

QUAD BIKE SAFETY FACTSHEET

■ USING A QUAD BIKE TO TOW

A survey of quad bike accidents on farms revealed that 86 percent of bikes were towing an attachment such as a trailer or spray tank. Quad bikes used to tow attachments which are too heavy, too wide, or carrying an unbalanced load, may rollover.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE) is committed to helping to reduce the risk of injuries and fatalities resulting from quad bike hazards.

■ Legislation

When quad bikes are being used for work purposes – as they often are on farms – they are covered by the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 (the Act). This Act requires employers to take “all practicable steps” to prevent employees and others from being harmed in their workplace.

■ Choosing the right vehicle for the job

If you plan to use a quad bike to tow, there are extra considerations to take into account such as:

- the maximum tow weight (trailer + load);
- the maximum tongue weight (weight on hitch point);
- the maximum quad bike load;
- the manufacturer’s recommended carrying limits;
- the maximum front and rear load capacity;
- how front and rear loads will affect stability and visibility.

This information should be available in the manufacturer’s instructions. Remember that weight limits include the weight of the rider, the trailer and the load.

■ Fitting and using attachments

If you fit an attachment to a quad bike, make sure the combined total weight does not exceed the manufacturer’s weight or towing specifications. Check the weight specifications for the different types of quad bike if you have more than one on your farm – they may not be the same. Other things to remember:

- When fitting attachments, always use the mounting point or draw bar provided by the manufacturer. Incorrect connections can increase instability.

- Do not alter the height of the mounting point or increase the towing capacity outside those provided by the manufacturer.
- Do not reinforce the tow bar of the bike to make it stronger. This could have an adverse effect if a bike rolls with an attached implement. Instead of breaking, as it should, the re-enforced tow bar could still take the strain of the attachment and add to the force of the roll.
- When a powered attachment is attached to the quad bike, ensure all guards are in place and that the machine can be comfortably operated from the seated position
- Liquid in spray tanks will move with changes in contour and adversely affect stability. Always use spray tanks with baffles fitted.

■ Loading and securing

Manufacturers address loading in different ways – some simply say to reduce towing weight when towing on uneven (not completely flat) land. Refer to the owner’s manual to determine both maximum safe tow weight and the extent to which terrain reduces that safe weight.

Also remember:

- Never overload your trailer.
- Always load your trailer with the bulk of the weight over the trailers axle(s). If possible keep the load as low to the trailer deck as is practical.
- The load on your tow bar should not exceed the manufacturer’s recommendations, and the trailer drawbar should be sitting on the towing vehicle, level or slightly nose down.



**Ministry of Business,
Innovation & Employment**

QUAD BIKE SAFETY FACTSHEET



- Regularly check your ropes and straps to make sure the load is well secured.
- Never carry passengers on the trailer.

Towing liquids, live animals, insecure or unstable loads behind a quad bike is hazardous and can contribute to the vehicle become unstable and rolling.

■ Operating a quad bike while towing

Riding a quad bike while carrying or towing loads requires different skills, so make sure the rider has been trained in these techniques. Use a low gear, reduce speed and allow longer braking distance when carrying a load. When riding on hills and rough terrain which can't be avoided, reduce your speed and the weight you're carrying. Follow manufacturers' recommendations.

It is important to remember that when riding a quad bike with a loaded trailer you should not expect it to navigate the same paths as easily and safely as when it has no trailer. You may need to alter your use of the quad bike or change your route in order to remain safe.

Further information can be found in the Guidelines for Safe Use of Quad Bikes.

www.osh.govt.nz/publications/booklets/safe-use-quad-bikes/toc.asp

Note: This material has been prepared using the best information available to MBIE at the time of publication. Information may change over time and it may be necessary for you to obtain an update. This material is also only intended to provide general advice and does not constitute legal advice. You should make your own judgement about action you may need to take to ensure you have complied with your workplace health and safety obligations under the law.