

education requirements. Of the 49 states providing data in 2004, 17 (35%) require some safety education for riders, typically youth. Michigan is one of those states. Most states, 32 (65%), however have no minimum safety education requirement for operating an ORV. Further, while 26 (53%) states have a minimum age for the operation of an ORV, 23 (47%) have no minimum age. Michigan is one of the states with a minimum age requirement. Finally, of those states without a minimum age requirement, none mandates a safety education program and certification.

ORV Accidents and Fatalities in Michigan

A single, all encompassing source for data regarding ORV accident statistics and the circumstances surrounding those accidents does not appear to be available. Currently, the Michigan DNR Law Enforcement Division investigates every snowmobile fatality and files a detailed report tailored to snowmobiling (e.g. whether the operator was on the designated snowmobile trail system, etc.) in addition to the typical vehicle accident reporting form (characterized as a UD-10 form). This is not the case with ORV fatalities. To date, ORV fatalities and accident circumstances are lumped in with road related data. Two sources provide some insight into Michigan ORV accident and fatality statistics. The US Consumer Products Safety Commission (2003) reported that 1982-2002 Michigan had 224 people die in ATV accidents. The use of the term ATV suggests that this does not include off-road motorcycles or full-size 4 wheel drive vehicles used in off-road situations. There is also no accompanying data to determine where (roadway, trail, frozen lake, etc.) the fatal accidents occurred or the circumstances of those accidents. The Michigan State Police Office of Highway Safety Planning (2004) reported that during 1994-2003 there were 2,528 ORV/ATV accidents on Michigan roadways, resulting in 77 fatalities. Again, this does not specify what constituted an ORV and what constituted a roadway. Is a dual sport motorcycle an ORV? Is a UP forest trail a roadway? Implementing an investigation and reporting system similar to that for snowmobile fatalities and hunting accidents and fatalities would provide much more accurate and useful data in analyzing ORV safety. Key questions may include:

- (a) Where did the accident occur? (e.g. designated ORV system, road shoulder open to ORV use, road shoulder closed to ORV use, frozen lake, private land, etc.)
- (b) Had the operator of the ORV that died completed an ORV safety certification course and been certified? Had any other operators involved received ORV safety certification?
- (c) What type(s) of ORV(s) did the accident involve? Were there full-size automobiles involved? What were the factors that contributed to the accident?

Public Comment at Regional ORV Information Meetings

Three public information meetings were held to garner public input regarding the ORV plan. The public was also encouraged to comment about ORV use, users, facilities, environmental damage, trespass and any other issue regarding ORVs. The meetings were held Tuesday October 12 at 7PM in the Holiday Inn South in Lansing, Wednesday October 13 at 7PM in the Holiday Inn in Grayling and Thursday October 14 at 7PM in