



HONDA

ATV Safety – Crossing ditches and water

Honda are often asked how to safely cross areas of water on an ATV and our stock answer is 'find a bridge!' But when you absolutely *have* to cross a ditch, stream, or even a river; here are a few tips to keep you safe and hopefully, dry.

It's all in the planning

Before approaching a water crossing, take a moment to assess and plan. You want the shallowest route through, so you need to know how deep the water is. If it's standing on the grass around the ditch, then it's likely to be quite deep. On the other hand, if you see patches in a river where the flow is particularly fast, this could indicate a shallower spot.

You're going to be relying heavily on grip to get you through, therefore it's

important to know how firm the bed or base is – so probe it with a stick to get a feel for it. A good indicator is where you see water flowing fast and bubbling up – this usually means a solid stone base.

As always, plan your entry and exit routes – check how steep they are and that they're free from obstruction. Look for tyre or track marks which might have been used before, as these can indicate a tried and tested route.

Slow and steady approach

Your approach should be slow and steady, in first gear and with four-wheel drive engaged. Move your body weight back, then gently let your front wheels ease into the water. If the ATV feels stable, move off gently. Resist the temptation to

suddenly accelerate – in rivers the water level can change suddenly and holes, stones, drops etc. could be anywhere. Try to 'pick' your way through, keeping as stable as possible.

When crossing water you should try to keep as many wheels on dry land as you can. In the common case of shallow trenches or crevices where the water has eroded the soil, for example, you might be able to safely negotiate these at an angle, with two wheels in the water and two out.

It's a long walk home...

Armed with common sense and these simple tips, your water crossing should be safe and dry. Just remember to plan and keep it steady, otherwise it's a long walk home!

