

Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV)

What You Need To Know About Off-Highway Vehicles in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

An off-highway vehicle (OHV) is a motor vehicle capable of off-highway travel during winter or summer. OHV's include all-terrain vehicles (ATV's), four-wheelers, three-wheelers, dirt bikes, motorcycles, trail bikes, and snowmobiles.

Federal regulations require the operator of an OHV to follow these rules when on National Forest land:

Operate OHV's only on areas, roads and trails designated as open to OHVs.

Operator and vehicle must meet all applicable state vehicle/operator requirements when on roads open to large vehicles.

Vehicle must be equipped with state approved muffler and/or speak arrester.

Recreational riding within developed campgrounds is prohibited. OHV's may only be to enter and leave campgrounds.

Operating a vehicle in a manner which damages the land, wildlife, or vegetation is prohibited.

In addition, Montana law requires a registration and sticker if you are going to be riding on trails or unnumbered Forest Service roads. We do accept a valid registration or license from another state. Keep registration documents for your ATV with the vehicle or on the person operating it.

Montana law also requires that any ATV or motorcycle operating on a public road (county roads and numbered Forest Service roads) be "street legal." This requires the ATV to have an operable headlight, tail/brake light, rear view mirror, license plate and horn. The law also requires all operators to be licensed drivers with the appropriate endorsement on their licenses. Public roads are defined as any route open to vehicular traffic. To simplify things, any road where you can drive a car or pickup is considered a public road.

For more information on Montana ATV requirements, go to:

<http://fwp.mt.gov/education/properatv.html>

OHV Courtesy

You can make a very positive or a very negative impression on people you meet along roads or trails while riding your OHV. The people you meet may very well form strong opinions about motorized travel as a result of your encounter with them.

Keep your speed down. Trails aren't racetracks and other users won't appreciate being surprised, chased off the trail, or buried in mud or dust.

Take time to visit with people you meet. Create a positive impression of motorized users.

When you meet stock such as horses, mules, llamas, and pack goats, pull off on the downhill side, and shut off your engine.

No one appreciates a loud machine that can be heard for miles. Make sure your OHV can be used only to enter and leave the campground, not to circle repetitively.

Don't drive your ATV or 4X4 on groomed snowmobile routes-it damages the track and creates a hazard for snowmobile riders.