



DRIVING YOUR ATV OR UTV/ORV ON IOWA PUBLIC ROADS AND STREETS

Know the Law. Ride Responsibly.

How to Drive on Public Roads

- Do not exceed 35 MPH.
- Driver must be age 18 or older with a valid driver's license.
- Do not drive while impaired or with open alcohol container.
- Headlight(s) must be on at all times.

What is Required for the Vehicle

Slow-Moving Vehicle Sign



Reflective sign with an orange triangle and dark red border that **must be displayed on rear of vehicle for ag or personal use.**

(Iowa Code 321.383)

- Proof of insurance.
- Registered with Iowa DNR and sticker displayed on rear of vehicle.
- Out-of-state vehicle must have an Iowa DNR nonresident user permit sticker.
- Functioning required equipment, including but not limited to: horn, mirrors, headlight(s), tail lights, and brake lights.
- Display slow-moving vehicle sign.

When and Where You Can Ride

- Operation allowed day or night.
- Roadway use allowed (except interstates and four-lane roads).
- Use state two-lane or county highways only on the most direct, accessible route to: an ATV/UTV/ORV park or trail, the nearest county road, an authorized city street, or your residence.
- Crossing multi-lane highways allowed only at intersections from authorized roads.

ATVs/UTVs and Iowa Law

ATVs/UTVs are regulated for use on roadways by Iowa code sections 321I and 321.234A.

Always refer to the most current version of the Iowa Code for legal guidance.



[321I](#)



[321.234A](#)

ATV vs. UTV/ORV: Key Differences

ATV

(All-Terrain Vehicle)



Handlebars

1-2 riders
straddle seat

3,4, or 6 wheels

UTV/ORV

(Utility Task Vehicle)
(Off-Road Utility Vehicle)



Steering wheel

2-6 riders sit
inside bench or
bucket seat

4 or 6 wheels

Exemptions for Ag Use on Public Roads

(Implements of Husbandry)

- No DNR registration required.
- No license needed if within 2 miles of farm. Class C license required if beyond 2 miles.
- Operation allowed only between sunrise and sunset.

Prioritize Your Safety



Wear a helmet.



Use a safety harness, if available.



Drive sober.

IOWA CODE REFERENCES

I. Non-Ag Operation Requirements

A. General Requirements:

- **Driver's License:** Valid license required – (Iowa Code 321.234A(2))
- **Insurance:** Valid liability insurance – (321.234A(2))
- **Minimum Age:** 18 years old – (321.234A(2))
- **Registration Decal:** Shall be affixed on rear of vehicle – (IA Admin Code 571-46.7; 321.234A(4))
- **Required Equipment:** As specified in Iowa Code Chapter 321 – (321.234A(3))

B. Lighting and Safety Equipment:

- **Headlamp(s):** Must be illuminated at all times – (321.384, 321.386)
- **Horn:** Required – (321.432)
- **Mirror:** Required – (321.437)
- **Rear Lamp:** Required – (321.387)
- **Signal Lamps:** Required – (321.404)
- **Slow-Moving Vehicle Sign:** Displayed on rear – (321.383(2))
- **Windows:** Frontside windows and windshield shall not be excessively dark – (321.438)

C. Operational Guidelines:

- **Direct Crossing:** Allowed on highways not part of the interstate – (321.234A(f); 321.10)
- **Paved County Secondary Roads:** Permitted if authorized by county or for direct access – (321.234A(f); 321.10(2-4))
- **Road Use - State Highways:** Only on undivided, two-lane roads for direct access – (321.234A(f); 321.10(2-4))
- **Road Use - City Streets:** Permitted if authorized by city or for direct access – (321.234A(f); (321.10(5))
- **Road Use - Unpaved County Roads:** Operation allowed – (321.234A(f); 321.10(2-4))
- **Speed Limit:** Must not exceed 35 MPH – (321.234A(2))

II. Ag Operation Exemptions

A. License Requirement Exemption:

- **Not required if used for farm purposes** – (321.176)
(Note: Cannot operate if license is suspended, barred, or revoked.)
- **2-mile limitation for ag operations** – (IA Admin Code 761-605.3; 321.176)

B. Operation Hours:

- **Only between sunrise and sunset** – (321.234A(1))

C. Registration Exemption:

- **Not required if used as an implement of husbandry** – (321.234A)

D. Speed Limit:

- **Must not exceed 35 MPH** – (321.234A(2))

2022 STATE OF IOWA ATV/UTV BILL HF2130

The (ATV/UTV) bill was proposed to the State Government in response to a 2020 survey asking avid ATV and UTV riders what they would like to see changed in Iowa law to support their sport better. Over 4600 people responded with the following key items: (1) Be able to ride on more County and State roadways. (2) Be able to ride in all 99 counties with a State wide uniform law.

Below is the easy to understand version of new HF2130 ATV/UTV bill

By the new State Law any registered (ATV/UTV) vehicle may be operated in all 99 counties of Iowa as long as you *OBEY* the following laws:

Maximum Speed will be 35 MPH

You must be at least 18 years old (No one below 18) and have a VALID driver's license and carry VALID proof of insurance.

You must have an *OPERATIONAL* Headlight at all times, Tail and Brake light, Horn and Rear View Mirror. You will be allowed to ride Day or Night

A registered (ATV/UTV) vehicle may only be operated on a State (primary) highway that is *NOT* a divided highway (4 lane) or Interstate road system.

