



UTV SAFETY

TOOLBOX TALK: UTV Safety (Industrial & General Use)

RATTLIR Safety Series – "Strike Before It Bites"

Purpose

Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs) such as Gators, Rangers, and Mules are frequently used in industrial facilities, power plants, and large job sites for transportation and material handling. Although they operate at lower speeds than full-size vehicles, UTV incidents frequently result in rollovers, struck-by events, and injuries due to improper loading, speed, or limited visibility. This toolbox talk covers general and industrial UTV safety, emphasizing proper operation, passenger safety, and awareness of terrain and pedestrian interactions.

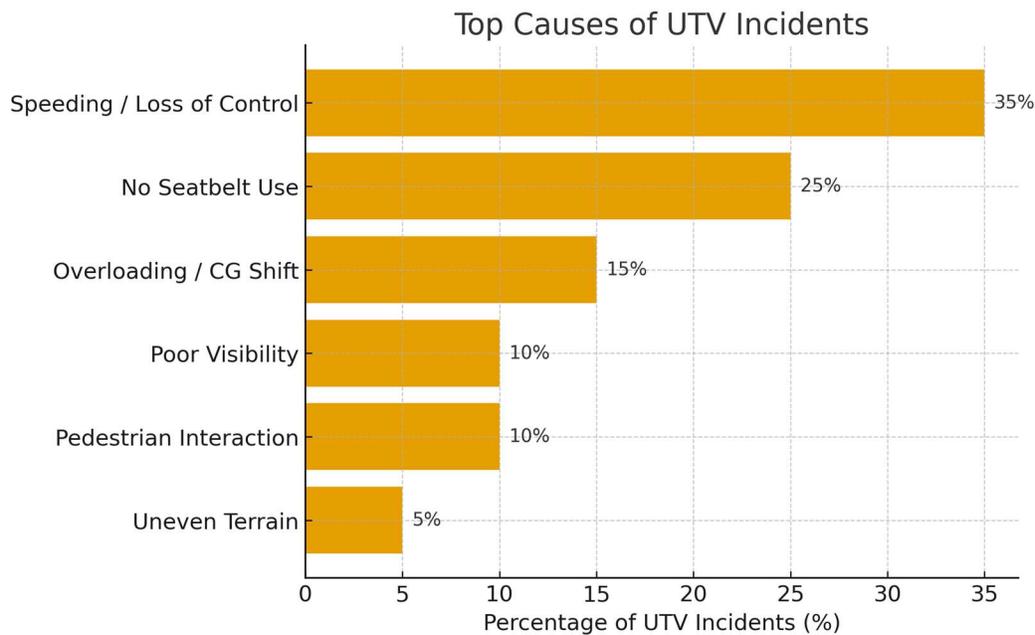


Figure 1 – Top Causes of UTV Incidents

UTV Hazards in Industrial Environments

- Reduced stability due to high center of gravity compared to standard vehicles.
- Sharp turns, sudden stops, or quick accelerations can lead to rollovers.
- Loaded cargo or tools can shift the center of gravity unexpectedly.
- Pedestrians and mobile equipment share the same travel paths.
- Limited visibility around corners, structures, equipment, and vegetation.
- Uneven surfaces, gravel, mud, and slopes may cause traction loss or tip-over.



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Safe Driving Practices

- Wear seatbelts at all times – most UTV fatalities involve unbelted occupants.
- Operate at safe speeds appropriate for terrain and plant conditions.
- Use headlights, strobes, or beacons when visibility is poor or during night operations.
- Avoid sudden turns or rapid steering corrections that could destabilize the vehicle.
- Drive cautiously near pedestrians and always yield right-of-way.
- Maintain safe following distances and be prepared for sudden stops.

Loading and Cargo Management

- Do not exceed the vehicle's rated cargo capacity.
- Secure all tools, materials, and equipment to prevent shifting during travel.
- Keep cargo loads low and centered to prevent rollover risk.
- Avoid stacking materials too high, as this significantly shifts the center of gravity.
- Ensure passengers do not ride in cargo beds or on side rails.

Industrial & Plant-Specific Hazards

- Be aware of pipe racks and cable tray supports that can limit clearance.
- Use spotters in areas with heavy pedestrian or contractor traffic.
- Slow down near blind corners or intersections; use horns where required.
- Follow posted site speed limits and adjust for weather conditions.
- Inspect UTVs before each shift – check tires, brakes, lights, seatbelts, and steering.

Discussion Questions

- Do you understand how load placement and speed affect UTV stability?
- Are you aware of the pedestrian and vehicle traffic patterns in your work zone?
- Was a vehicle inspection completed before operating a UTV today?

RATTLIR Takeaway

UTVs may appear simple and forgiving, but their high center of gravity and shared travel paths make them one of the most misunderstood hazards on industrial sites. By controlling speed, securing loads, wearing seatbelts, and managing visibility, workers prevent the rollovers, collisions, and sudden loss-of-control events that cause serious injury. RATTLIR strikes before it bites by promoting disciplined UTV operation and complete situational awareness around people, equipment, and changing terrain.