

ATV Age Requirements Under Age 18

No person under the age of 18 years shall operate an ATV on California public lands unless the person satisfies one of the following conditions:

- (a) The person is taking [part in] a prescribed safety training course under the direct supervision of a certified ATV safety instructor.
- (b) The person is under the direct supervision of an adult who has in possession an appropriate safety certificate issued by this state, or issued under the authority of another state.
- (c) The person has in possession an appropriate safety certificate issued by this state or under the authority of another state. CVC §38503
Riders 14-17 may ride without supervision if they have earned and possess a state issued ATV safety certificate.

Additional Rules for Under 14

No person under 14 years of age shall operate an ATV on California public lands unless the person satisfies one of the conditions above and is accompanied by/under the direct supervision of a parent, guardian, or otherwise authorized person in possession of an ATV safety certificate. CVC §38504

Reminder: ATV drivers must be able to safely reach and operate all vehicle controls. CVC §38304, §38304.1

The CA OHMVR Division currently provides funding for ATV safety certificate training for those age 6 through 17. For more information, see their website here:

www.ohv.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=25676

Dispersed Camping

Dispersed camping allows OHV users to more easily access roads and trails deeper into the forest. These are undeveloped areas and most have no amenities (trash, water, toilets, etc.). Popular OHV areas with camping access:

Mi-Wok	Hull Creek, Deer Creek/Crandel
Calaveras	Black Springs, Cabbage Patch, Big Rattlesnake, Interface
Groveland	Harden Flat, Anderson Valley, Date Flat, Bull Creek
Summit	Herring Creek, Eagle Meadows/Niagara Creek

Choosing a Campsite

Use existing campsites in lieu of clearing new ones. If you want to have a campfire, find a site with an existing fire ring. Although it's natural for campers to want to stay near water sources, camp at least 100 feet away from edges of meadows, lakes, or streams to minimize damage to critical wildlife and riparian areas. Dispersed campers are permitted to park within one vehicle length (including any tow vehicle) of a road or trail and walk into camp. Dispersed camping is not allowed within developed recreation areas or where signs prohibit it. For more information, please contact the area's ranger district office.

Stoves and Campfires

You must have a free campfire permit to operate a campstove or have a campfire. Permits may be obtained in person from Forest Service offices or online at permit.preventwildfireca.org. Your responsibilities for building and putting out your fire safely are explained on the permit and must be adhered to. It is your responsibility to check for fire restrictions before you leave.

Sanitation

Pack out what you pack in. Litter is unsightly, unsanitary, and harmful to wildlife and aquatic ecosystems. Place food scraps in a closed container to pack out and dispose. Do not burn your trash. Leaving human waste in dispersed camping areas can spread disease, lead to contaminated water supplies, soils, attract wildlife, and spoil a camping area. Portable human waste disposal kits which allow you to "go" on the go are commercially available. As a last resort, choose a spot at least 200 feet away from water sources and campsites, dig a small hole at least six inches deep, and cover it when you are through. Pack out any toilet paper or sanitary products and dispose of them properly. You must remove all of your belongings and trash when you vacate your campsite.

Food Storage in Bear Country

Here's a good rule to remember: if something goes in or on your body, it can attract bears. You can use a bear resistant food container or your car to secure your items— just make sure all items (including trash) are sealed, packed out of sight, and that the doors are locked with the windows up.

Contact Us:

Most offices are open Monday through Friday, call or visit www.fs.usda.gov/stanislaus for current hours.

Stanislaus National Forest Supervisor's Office

19777 Greenley Road
Sonora, CA 95370
(209) 532-3671

Summit Mi-Wok District Highway 108 Corridor

1 Pinecrest Lake Rd
Pinecrest, CA 95364
(209) 965-3434

Groveland Ranger District Highway 120 Corridor

24545 Highway 120
Groveland, CA 95321
(209) 962-7825

Calaveras Ranger District Highway 4 Corridor

5519 Highway 4
Hathaway Pines, CA 95223
(209) 795-1381



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

OHVs on the Stanislaus Stanislaus National Forest

Forest roads and trails provide an opportunity to visit and recreate in the Stanislaus National Forest by off-highway vehicles (OHVs). Learn how to do so safely, legally, and responsibly.

Traveling on Forest Routes

An "off-highway motor vehicle" is any vehicle that can be driven on a Stanislaus National Forest road or trail. You may not travel cross-country or on routes closed to your vehicle. A Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) is a vital tool containing information on how to use forest routes. Read your map carefully, it will tell you which vehicles are allowed on what routes (usually by the size or class of vehicle). It is your responsibility to know you are operating your vehicle in a legal location. Maps are free and can be obtained at a district office, from our website, or on the Avenza app— where it can be used for offline navigation.



