April 30, 2012

The Honourable Bob Chiarelli
Ministry of Transportation
Corporate Correspondence Unit
3rd Floor, Ferguson Block
77 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1Z8

Dear Honourable Sir:

Re: Improved Legislation for ATV use Among Children and Youth

On behalf of the Thunder Bay District Health Unit I am writing to express our concerns about the alarming increase in injuries and death to children and youth resulting from riding All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and the lack of stringent legislation to protect these individuals.

Public health is mandated to reduce the rate of injuries and deaths caused by motorized vehicles, including ATVs. The popularity of ATV use continues to gain ground in Ontario and of immediate concern are the increased rates of injury to children under the age of 16.

There are over one million ATVs in use in Canada. The number of serious injuries involving ATVs is growing faster than for any other major wheeled or water-based activity, states the Canadian Paediatric Society's 2012 status report. More than 1/3 of serious injuries from ATV crashes involve young people under the age of 15. According to statistics from the Ontario Provincial Police 13 children under the age of 16 died as the result of ATV fatalities in the past five years. Of the total number of deaths in all ages (94) over the past five years, 60% were not wearing a helmet.

These statistics illustrate that the province must significantly tighten its off-road vehicle legislation to protect our children. Rigorous legislation is associated with reduced mortality.


We strongly urge that the recommendations brought forth by the Canadian Paediatric Society and the Chief Coroner of Ontario be implemented by:

- increasing public education; enhance legislation and enforcement to prevent ATV injuries and death (particularly in children) through the endorsement of:
• the safety reminder issued by the Chief Coroner of Ontario that children under the age of 16 should not operate All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) intended for adults and that all ATV riders should complete an approved rider’s safety course in their area or through the Canada Safety Council;

• mandatory helmet use for all ATV riders at all times;

• that persons under the age of 16 be under close supervision and accompanied by an adult;

• that this legislation be enforced by a “peace officer”.

The Thunder Bay District Health Unit Board of Health urges the Minister to improve legislation to ensure the protection of Ontario citizens when using ATVs.

If you require any additional information, please feel free to contact Ms. Judi Marton, Public Health Nurse at 807-625-8848.

Yours truly

Maria Harding, Chair
Board of Health
Thunder Bay District Health Unit

cc. Dr. Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health
    The Honourable Deb Matthews, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
    The Honourable Eric Hoskins, Ministry of Children and Youth Services
    The Honourable Michael Gravelle, Ministry of Natural Resources and MPP – Thunder Bay Superior North
    Mr. B. Mauro, MPP – Thunder Bay Atikokan
    Ontario Public Health Association
    Association of Local Public Health Agencies
    Thunder Bay District Municipalities
    Northern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA),
    The Association of Chiefs of Police
    Attorney General

Enclosures: Report No. 24-2012 – All Terrain Vehicle Safety and Attachments
            Resolution No. 29-2012 – All Terrain Vehicle Safety
RE: Report No. 24-2012 - All Terrain Vehicle Safety

THAT with respect to Report No. 24-2012 (Prevention of Injury and Substance Misuse), we recommend that a letter be sent to the Ministry of Transportation to:

- Endorse the safety reminder issued by the Chief Coroner of Ontario that children under the age of 16 should not operate All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) intended for adults and that all ATV riders should complete an approved riders safety course in their area or through the Canada Safety Council;
- Endorse mandatory helmet use for all ATV riders at all times;
- Recommend persons under the age of 16 be under close supervision and accompanied by an adult;
- Recommend that this legislation be enforced by a “peace officer”;

AND THAT a copy of this letter be sent to the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Minister of Children and Youth Services, local members of the Provincial Parliament, the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA), the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA), Ontario Boards of Health, Municipalities in the District of Thunder Bay, Northern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA), The Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Attorney General for their support and action.
RECOMMENDATION

THAT with respect to Report No. 24-2012 (Prevention of Injury and Substance Misuse), we recommend that a letter be sent to the Ministry of Transportation to:

• Endorse the safety reminder issued by the Chief Coroner of Ontario that children under the age of 16 should not operate All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) intended for adults and that all ATV riders should complete an approved riders safety course in their area or through the Canada Safety Council;
• Endorse mandatory helmet use for all ATV riders at all times;
• Recommend persons under the age of 16 be under close supervision and accompanied by an adult;
• Recommend that this legislation be enforced by a “peace officer”;

AND THAT a copy of this letter be sent to the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Minister of Children and Youth Services, local members of the Provincial Parliament, the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA), the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA), Ontario Boards of Health, Municipalities in the District of Thunder Bay, Northern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA), The Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Attorney General for their support and action.

REPORT SUMMARY

The Thunder Bay District Health Unit, along with other community partners of the Snowmobile ATV Vessel Education Committee (SAVE), is concerned about the increasing number of injuries and deaths in Northwestern Ontario. The majority of these deaths and injuries is occurring with children and many are preventable.

BACKGROUND

There are over one million ATVs in use in Canada. The number of serious injuries involving ATVs is growing faster than for any other major wheeled or water-based activity. More than 1/3 of serious injuries from ATV crashes involve young people under the age of 15. On August 30, 2011, the Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario, issued a media release reminding the public that ATVs pose dangers to children under the age of 16.

