

North Carolina General Statutes

Part 10C. Operation of All-Terrain Vehicles.

§ 20-171.15. Age restrictions.

(a) It is unlawful for any parent or legal guardian of a person less than eight years of age to knowingly permit that person to operate an all-terrain vehicle.

(b) It is unlawful for any parent or legal guardian of a person less than 12 years of age to knowingly permit that person to operate an all-terrain vehicle with an engine capacity of 70 cubic centimeter displacement or greater.

(c) It is unlawful for any parent or legal guardian of a person less than 16 years of age to knowingly permit that person to operate an all-terrain vehicle with an engine capacity greater than 90 cubic centimeter displacement.

(d) It is unlawful for any parent or legal guardian of a person less than 16 years of age to knowingly permit that person to operate an all-terrain vehicle unless the person is under the continuous visual supervision of a person 18 years of age or older while operating the all-terrain vehicle.

(e) Subsections (b) and (c) of this section do not apply to any parent or legal guardian of a person born on or before August 15, 1997, who permits that person to operate an all-terrain vehicle and who establishes proof that the parent or legal guardian owned the all-terrain vehicle prior to August 15, 2005. (2005-282, s. 2.)

§ 20-171.16. Passengers.

No operator of an all-terrain vehicle shall carry a passenger, except on those vehicles specifically designed by the manufacturer to carry passengers in addition to the operator. (2005-282, s. 2.)

§ 20-171.17. Prohibited acts by sellers.

No person shall knowingly sell or offer to sell an all-terrain vehicle:

- (1) For use by a person under the age of eight years.
- (2) With an engine capacity of 70 cubic centimeter displacement or greater for use by a person less than 12 years of age.
- (3) With an engine capacity of greater than 90 cubic centimeter displacement for use by a person less than 16 years of age. (2005-282, s. 2.)

§ 20-171.18. Equipment requirements.

Every all-terrain vehicle sold, offered for sale, or operated in this State shall meet the following equipment standards:

- (1) It shall be equipped with a brake system maintained in good operating condition.
- (2) It shall be equipped with an effective muffler system maintained in good working condition.
- (3) It shall be equipped with a United States Forest Service qualified spark arrester maintained in good working condition. (2005-282, s. 2.)

§ 20-171.19. Prohibited acts by owners and operators.

(a) No person shall operate an all-terrain vehicle on a public street or highway or public vehicular area unless the person wears eye protection and a safety helmet meeting United States Department of Transportation standards for motorcycle helmets.

(a1) No person under 18 years of age shall operate an all-terrain vehicle off a public street or highway or public vehicular area unless the person wears eye protection and a safety helmet meeting United States Department of Transportation standards for motorcycle helmets.

(a2) Notwithstanding subsection (a1) of this section, a person who is under 18 years of age and employed by a supplier of retail electric service, while engaged in power line inspection, may operate an all-terrain vehicle while wearing both of the following:

(1) Head protection equipped with a chin strap that conforms to the standards applicable to suppliers of retail electric service adopted by the Occupational Safety and Health Division of the North Carolina Department of Labor.

(2) Eye protection that conforms to the standards applicable to suppliers of retail electric service adopted by the Occupational Safety and Health Division of the North Carolina Department of Labor.

(b) No owner shall authorize an all-terrain vehicle to be operated contrary to this Part.

(c) No person shall operate an all-terrain vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, any controlled substance, or a prescription or nonprescription drug that impairs vision or motor coordination.

(d) No person shall operate an all-terrain vehicle in a careless or reckless manner so as to endanger or cause injury or damage to any person or property.

(e) Except as otherwise permitted by law, no person shall operate an all-terrain vehicle on any public street, road, or highway except for purposes of crossing that street, road, or highway.

(f) Except as otherwise permitted by law, no person shall operate an all-terrain vehicle at anytime on an interstate or limited-access highway.

(g) No person shall operate an all-terrain vehicle during the hours of darkness, from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise and at anytime when visibility is reduced due to insufficient light or atmospheric conditions, without displaying a lighted headlamp and taillamp, unless the use of lights is prohibited by other applicable laws. (2005-282, s. 2; 2006-259, s. 10(a); 2011-68, s. 1.)

§ 20-171.20. Safety training and certificate.

Effective October 1, 2006, every all-terrain vehicle operator born on or after January 1, 1990, shall possess a safety certificate indicating successful completion of an all-terrain vehicle safety course sponsored or approved by the All-Terrain Vehicle Safety Institute or by another all-terrain vehicle safety course approved by the Commissioner of Insurance. The North Carolina Community College System is authorized to provide all-terrain vehicle safety training, approved by the Commissioner, to persons less than 18 years of age. (2005-282, s. 2; 2007-433, s. 4.)

§ 20-171.21. Penalties.

Any person violating any of the provisions of this Part shall be responsible for an infraction and may be subject to a penalty of not more than two hundred dollars (\$200.00). (2005-282, s. 2; 2008-187, s. 11.)

§ 20-171.22. Exceptions.

(a) The provisions of this Part do not apply to any owner, operator, lessor, or renter of a farm or ranch, or that person's employees or immediate family or household members, when operating an all-terrain vehicle while engaged in farming operations.

(b) The provisions of this Part do not apply to any person using an all-terrain vehicle for hunting or trapping purposes if the person is otherwise lawfully engaged in those activities.

(c) The provisions of G.S. 20-171.19(a1) do not apply to any person 16 years of age or older if the person is otherwise lawfully using the all-terrain vehicle on any ocean beach area where such vehicles are allowed by law. As used in this subsection, "ocean beach area" means the area adjacent to the ocean and ocean inlets that is subject to public trust rights. Natural indicators of the landward extent of the ocean beaches include, but are not limited to, the first line of stable, natural vegetation; the toe of the frontal dune; and the storm trash line. (2005-282, s. 2; 2008-91, s. 1; 2011-68, s. 2.)