Roads vs "Trails"

In general, roads are at least 50 in wide and receive some maintenance. Trails are less than 50 inches in width, or if wider, be maintained as a trail (less maintenance and users might encounter rougher conditions/grades). See the next page for more information on navigating forest routes.

Winter and Spring Closures

From December 15 to April 15 all forest routes are subject to a seasonal closure.* Due to high elevation terrain and late snowstorms, this closure is almost always extended through May (or later). Call a district office for updated

information or check the "Alerts & Closures" webpage. *Closed to wheeled vehicles. Talk to a ranger about over-snow recreation opportunities.

Vehicle Registration Requirements

As of 2024, to operate any type of motorized vehicle on public lands, your vehicle must have one of the following:

- Street Legal License Plate
Vehicles that can be operated both on- and off-highway will be given a street-legal license plate.
- Green or Red ID Plate (Sticker)

If you are going to operate any off-road only motorized vehicle, it must be registered with the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). This includes recreational off-highway vehicles (ROVs), all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), side-by-sides, dirt-bikes, quads, etc. The registration is approximately \$52 and is valid for a two-year period. Monies collected support an OHV fund used to: develop and operate existing and new OHV areas, enforce regulations, educate, and protect natural resources.

The registration is displayed on the vehicle in the form of a green or red ID plate (sticker). The red sticker is for motorcycles and ATVs model year 2003 and newer that fail to meet the emission standard established by the California Air Resources Board and is subject to restriction.

The red sticker indicates that these vehicles may only be operated on public lands during certain times of the year. From June 1 through Sept. 30, all red sticker vehicles are prohibited from operating on the Mi-Wok or Groveland Ranger Districts. OHV areas on the Summit and Calaveras Ranger District are not currently subject to a restricted red sticker riding schedule. Green stickered vehicles do not have restricted riding seasons.

For more information about registering an off-highway only vehicle, please see: www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/how-to-register-an-off-highway-vehicle-ohv-htvr-19/

Non-Resident Permit

If you are not a California resident and your OHV is not registered in your home state, then you must purchase a non-resident OHV permit. For more info and to purchase them online, see: www.ohv.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=25669

The Rules of Riding— Be a Good Forest User

The future of OHV opportunities depends on you! Protect your privilege to ride. Respect the land, its wildlife, and the rights of others using the Stanislaus National Forest.

Be legal. Set an example by complying with all equipment and licensing requirements.

Educate your family. It's your responsibility to know the rules in the area— but don't forget your children:

- Are they legal? Do they know the rules?
- Do you know where they are riding?

If you have the opportunity, educate others. Those who break the rules and don't ride right threaten YOUR riding access. Approach all situations with respect and disengage if at any time you feel unsafe. Contact law enforcement and report any incidents of illegal or unsafe activity.



Stay on open routes. Respect trail, road, and area closures. You are responsible for knowing and obeying any closures. Check the Stanislaus National Forest website for any closures or call a district office for condition information.

In general, signs with horizontal route numbers indicate forest roads where only highway legal vehicles may operate, and vertical numbers for all OHVs— even if not all vehicles may be able to navigate the terrain.

Though we strive to have all routes properly signed, it is not uncommon to come across outdated signage that conflicts with current designations. Users should always defer to the MVUM for a route's designated use.

You may encounter unmarked or unmapped routes; assume they are closed and do not enter. Do not enter or cross private land without the landowner's permission.

Plan your travel ahead of time and know where you are allowed to go. The Avenza app with an MVUM downloaded is a useful navigation tool when on the forest.

Be self-sufficient, keep your equipment in good repair and carry necessary supplies for changes in the weather or other conditions. A well-executed trip can be satisfying to you, and a bad one a burden or offense to others.



Stay off trails when your use will leave ruts and impact the trail. Do not ride when roads/trails are very wet or very dry— doing so can damage them, causing the need for costly repairs and may lead to their closure.

Minimize wheel your spin— it creates ruts, erodes soil, and increases the complexity of maintenance, and causes indefinite trail closures until repairs can be completed.

Designated play areas for high impact riding, such as those found in state facilities, are not available on this forest— please do not ride in this manner on forest trails.

Always yield the trail to other users. Show your respect by slowing down or stopping altogether. All trails are two-way— anticipate that other users may be around the next corner. Brief inattention can cause disaster, and remember, excessive speed is both dangerous and prohibited.

Never spook horses, cattle, or wildlife. Animals are startled by unannounced approaches, sudden movements, or loud noises. On narrow routes, please shut off your engines until the animals are well away from you and your equipment. Do not assume that cattle will move off the trail or continue in their current direction. Approach them cautiously. Leave gates as you found them.

If you encounter stock users, follow their handler's directions (ask if you aren't certain).

treadlightly!

