



News Release

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SAFE KIDS METRO KC STATEMENT ON THE DEATH OF TEEN IN ATV ACCIDENT

Kansas City, MO- Statement may be attributed to Regina A. Weir, coordinator of Safe Kids Metro KC, a program of Mother & Child Health Coalition, www.mchc.net.

We join the community in mourning the loss of Tyler Rathbun, the Shawnee Mission High School student who died in an ATV accident last weekend. Our hearts go out to the family, friends and fellow students suffering in the wake of this tragic loss. Tyler was a passenger on an ATV when he was killed. Here's what parents and young people need to know about ATVs and why:

Kids and All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)*

All-terrain vehicle (ATV) sales have grown dramatically in recent years. There are significant risks associated with riding ATVs:

- Head injuries (cause of most ATV-related deaths)
- Head and spinal trauma
- Abdominal injuries
- Abrasions, lacerations, and clavicle and extremity fractures
- Burn injuries from contact with the engine and exhaust system

Safe Kids USA's policy is that until they are fully licensed under state law to operate a motor vehicle, children should not operate or ride as passengers on ATVs of any size, including youth ATVs. ATVs are inherently difficult to operate, and children under 16 do not have the cognitive and physical capabilities to operate these vehicles safely. While ATVs in some cases support a family's livelihood, the death and injury risks their use poses to children is too great.

Parents and caregivers should note that the majority of ATVs are designed to carry only an operator, with no passengers, and that helmets do not provide sufficient protection in ATV crashes.

A child 16 or older who is licensed to operate motor vehicles and would like to operate an ATV should take a hands-on safety training course and always follow safety guidelines.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) there were 542 reported ATV-related fatalities and an estimated 150,900 ATV-related injuries treated in emergency rooms in 2007. Children younger than 16 accounted for 20% of reported deaths and 27% of estimated injuries. Children younger than 12 accounted for 9% of reported deaths.

Helmets do not provide sufficient protection in ATV crashes. In one study of ATV deaths and injuries to children under the age of 16, 19% of children who died from head injuries were wearing helmets.

ATV Deaths occur in:

- Collisions (56% of deaths) more than half with fixed object
- Overturns (35% of deaths) backward more common than forward
- 60% occur on roadways
- Only 1% on ATV trails

Population most at risk

- Children under 16 years old constitute:
 - 14% of all drivers
 - 40% of all injuries
 - 35% of all ATV-related deaths
- Males are over-represented:
 - 3 times more likely to experience injury
 - Younger males most at risk
 - Most children (95%) are operating vehicles rated for adults

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends **engineering approaches** including seat belts, roll bars, headlights and speed governors; **legislation regarding** helmet use, requirements for licensing/certification, minimum driver age 16 years, prohibition of alcohol, passengers and ATV use at night; **and education** about the use of motorcycle helmets, eye protection and protective reflective clothing.

More information on safety precautions for use of ATVs is available at <http://www.atvsafety.gov/>

*Information is from www.Safekids.org.

Photo and interviews are available upon request.

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