

UTV safety

Key takeaways

- Know your specific UTV; each model has its own unique features and manufacturer safety instructions.
- Ask what can go wrong and what can be done to prevent hazards. This is also called a hazard assessment: thinking through the tasks and work environment to determine how to control hazards and risks.
- Maintain a safe speed. Just because the UTV can go 50 mph doesn't mean it should.
- Some UTVs qualify as slow-moving vehicles and therefore require a SMV sign.



- To learn more about how to improve UTV safety, visit saif.com/agsafety for more resources.

About UTVs

Utility terrain vehicles (UTV), or “side-by-sides,” are useful tools to transport materials and people, or to access off-road sites. UTVs are an alternative to ATVs and are commonly used on farms, ranches, or worksites.

However, when it comes to safety, UTVs should be compared more closely to small trucks than ATVs. Wearing a seatbelt is the most important safety measure when riding in a UTV with a rollover protection system (ROPS). In addition to wearing a seat belt, there are many other things that can be done to control hazards:

- Before starting, check gas, brakes, and tires.
- If the UTV has a rollover protection system, wear your seatbelt.
- If the UTV **does not** have a ROPS or a cab, **do not** wear your seatbelt.
- Only transport the same number of passengers as there are seatbelts or seats.
- Avoid sharp turns and sudden starts or stops.
- When driving in fields or off-roading, slow down and be aware of gates, fences, ditches, holes, or other hazards.

- Secure all tools and equipment in the cab and in the bed.

UTV stories

- While driving between worksites, the passenger of a UTV was thrown from the vehicle when the driver turned sharply. The passenger hit their head and suffered a concussion and stitches. How could this have been avoided?
- When spraying weeds using a UTV, an employee stopped the vehicle, set the emergency brake, and got out to check the spray tank. The UTV began rolling down the slope. The employee tried to jump in to stop the UTV, and the rear tire ran over their foot. What steps should be taken to prevent this?
- An employee was attempting to slow the UTV to a stop by releasing their foot from the gas. They were driving a UTV with a hydrostatic pedal and it lurched to a stop. They were not seat-belted and hit their head on the windshield. What can we learn from this?

Take action (Complete one or more activities as a team)

- A. **GROUP DISCUSSION:** Talk about the stories in this safety talk and discuss ways they could have been prevented. Could they happen here?
- B. **GROUP ACTIVITY:** Review your business's specific safety expectations for UTV use, including speed, passengers, service and maintenance expectations, and seatbelts.
- C. **FIELD TRIP:** Inspect the UTVs and discuss unique maintenance, design, and safety features of that specific model. Also discuss any known hazardous terrain that may be unique on your farm, orchard, or ranch.