Visit treadlightly.org/learn to discover more about recreating sustainably on public lands. View important safety tips and learn about how you can help keep access open by riding responsibly.

Regulations and Guidelines

The vehicle code for the State of California sets forth all provisions necessary for off-highway users to comply with. Fines for violations of state law are substantial. Be sure you are familiar with the law before unloading your vehicle for use on public lands. The Forest Service rigidly enforces state and federal laws on the Stanislaus National Forest.

Please note that the entire Division 16.5, Off-Highway Vehicles section of the California Vehicle Code (VEH) is enforceable on the Stanislaus National Forest.

Important OHV Rules

This selected, incomplete, list of statutes is provided for your convenience. It is your responsibility to make sure you and your vehicles are in compliance with state law. Check the Stanislaus National Forest website or contact a district office for alerts affecting OHV recreation before you leave home.

A "recreational off-highway vehicle" (ROV) has a steering wheel, non-straddle seating and can reach speeds greater than 30 MPH with an engine displacement no greater than 1,000cc (61 ci). ROVs are also referred to as UTVs, side-by-sides, or RUVs. All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are distinct from ROVs. Both are not street legal vehicles.

Regulations for Users of All Vehicles

- It is illegal to possess an open container of an alcoholic beverage while riding in or operating any vehicle.
- No person shall operate, nor shall an owner permit the operation of, an off-highway motor vehicle:
 - ...in a manner likely to cause malicious or unnecessary damage to the land, wildlife, habitat or vegetative resources. VEH §38319
 - ...carelessly, recklessly, or without regard for the rights or safety of other persons or in a manner or at a speed that would endanger or be likely to endanger any person or property. 36 CFR 261.54(f)
- It is unlawful for the driver of any vehicle to disobey any sign, signal, or traffic control device... VEH §38300
- No motor vehicle shall exceed 15 MPH within 50 feet of any campground, campsite, or concentration of people or animals. VEH §38310
- Any vehicle operated between sunset and sunrise must display at least one headlight that enables an operator to see clearly 200 feet ahead and one red taillight visible for 200 feet. VEH §§38350, 38345

ROV, ATV, and Motorcycles

- All occupants (operators and passengers) of a ROV must wear a properly fastened seatbelt and shoulder belt or safety harness when the vehicle is in motion. VEH §38602
- All occupants (operators and passengers) of an ATV and/or ROV must wear safety helmets meeting motorcycle and motorized bicycle requirements when on public lands. VEH §38601, §38505

- If your driving privilege is suspended in California, you may not operate an ROV or ATV on California public lands.
- A person operating a ROV shall be at least 16 years of age, or be directly supervised in the vehicle by a parent or authorized adult. VEH §38600
- Motorcycles and ROVs must be equipped with a US Forest Service-approved spark arrester and adequate muffler, both working, and unmodified. PRC §4442a

Passengers in ROVs and ATVs

- (a) A person operating a ROV with a model year of 2014 or later, shall not allow passengers unless their seat is part of the original manufacturing (OEM).
 - (b) Non-OEM passenger seats in vehicles model years 2013 or earlier, may be occupied if the occupant of the seat is fully contained inside of the vehicle's rollover structure. VEH §38603
- (a) Passengers are only allowed if they can grasp the occupant handhold (required device that supports and assists in keeping arms and hands within the vehicle) while seated upright against the seatback, with seat and shoulder belts or safety harness properly fastened.
 - (c)...handholds must allow the passenger to exit without interference. VEH §38604
- An operator of an ATV may carry no more than one (1) passenger if the vehicle was designed for it, otherwise carrying passengers is prohibited. VEH §38506

Additional ATV regulations apply to minors (see back page).

Noise Regulations and Monitoring

The State of California has enacted legislation limiting the amount of sound produced by any OHV operating on public lands. Noise levels may be checked at any time during your riding experience on the Stanislaus.

If your off-highway vehicle was manufactured	Noise limit is
Before January 1, 1986	101 dBA
On or after January 1, 1986	96 dBA
If your competition* off-highway vehicle was manufactured	Noise limit is
Before January 1, 1998	101 dBA
On or after January 1, 1998	96 dBA

In a quick test, the noise output of an OHV is measured by a precise sound meter. The device is held 20 inches from the end of the exhaust system and measurements are taken while the engine is running at half the maximum RPM.

An increase of just three decibels produces twice the volume (even if human ears cannot discern a difference). For example, 104-dBA is twice as loud as 101-dBA.

Noise enforcement and monitoring is one of the highest priorities of the State OHV Commission and a critical element for evaluation in determining the continuance of "Operations & Maintenance" and "Enforcement" type grant applications for all state-funded OHV riding areas.