



# DRIVING YOUR ATV OR UTV/ORV ON IOWA PUBLIC ROADS AND STREETS

Know the Law. Ride Responsibly.

## How to Drive on Public Roads

- Do not exceed 35 MPH.
- Driver must be age 18 or older with a valid driver's license.
- Do not drive while impaired or with open alcohol container.
- Headlight(s) must be on at all times.

## What is Required for the Vehicle

### Slow-Moving Vehicle Sign



Reflective sign with an orange triangle and dark red border that **must be displayed on rear of vehicle for ag or personal use.**

(Iowa Code 321.383)

- Proof of insurance.
- Registered with Iowa DNR and sticker displayed on rear of vehicle.
- Out-of-state vehicle must have an Iowa DNR nonresident user permit sticker.
- Functioning required equipment, including but not limited to: horn, mirrors, headlight(s), tail lights, and brake lights.
- Display slow-moving vehicle sign.

## When and Where You Can Ride

- Operation allowed day or night.
- Roadway use allowed (except interstates and four-lane roads).
- Use state two-lane or county highways only on the most direct, accessible route to: an ATV/UTV/ORV park or trail, the nearest county road, an authorized city street, or your residence.
- Crossing multi-lane highways allowed only at intersections from authorized roads.

## ATVs/UTVs and Iowa Law

ATVs/UTVs are regulated for use on roadways by Iowa code sections 321I and 321.234A.

Always refer to the most current version of the Iowa Code for legal guidance.



[321I](#)



[321.234A](#)

## ATV vs. UTV/ORV: Key Differences

### ATV

(All-Terrain Vehicle)



Handlebars

1-2 riders  
straddle seat

3,4, or 6 wheels

### UTV/ORV

(Utility Task Vehicle)  
(Off-Road Utility Vehicle)



Steering wheel

2-6 riders sit  
inside bench or  
bucket seat

4 or 6 wheels

## Exemptions for Ag Use on Public Roads

(Implements of Husbandry)

- No DNR registration required.
- No license needed if within 2 miles of farm. Class C license required if beyond 2 miles.
- Operation allowed only between sunrise and sunset.

## Prioritize Your Safety



Wear a helmet.



Use a safety harness, if available.



Drive sober.

# IOWA CODE REFERENCES

## I. Non-Ag Operation Requirements

### A. General Requirements:

- **Driver's License:** Valid license required – (Iowa Code 321.234A(2))
- **Insurance:** Valid liability insurance – (321.234A(2))
- **Minimum Age:** 18 years old – (321.234A(2))
- **Registration Decal:** Shall be affixed on rear of vehicle – (IA Admin Code 571-46.7; 321.234A(4))
- **Required Equipment:** As specified in Iowa Code Chapter 321 – (321.234A(3))

### B. Lighting and Safety Equipment:

- **Headlamp(s):** Must be illuminated at all times – (321.384, 321.386)
- **Horn:** Required – (321.432)
- **Mirror:** Required – (321.437)
- **Rear Lamp:** Required – (321.387)
- **Signal Lamps:** Required – (321.404)
- **Slow-Moving Vehicle Sign:** Displayed on rear – (321.383(2))
- **Windows:** Frontside windows and windshield shall not be excessively dark – (321.438)

### C. Operational Guidelines:

- **Direct Crossing:** Allowed on highways not part of the interstate – (321.234A(f); 321.10)
- **Paved County Secondary Roads:** Permitted if authorized by county or for direct access – (321.234A(f); 321.10(2-4))
- **Road Use - State Highways:** Only on undivided, two-lane roads for direct access – (321.234A(f); 321.10(2-4))
- **Road Use - City Streets:** Permitted if authorized by city or for direct access – (321.234A(f); (321.10(5))
- **Road Use - Unpaved County Roads:** Operation allowed – (321.234A(f); 321.10(2-4))
- **Speed Limit:** Must not exceed 35 MPH – (321.234A(2))

## II. Ag Operation Exemptions

### A. License Requirement Exemption:

- **Not required if used for farm purposes** – (321.176)  
(Note: Cannot operate if license is suspended, barred, or revoked.)
- **2-mile limitation for ag operations** – (IA Admin Code 761-605.3; 321.176)

### B. Operation Hours:

- **Only between sunrise and sunset** – (321.234A(1))

### C. Registration Exemption:

- **Not required if used as an implement of husbandry** – (321.234A)

### D. Speed Limit:

- **Must not exceed 35 MPH** – (321.234A(2))