



HONDA



ATV Safety – winter challenges

Winter throws at us many different weather conditions – fog, frost, snow, sleet, ice – all of which have the capacity to significantly alter the terrain

Colder temperatures and shorter days make riding a real challenge. Get through the season safe and sound, with a few tips from Honda's ATV riding expert, Lindsay Shields.

POWER: Batteries don't respond well to cold temperatures, so check that both the battery on your ATV as well as the one that powers your mobile phone is fully charged.

KEEP IN CONTACT: People knowing where you are is crucial, as is factoring in time for them to start getting worried about you and actually get to you. All told, this could double or triple the time that you had anticipated being out.

CLOTHING: Make sure you're dressed for the conditions you're going out in and also, for what might come along. Weather turns quickly – make sure you've got extra layers to keep you warm.

ATTACHMENTS: Snowploughs, winches and salt spreaders can all help make life easier and are easily fitted to your ATV.

RIDING STYLE: In winter, traction won't be great and stopping distances will be longer. Engine braking efficiencies are reduced because of the grip available to tyres on frozen surfaces so you need to think ahead when dealing with hills – especially when you're towing a trailer.

Ascending, you might lose traction so consider your exit routes carefully. Descending, select the straightest unblocked exit. Your engine will hold you at, say, 2mph with the throttle closed but if you end up in a slide, the only way to get your steering back is to accelerate and get the wheels turning at the speed you're sliding. You don't want to be doing that with a big tree in your way!

The front shape of an ATV is angled upwards and, in snow, it acts a bit like a snowplough. So, if you hit snow at

speed, the ATV will try to climb it. At best, you could lose steering but at worst, you could end up sitting on a heap of snow with no drive – so, drive slowly!

CONDITIONS: Frost and snow offer zero grip and because ATVs have low ground pressure footprints, the weight of the machine over deep, snowy surfaces can make it easy for it to sink down and sit on its undertray. If this happens, the wheels then won't be touching anything in order to propel you forward.

Of all the weather conditions, I think that fog is probably the most challenging. It can descend quickly and leave you completely disorientated, taking away your usual reference points.

If you can see the track in front of you, don't deviate from it and take things slowly. If you can't, call for help. Best of all, if fog is on the cards, stay close to home.

Honda offers a range of bespoke accessories for its ATVs including a heated grip kit – for more information, give your local dealer a call to discuss your own requirements. Dealer locator at www.honda.co.uk/atv. Honda offers a free EASI Rider Course® with every new Honda ATV. Ask your Authorised Honda dealer to register you for a course – it's well worth it as it can qualify in risk assessments for PUWER or HSE requirements.