You can *ONLY* drive on State two lane highways over the most direct and accessible route to and from an all-terrain vehicle park or trail, to the nearest County (secondary) road, or a authorized city street or your residence.

You can (cross) a State divided highway (4 lane) at an intersection from an authorized road as long as it is *NOT* an Interstate Highway.

A registered (ATV/UTV) vehicle may be operated on any County (secondary) unpaved (gravel) road.

You can only drive on County (secondary) paved (highways) providing that you take the most direct and accessible route to and from an all-terrain vehicle park or trail, to the nearest County (secondary) gravel road, an authorized city street or your residence.

A registered (ATV/UTV) *CAN NOT* drive on any County (secondary) gravel or paved roadway that is marked (under construction) (closed) or a (detour) for normal vehicle traffic

A (ATV/UTV) can be restricted from a County (secondary) roadway during special events, Example RAGBRAI for not more than seven consecutive days or a max of 30 days per year.

All Iowa Cities may regulate the operation of (ATV/UTV) traffic within their city limits this includes (primary) and (secondary) road extensions.

A City *CAN NOT* charge a fee to (ATV/UTV) for use of their streets.

By Iowa State Law HF2130 all of the above (laws) override the (current) County ordinances in place.

If you have any questions about forming a (ATV/UTV) Club or questions about HF2130 regulation itself, please feel to contact our dedicated group of advisors at ia.stateohvadvisory@gmail.com

Please remember that we worked hard to get this bill. So please work hard to help us keep it. Always work together with your local County Officials.

HF 2130 OHV FAQ

1. Can a fee be charged or a pass/sticker be required for off-highway vehicles to be ridden on roadways/highways on public property by any government or nongovernment entity?

No, cities may not charge a fee to operate an off-highway vehicle (OHV) within the city but counties may be able to depending on the designation of county roads. Refer questions to counties as to whether a pass is required in their jurisdiction. Nonresidents must still obtain a sticker to operate OHVs on public land (not including public roadways), a designated riding area, a designated riding trail, or ice of this state.

2. Can a dealer allow a customer to test drive an off-highway vehicle on roadways/highways if the vehicle has the appropriate dealer decal placed on the vehicle?

Yes, OHVs are motor vehicles so the dealer decal registration exemption applies the same to them as to other motor vehicles as long as they are on authorized roads.

3. Can off-highway vehicles be ridden in state parks?

They can operate on “through roads”, meaning a road that starts and ends outside of park boundaries to pass from one authorized destination to another. They may not operate them on side roads wholly contained within park boundaries. This also applies to wildlife/game management areas.

4. Does this law include all off-highway vehicles that are registered with the DNR? Off highway motorcycles, utility vehicles and ATVs? Can a mini bike be ridden on roadways?

No, according to Iowa Code 321I.1(b), off-road motorcycles are all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) for the purpose of registration, titling if a title has not previously been issued, and operators are subject to operating provisions governing ATVs – but does not state they are ATVs or off-road utility vehicles which is what the new law is intended to effect.

5. What equipment is required by the D.O.T for an off-highway vehicle to legally be driven on roads/highways?

The minimum requirements to drive on streets listed in the new law are operational headlights (at all times), tail lights, brake lights, horn, and rearview mirror. Iowa Code 321I requires a muffler and brakes on ATVs. However, refer these questions to the DOT as motor vehicles on roadways are within their scope of administration and rulemaking authority.

6. Does the DNR charge a fee to operate an OHV on roadways?

No, but the OHV needs to be registered with the DNR through county recorders.

HF 2130 OHV FAQ

7. Can farmers that are exempt for registration still travel from one farm to another?

Yes, Iowa Code 321.9(3) exempting ATVs used exclusively as farm implements from registration was not changed by the new law. Nor was Iowa Code 321.234A(1)(a) allowing for ATV operation on a highway between sunrise and sunset and incidental to the vehicle's use for agricultural purposes (including stopping in the course of agricultural use to obtain fuel for the all-terrain vehicle or to obtain food or a nonalcoholic beverage for the operator). The new law's language regarding age and insurance also does not apply to ATVs used for agricultural purposes under Iowa Code section 321.234A(1)(a).

8. Where can OHVs be ridden on roadways?

-Undivided two-lane primary highway (not interstate) on the most direct route between an ATV park/trail, secondary road where authorized, city street where authorized, and the operator's residence.

-Any secondary road that is unpaved.

-Any secondary road that is paved and undivided on the most direct route between an ATV park/trail, secondary road where authorized, city street where authorized, and the operator's residence.

-A paved, undivided secondary road as authorized by the county board of supervisors.

-Directly across a highway that is not an interstate at an unobstructed intersection after stopping and yielding to oncoming traffic.

-Counties may prohibit operation on a secondary road closed for construction/reconstruction/maintenance/natural disaster, a secondary road designated as a detour route during construction/reconstruction/maintenance/natural disaster, and any secondary road by ordinance for short periods of time.

9. If a customer is unsure that their type of vehicle is acceptable to be ridden on a roadway should they contact the D.O.T?

Yes, motor vehicles on roadways are within the DOT's scope of administration and rulemaking authority.

10. How does this law affect nonresidents?

Nonresident OHVs must be registered to operate on Iowa roadways. Nonresidents must still purchase a user permit from the DNR to operate OHVs on public land (not including public roadways), a designated riding area, a designated riding trail, or ice of this state.

ATV State Rules: <https://atvsafety.org/state-rules>

Questions can be directed to local law enforcement or DPS State Patrol Division
@ 515-725-6090 isinfo@dps.state.ia.us