

# Riders Handbook

May 2008

**As a responsible off-highway vehicle rider I WILL:**

- 1 **Be legal.** Know and obey all laws and rules governing OHV use, including municipal bylaws — Rule breakers threaten my riding opportunities. Riding is a privilege, not a right.
- 2 **Ride on authorized trails only.** Carry a map and compass and STAY ON TRAIL. Respect trail, road, and area closures. Stay off land marked private—If I don't know, I won't go. Check with local clubs.
- 3 **Minimize my impact.** Stay off trails when the ground is soft and use will be damaging—especially after heavy rains. Leave no trace when camping. Leave gates as I find them. Pack out all litter.
- 4 **Respect the environment.** Never harm or harass wildlife. Never ride in parks, protected areas, or sensitive ecosystems (wetlands, swamps, marshes, streams and rivers, beaches and sand dunes, coastal or highland barrens, or other sensitive areas). Wash my vehicle after riding to reduce the spread of noxious plant seeds.
- 5 **Plan ahead.** Know my equipment, my ability, and the weather conditions. Keep my equipment in good repair. Carry an emergency kit, food, and water. Carry extra fuel, tools, and supplies for changes in the weather or breakdowns. Inform someone of my planned route and arrival time. Always ride with a buddy.
- 6 **Ride responsibly.** Make sure my vehicle is a size I can control. Ride drug and alcohol free. Keep my speed and engine rpm low and steady to reduce noise—especially in residential areas. Be a credit to my recreation.
- 7 **Expect and respect other trail users.** Slow down when approaching other users especially those with young children and animals. Yield the right of way. Remove my helmet when talking to other trail users.
- 8 **Ride safely.** Supervise children at all times. Observe all age restrictions. Carry a passenger only on machines originally manufactured to do so. Wear a helmet, eye protection, and other protective equipment. Take a rider training course. Educate others about the need for training. Help those in distress.

## Why an OHV handbook?

The goal is to educate you so you can protect yourself, protect other people, and protect the environment as you drive your OHV —off-highway vehicle.

This handbook focuses on ATVs, snowmobiles, and off-road motorcycles, which include dirt bikes and mini-bikes. However, the Off-highway Vehicles Act also regulates other vehicles you drive off road that are not registered under the Motor Vehicle Act.

It includes the rules, regulations, and behaviours that will allow you to enjoy riding your OHV while helping to keep you and others safe on the trail.

Several things come into play as you drive:

- the weather
- the OHV and the safety equipment you use
- the trails you drive on
- your speed and body position
- your skill and judgement

This includes your judgement of your child's ability, if you are a parent or guardian\*.

These resources support safe OHV-riding:

- provincial OHV associations
- local OHV clubs
- volunteers
- trail wardens
- law enforcement officers\*
- NS government staff
- the laws and regulations
- safety training courses
- outdoor and first aid training courses

For information and to obtain additional copies of this handbook

Call → **1-877-OHV-LINE**  
**1-877-648-5463**

weekdays 8:30-4:30

Ask to speak with a law enforcement officer.

Click → [www.gov.ns.ca/natr/ohv](http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/ohv)

Visit your local  
Access Nova Scotia Centre.

To report violations

Call → **1-800-565-2224**

24 hours, 7 days a week



Flip through this handbook and share the information with your family, friends, and children.

The wording in this handbook may differ from the official version of the Nova Scotia Off-highway Vehicles legislation. The legislation may change. When accuracy is critical, please consult official sources.

For the OHV Act


Click → [www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/legc/statutes/offhighw.htm](http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/legc/statutes/offhighw.htm)


For the OHV Regulations

Click → [www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/rxam-z.htm#ohveh](http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/rxam-z.htm#ohveh)

### Note

\* means the word is defined at the back of this book under “Words Used In This Handbook”

 means this is related to parents and children

 means this is a law

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*The Off-highway Vehicle Ministerial Advisory Committee, the All Terrain Vehicle Association of Nova Scotia (ATVANS), the Snowmobilers Association of Nova Scotia (SANS), the Nova Scotia Off Road Riders Association (NSORRA), OHV instructors, the Long Lake Loggers ATV Association, and many Nova Scotia government departments.*

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