

NEWS RELEASE

Live to ride another day

Zero tolerance for alcohol and ATVs

EDMONTON/August 3, 2011 - A sunny summer day. Friends and family. A cold, crisp beer. A trip down the trails on an ATV. One of these things does not belong.

For too many Albertans, wonderful summer days on the ATV trails are ruined by crashes involving alcohol and drugs. And experts are raising the warning flag.

“The power, speed and weight of an ATV along with the unpredictable nature of the off-road conditions make the consequences of an ATV crash or rollover just too serious to ignore,” says Dr. Don Voaklander, director of the Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research.

Intoxication by drugs and alcohol has been implicated as one of the most pervasive risk factors in ATV injuries. Even slight intoxication increases both the likelihood of a crash and the likelihood that the injuries sustained will be more severe.

“One of the most important things you can do is ride sober,” says Kathy Belton, Associate Director of the Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research. “We encourage zero tolerance for alcohol and drugs before and while operating an ATV.”

Of the ATV fatalities in Alberta between 2002 and 2009, 55% of those checked for alcohol had tested positive – 72% of whom were over the legal limit.

“The risk of suffering a life-threatening injury on an ATV after consuming alcohol is elevated because our abilities to make quick decisions and adjustments for the terrain are impaired,” explains Belton.

Drinking alcohol and operating an ATV could also result in an impaired driving criminal conviction.

Experts recommend riders take simple steps to ensure they live to ride another day:

- Protect your head. Wear an approved helmet with face and eye protection.
- Age matters. Kids under 16 years old should not operate an adult ATV. Follow manufacturers' recommendations for age and size. Kids' level of development puts them at a higher risk for injury and death on ATVs. Make sure there is always close, visual, adult supervision.
- Zero tolerance. Alcohol, drugs and ATVs don't mix.
- One rider. Refuse to carry or be a passenger on an ATV built for one person.
- Get the skills. Take an ATV operator training course.

-30-

For more information, contact:

Sharon Schooler

Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research

780-492-9222 or sharon.schooler@ualberta.ca