

“Under the Trooper’s Hat”

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Now that summer is in full swing, many young people will be traveling around on off-highway vehicles (OHVs). For the purposes of this article, OHVs will be considered dirt bikes, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) or side-by-sides. I’m addressing frequent questions about requirements for youth to operate an OHV.

According to the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department OHV –Highway Vehicle 2017-2019 Laws and Safety Guideline manual, all operators must be at least 12 years old AND possess an OHV safety certificate, valid driver’s license, or learner’s permit to operate an off-highway vehicle. Any person under the age of 16 without a driver’s license, learner’s permit or off-highway vehicle safety certificate may not operate an off-highway vehicle except on the private lands of that person’s parent or guardian or as a participant in an organized sporting event that involves the use of OHVs. Once a youth reaches age 16, he or she must have either a driver’s license or learner’s permit to operate an OHV.

Youth ages 12 through 15 can obtain an OHV safety certificate by attending a scheduled classroom or hands-on class. Another option is to complete an online certification course. Once the youth passes the safety certification test, he/she will be able to legally operate an OHV on land other than their parents’, which includes designated OHV trails and ditches. Please visit the North Dakota Parks and Recreation website, <http://www.parkrec.nd.gov/>, and click on the OHV/Snowmobile link listed at the top of the page to view available certification courses or to schedule a course in your area.

Operators and / or passengers under the age of 18 must wear an approved U.S. Department of Transportation helmet. Passengers can only be carried on an OHV if it was specifically manufacture-equipped with a passenger seat. All OHVs, both in-state and out-of-state, must be registered and have valid insurance when traveling on any public lands.

For more information about OHV use and regulations, visit the North Dakota Parks and Recreation’s website link [Laws and Registration](#).

The mission of the North Dakota Highway Patrol is to make a difference every day by providing high quality law enforcement services to keep North Dakota safe and secure. NDHP invites you to visit the FAQ section of our website: www.nd.gov/ndhp, like our Facebook page www.facebook.com/northdakotahighwaypatrol or join us on Twitter [@NDHighwayPatrol](https://twitter.com/NDHighwayPatrol) where you can learn more about traffic safety, tips and NDHP news. Download the NDHP mobile app to receive notifications, report a crime tip, thank a trooper ask a question or make a suggestion for next month's *Under the Trooper's Hat* feature.