

Wisconsin ATV/UTV Law Changes – Effective March 4, 2020

*The ATV/UTV Laws pamphlet still applies, unless otherwise stated in this update

What's New?

UTV Definition Changes

The legal definition of an UTV has changed. No longer are low pressure tires required. Now simply 4 or more tires are required. How the width of an UTV is measure has changed. UTVs are required to be originally manufactured, and must have at all times a width of not more than 65 inches as measured laterally between the outermost wheel rim on each side of the vehicle, exclusive of tires, mirrors, and accessories that are not essential to the vehicle's basic operation.

Secondary UTV Definition Changes

For machines that would otherwise meet the ATV definition except for weight & width, two changes were made. The weight and width requirements are increased to not more than 2000 pounds, and a width of 65 inches or less as measured laterally between the outermost wheel rim on each side of the vehicle, exclusive of tires, mirrors, and accessories that are not essential to the vehicle's basic operation.

ATV Definition Changes

The legal definition of an ATV has changed. No longer are low pressure tires required. Now simply 3 or more tires are required. How the width of an ATV is measure has changed. ATVs are required to be commercially designed and manufactured and must have a width of not more than 50 inches as measured laterally between the outermost wheel rim on each side of the vehicle, exclusive of tires, mirrors, and accessories that are not essential to the vehicle's basic operation.

ATV Passenger Rules

Previously only on the roadway were passengers restricted only to those ATVs that were designed and intended for passengers. Now that requirement has been extended to all other areas. ATV operators cannot have a passenger riding in or on any part of an ATV that is not designed or intended to be used by passengers.

Lighted Headlamp Display Requirements

Previously ATVs and UTVs were required to have a lighted headlamp & tail lamp during hours of darkness or during daylight hours when within a highway. ATVs and UTVs are now required to have a lighted headlamp & tail lamp at all times during operation.

New ATV & UTV Auxiliary Lighting Restrictions

No person (except EMS personal) may operate an ATV or UTV that is equipped with any of the following:

1. A lamp that emits any color of light other than white or amber and that is visible from directly in front of the ATV or UTV.
2. A lamp that emits any color of light other than red, yellow, amber, or white and that is visible from directly behind the ATV or UTV.
3. A flashing, oscillating, or rotating lamp that emits any color other than yellow or amber.

Any person operating an ATV or UTV must dim his or her high-beam headlamps and any auxiliary lamps when within 500 feet of an approaching ATV/UTV or vehicle, and within 500 feet to the rear of another ATV/UTV or vehicle. In addition, an operator must dim his or her backup lamps unless actively backing.

Operational Requirements and Modification Restrictions

ATVs and UTVs cannot be operated with anything else other than tires. This restriction does not apply to private property or frozen waters.

An ATV or UTV may not be modified so that its maximum width exceeds the width allowed for an ATV—50 inches or the width allowed for UTV—65 inches. This does not apply to the operation of an ATV or UTV on private property.

DNR Web site to get pamphlet: <https://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/le/LEA507.pdf>