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ATV safety begins with the operator

With the upcoming Thanksgiving weekend soon approaching, outdoor enthusiasts will be out enjoying the last official long weekend of the year. That being said, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) want to see that this weekend is a safe one and one that is free from tragedy on our roadways, waterways and trails. The public can expect to see an increased police presence within the OPP Central Region to ensure that this takes place.

One disturbing trend that appears to consistent is the number of crashes and unnecessary collisions involving All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's). So far this year, 15 people (compared to 10 at this time last year) have lost their lives in ATV related collisions throughout OPP patrolled areas throughout Ontario and 3 have been killed in Central Region.

ATVs are prohibited from all roadways in Ontario unless the municipality has passed a bylaw to make an exception to this rule. ATV operators must remember that:

? Drivers must hold a valid G2 or greater drivers licence (if operated on roadways where allowed)

? All riders must wear an approved helmet.

? Operator must drive the ATV on the far right hand side of the roadway.

? 20 km/h is the maximum speed an ATV can travel on roads with a posted speed limit of 50 km/h or less.

? Operator shall operate the ATV at a speed of one half of the posted limit up to a maximum speed of 50km/h.

? Impaired Operation ? drinking and driving while operating an ATV is a criminal offence and carries the same penalties as operating a vehicle

? ATV's are prohibited from travelling along or across Highway 400 series highways.

? Ownership ? vehicle must be registered and proof of same must be produced at the trailside.

? ATV owner must have liability insurance and surrender proof upon request.

? Licence Plate ? the vehicle must have a properly displayed off-road licence plate

? Age ? must be at least 12 years of age (when operating on trails unsupervised).

? An ATV travelling along a road must have its headlights and tail lights on.

Remember to always operate your ATV with an approved helmet, eye protection, boots, gloves, long pants and long-sleeved shirt or jacket. Ignorance of the law is no excuse; please follow these safety tips in order to maximize the enjoyment of your ATV:

Safety Tips for ATV Riders

? Ride off-road only, never on public roads

? Ride with others ? never alone

? Always supervise youngsters

? Ride sober ? no alcohol or drugs

? Respect the environment ? don't litter

? Be courteous to all you meet

? Ride within your capabilities

? Respect riding trail and area rules

For more information on ATV's please visit one of these websites: www.catv.ca or www.safety-council.org