

## **Facts about Injuries to Children on All-Terrain Vehicles**

### **What They Are**

All-terrain vehicles, commonly known as ATVs, are three- or four-wheeled machines specifically designed for off-road travel. As bigger and faster ATVs have been introduced to the market over the past decade, ATV-related deaths and injuries have increased substantially in every age group. However, in 2003 children accounted for nearly one third of all ATV-related injuries. ATVs are inherently difficult to operate, and children under the age of 16 do not have the cognitive and physical capabilities to operate these vehicles safely. SAFE KIDS recommends that children under the age of 16 should never ride or operate ATVs of any size, including youth-sized ATVs.

### **Deaths and Injuries**

- In 2003, at least 111 children under the age of 16 died as a result of ATV-related injuries.
- In 2003, an estimated 38,600 children under the age of 16 were injured in all-terrain vehicle-related incidents.
- ATV-related injuries are six times more likely to result in hospitalization and 12 times more likely to result in death than bicycle-related injuries.
- Head injuries account for a majority of ATV-related deaths, which usually are instantaneous. Serious nonfatal injuries include head and spinal trauma, abdominal injuries and multiple trauma.

### **How Injuries Occur**

- ATV-related injuries commonly occur due to rollovers, collisions with stationary objects and falls from the vehicles.

### **Who Is at Risk**

- Males account for nearly 70 percent of ATV-related deaths among children under the age of 16.
- Children under the age of 16 riding ATVs are four times more likely than ATV operators over 16 to experience an injury requiring emergency room treatment.

### **Safety Laws and Regulations**

- Currently, 27 states have a minimum age requirement for operation of an ATV. Of these, only three states (Missouri, New Hampshire and Virginia) require ATV operators to be 16 or older.

- A recent study suggests that current legal and regulatory standards have a low probability of decreasing ATV-related deaths among children and that states should restrict the use of ATVs by children under the age of 16.
- In 1988, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission banned the manufacture of three-wheeled ATVs, required warning labels to be placed on ATVs and issued engine-size regulations for ATVs designed for use by children under the age of 16.
- In 1998, ATV manufacturers assumed the responsibility of self-regulation, a method that relies on fine print in advertisements, warning labels, offers of training and voluntary policies restricting the sale of adult-sized ATVs for use by children under the age of 16.

### **Health Care Costs and Savings**

- The annual cost of all-terrain vehicle-related injuries among children ages 14 and under is more than \$3.3 billion.
- The annual cost of deaths from all-terrain vehicles (including wheeled ATVs, snowmobiles, and hovercraft on land) among children ages 14 and under is almost \$5.7 million.