The SAVE Committee promotes awareness, education and enforcement of safe All Terrain Vehicle riding throughout Northwestern Ontario, with a goal of reducing injuries and fatalities while operating recreational vehicles. According to statistics from the Ontario Provincial Police, 13 children under the age of 16 died in Ontario as the result of
ATV fatalities in the past five years. Of the total number of deaths in all ages (94) over the past five years, 60% were not wearing a helmet.

**COMMENTS**

In 2004, the Thunder Bay District Board of Health passed a resolution that endorsed the Canadian Paediatric Society’s position statement that “children under 16 years of age do not operate ATVs due to lack of knowledge, physical size and strength, cognitive and motor skills” (Canadian Paediatric Society, 2004).

In 1994, snowmobiles outsold ATVs 2:1. Since 2007, that trend has reversed.

Every day in 2004-2005, 19 Ontarians visited the ER for ATV-related injuries; 80% were males.

Certified safety training courses, as well as direct supervision by a responsible adult are necessary to ensure quick action in the event of a mishap while a child is operating an ATV.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications related to this report.

**STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

There are no staffing implications related to this report.

**CONCLUSION**

It is recommended that the Thunder Bay District Board of Health encourage the Ministry of Transportation to promote the safe use of ATVs to prevent ATV injuries, particularly in children, that would include increased public education, enhanced legislation and enforcement.

**LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Public Safety Reminder from the Chief Coroner of Ontario: ATVs and Children (Distributed Separately).


**PREPARED BY:** Judi Marton, Public Health Nurse

**THIS REPORT RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:** Ken Ranta, Director – Health Promotion

**DATE:** March 7, 2012

Chief Executive Officer Medical Officer of Health
August 30, 2011 9:30 AM

A 10-year-old boy was recently killed while riding an adult all terrain vehicle (ATV) alone in Northern Ontario.

There have been a number of similar deaths this summer, and the Office of the Chief Coroner reminds the public that ATVs pose dangers to children under the age of 16.

A number of medical studies have found that drivers and riders of ATVs, particularly children, have high rates of injury and death compared to other off-road vehicle types. Full-size ATVs are large, heavy, and powerful machines that require strength, balance, dexterity, and judgment which children have not yet developed. Children are at risk of driving too fast or driving onto uneven ground, losing control of the machine, and being thrown from the vehicle or crushed in a rollover. The resulting grief for the family is unimaginable.

A coroner's inquest in 2005 examined the death of a seven-year-old boy who died while driving an ATV. Recommendations at that time included mandatory approved safety training, increased public education regarding the safe operation of ATVs, and permission to drive an ATV on approved trails only from age 12 - 16. These are equally applicable today.

All ATV drivers should complete a rider safety course in their area or through the Canada Safety Council, and parents, children and teens should be aware of the risk of injury or death when riding an ATV, especially in the absence of adult supervision.

These are preventable deaths. The recommendation from the Office of the Chief Coroner is that children under the age of 16 should not operate ATVs intended for adults.

CONTACTS
Dr. Andrew McCallum
Chief Coroner for Ontario, Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services
416-314-4008

Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services
ontario.ca/safety

Site Sub-Navigation
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Notices

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• IMPORTANT NOTICES

LAST MODIFIED: FEBRUARY 13, 2012
Are We Doing Enough?

A status report on Canadian public policy and child and youth health

2012 Edition
ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE (ATV) SAFETY LEGISLATION

Registration

- Manufacturer approved training and vehicle
- Adhesive or other substance, and
- No operation while under the influence of
- Proactive clothing
- The consumer use of helmet and other
- Maximun for which the vehicle was designed:
- Ensuring the number of passengers to be
- An operation to be at least 16 years of age,

Vehicle Registration

- Vehicle registration that—minimum—continues
- Governmental to introduce and enforce of
- Provincial and national
- Consumer Protection Legislation to ensure

The CPS is disappointed by the lack of

For those aged group,

there was a 30% reduction in ATV-related injuries
under the age of 14 years from owning ATV's.

One year after Nova Scotia restricted children

machine.

How much closer is that of an adult on a larger
- only on a vehicle. A youth model ATV is still
- limited speed capability are safer. The risk to a child

injury prevention

were doing enough

2002-2004 ATV/UTV Injury Incidents in Canada

ATV-related injury incidents continue to increase each
season. The number of ATV-related injury incidents
in Canada in 2002 is slightly lower than in 2001, but
the increase from 2001 to 2002 is significant. The
number of ATV-related injury incidents in
Canada in 2004 is similar to the number in 2003,
but the increase from 2003 to 2004 is significant.

The number of ATV-related injury incidents in
Canada in 2004 is similar to the number in 2003,
but the increase from 2003 to 2004 is significant.

The number of ATV-related injury incidents in
Canada in 2004 is similar to the number in 2003,
but the increase from 2003 to 2004 is significant.
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**All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Safety Legislation**

2009 Status: 2012 Status