

OFF ROAD VEHICLE  
VS  
ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE

By Sheriff Byron Nogelmeier

It seems like there has been a growing popularity of all terrain vehicles and off road vehicles.

Off road vehicles are not intended to be driven on a public highway. South Dakota State Law states that no person may operate on a public street or highway an off-road vehicle except for crossing from one side of the road to the other. The off road vehicle must be driven in a highway ditch as close as possible to the outer edge of the highway right-of-way. However, no person may operate an off-road vehicle in a highway ditch along the interstate highway system, or operate an off-road vehicle on any lands owned, leased, or controlled by the Department of Game, Fish and Parks, except on a designated off-road vehicle area or designated trail, or operate an off-road vehicle in a highway ditch that is designated as part of the state snowmobile trails system .

The age requirement for someone to drive an off road is twelve years of age or older. A violation is a Class 2 misdemeanor

Now all-terrain vehicles are licensed the same as a motorcycle. Your all terrain vehicle must have four or more wheels and have a combustion engine having a piston or rotor displacement of two hundred cubic centimeters or more. You are allowed to drive it on the public highway as long as you have it licensed and meet the necessary light, brake, and other vehicle accessory requirements. You cannot drive an all terrain vehicle on an interstate highway system.

Drivers Licensing requirement is that you hold a valid South Dakota driver license and you must be 14 years of age or older. If you are under the age of 18 you will be required to wear a DOT approved helmet. The all terrain vehicle must have insurance just as your car and motorcycle.

I hope this clears up some confusion with off road and all terrain vehicles.

Remember School is open and drive safe.