

**NOTE: The North Dakota Department of Transportation has given their permission for use of this article. You may modify, edit or publish to meet your needs.**

### **Motor Scooter and OHV Safety is Important**

*May 5, 2009, 7:55 am*

**Motor Scooters and off-highway Vehicles (OHVs) are essential tools for many farmers and ranchers. Riding with safety in mind is very important.**

**Motor scooters and off-highway vehicles (OHVs), formerly known as all terrain vehicles, are popular vehicles for recreation and as work vehicles in North Dakota. While essential for many farmers and ranchers, it is important to ride with safety in mind. In 2008, two North Dakotans died as a result of OHV crashes. Before getting on a scooter or OHV, the rider should have the proper equipment. Good gloves offer protection in case of a crash. The gloves should be padded over the knuckles. Over-the-ankle boots with low heels keep feet in footrests and offer protection. At a minimum, long sleeved shirts and pants should be worn. Off-highway pants with knee pads and a jersey with chest and shoulder pad protectors are even better. A helmet can mean the difference between life and death, or the difference between a few broken bones or serious head injury. Make sure the helmet is Department of Transportation approved, and fits properly. Eyes should be protected with a face shield or goggles so an object hitting the facial area doesn't distract or injure the driver. The North Dakota Department of Transportation wants the public to be aware that a scooter or OHV with an engine larger than 50 cc must be licensed as a motorcycle. In addition, there are restrictions as to the areas these vehicles may be driven legally. It is legal to drive on private lands with the land owner's permission and lands designated as off-highway vehicle trails or riding areas. A licensed driver over 16 years of age may operate a class III OHV on a paved highway designated and posted at a speed not exceeding 55 miles per hour. One can also drive in the highway right of way, bottom of a ditch, along the out slope, and on dirt, gravel, or loose surface roadways. It is illegal to operate on the shoulder or inside slope. Local ordinances may be more restrictive than state laws, so the rider should check with local law enforcement officials about local laws. It is illegal to ride on public lands that are not designated as trails or riding areas; any tree nursery or planting area; United States, state or interstate highways or right of ways; or on railroad tracks.**