

Injury Prevention: Adolescents and ATVs

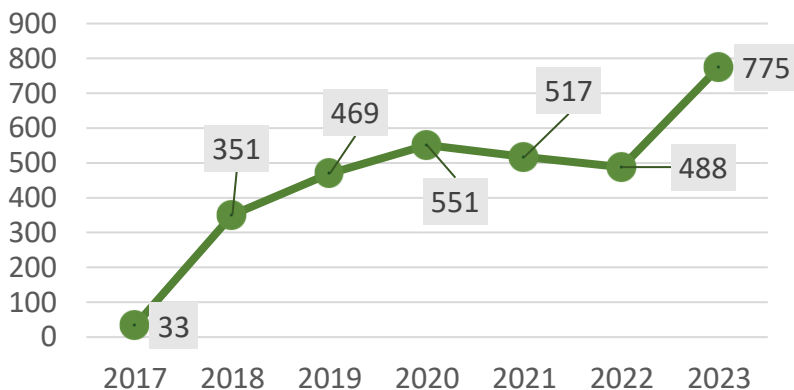
All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are motorized vehicles designed for off-road and dirt road use. ATVs, also known as three- or four-wheelers, are characterized by a seat designed to be straddled by the operator, handlebars to steer, and low-pressure tires. ATVs are primarily used for recreation but prove useful for yard and farm work. Riding ATVs can result in injuries severe enough to require emergency care.

There were **3,184** emergency department visits¹ for ATV-related injuries among Kentucky adolescents* from 2016–2023.

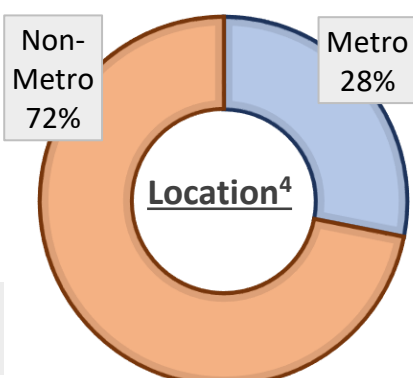
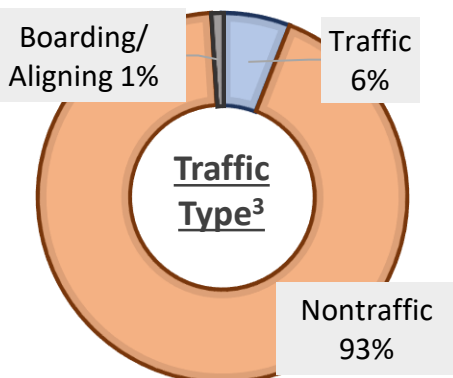
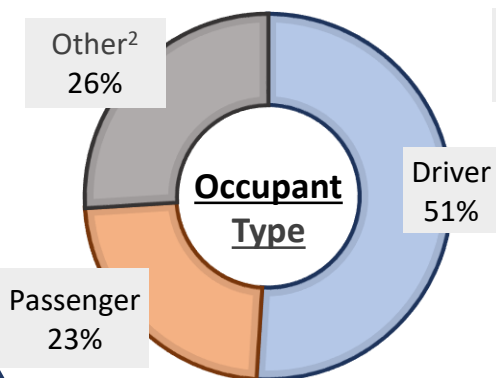
The median cost of an emergency department visit was **\$2,136** for adolescent ATV-related injuries.

*The term “adolescent” is limited to Kentucky residents 17 years of age and younger.

Kentucky Adolescent ATV-Related Injury ED Visits, 2016–2023



Kentucky Adolescent ATV-Related Injury ED Visit Characteristics, 2016–2023



Discharge status

- 91% home/self-care
- 8% inpatient care
- 1% other

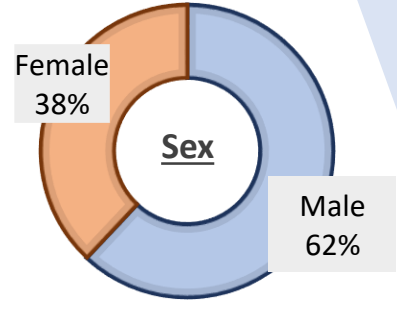
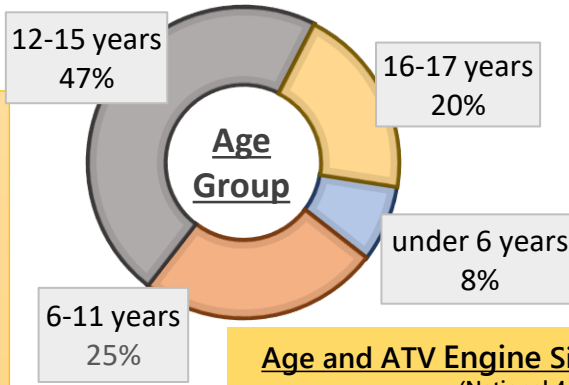


¹ED visits represent encounters of care and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated in Kentucky. ²“Other” is defined as those persons injured outside of the ATV or boarding/alighting from the ATV. ³“Traffic injuries” is defined as injuries occurring on public roadways, while “Nontraffic injuries” is defined as injuries occurring off public roadways, and boarding/alighting are unknown. ⁴“Location” is defined as metro (counties containing metropolitan statistical areas with populations of 50,000 or higher) and nonmetro (those with less than 50,000 in any urban cluster population) per the 2013 National Center for Health Statistics urban–rural classification. Data source: Kentucky Outpatient Services Database, Office of Data and Analytics. November 2024. Data are provisional and subject to change.

Kentucky Adolescent ATV-Related Injury ED Visits by Age Group and Sex, 2016–2023

80% of adolescent ATV-related injury ED visitors were under the age of 16.

The American College of Pediatrics recommends ATV use only for adolescents 16 years and older.



Age and ATV Engine Size Recommendations (National 4-H Safety)	
Age	ATV Engine Size
< 6 years old	Use not recommended
6–11 years old	Under 70 cc
12–15 years old	70–90 cc
16 years and older	Over 90 cc



Safety Tips



Read the owner’s manual carefully and keep the ATV in good repair. Always follow the ATV manufacturer’s minimum age recommendation warning label.

Do not drive in adverse weather, hazardous terrain, or insufficient light.



Do not operate on paved roads. If you must drive on a paved road, be extremely careful when you cross the road.

Wear a helmet approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the American National Standards Institute, or the Snell Memorial Foundation. Replace helmet every five years or if involved in an impact.



Additional Resources

- ❖ [Kentucky \(KRS 189.515\) restrictions on operation of all-terrain vehicle](#), effective June 29, 2021
- ❖ [Consumer Product Safety Commission \(CPSC\) 1.800.638.2772](#)
- ❖ [CPSC warning against children riding adult ATVs](#)
- ❖ [ATV Safety Institute](#) Trainings and riding tips 1.800.887.2887
- ❖ [National 4-H Safety](#) Resources and tips/practice guide



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Images: www.flaticon.com, www.mountainridgeatvtrails.com

