positively locks onto the tailgate or deck. Use ratchet-type tie-downs to secure ramp(s) to the bumper or trailer hitch during loading / unloading.



Safety Alert of THE MONTH

PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS IN BC'S FOREST INDUSTRY

- Front “kick stops” prevent ramps from moving forward; side rails help ensure ATV tires don’t slip off.
- Longer ramps reduce ramp incline, so you don’t have to “take a run” at the ramps.

Selecting a Loading / Unloading Site

- Find a site that gives you room to operate – no traffic or obstacles, level surface, firm ground.
- Use topography to your advantage – a small hill, or backing into a depression or shallow ditch will lower the rear pickup wheels, reducing ramp incline angle.
- If you have to load / unload beside a travelled road, find a location with good visibility (along a straight section) so other drivers can see you and have the opportunity to slow down. Use your radio to let others know you are there; let them know when you are finished.

Loading and Unloading

With the right gear in the right location, you are set up for success. By applying the right techniques – a little patience, a double-check system, a well-balanced stance, gentle throttle application and covering the brakes as you enter and leave the deck – loading and unloading goes off like clockwork.

Unlike the “stars” of many “ATV fail” videos, wear your helmet when loading and unloading. Use suitable footwear (ie - caulk boots provide no traction on a metal deck), gloves and eyewear. Use 3-point contact when entering and exiting the deck. Check out the good ideas in these links:



[Loading and Unloading An ATV](#)

[Using ATV Loading Ramps](#)

[Side Load ATV Trailers](#)

[ATV Towing and Loading](#)

[Winch-Assist Loading](#)



Safety Alert of THE MONTH

PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS IN BC'S FOREST INDUSTRY

Securing Your Load

- Use a set of quality tie-downs to secure your ATV. Attach them to sturdy locations on the machine (handlebars, axles, front or back metal carrying frames) and purpose-built D-rings on trailer or box.
- Give the machine a tug test to confirm it cannot move forward or backward, or side to side.
- Tie-off the “tails” of the straps.
- Place the ramps back into their storage location; tie them down.
- Travel a few miles, pull over in a wide location, do the tug test and re-tighten the tie-downs. During the trip, periodically check to confirm the tie-downs remain tight.
- Always carry a spare pair of tie-downs.
- Ensure safety equipment/PPE is stored and secured.

Effective preparation will help avoid mistakes; a patient attitude will avoid turning minor slip-ups into upset conditions.

“Yeah, you’re right Susan. There’s no sense in turning “a little bit late” into a disaster. I’ll radio the crew and let them know we’ll be an hour late while you get us turned around.”

Resources:

[WSCA ATV Training](#) – workplace-oriented training course outline

[ATV Safety Alert](#) – recent ATV mishap in BC Interior

[Canada Safety Council](#) – information about “train the trainer” sessions

[Quad Riders ATV Association of BC](#) – listing of local BC instructors

[ATV Safety Institute](#) (US) – gear tips, riding techniques and skills development exercises

[WorkSafeBC – ATV / UTV Checklist](#) – regulatory requirements for BC workplace ATV use.

