



## Effective 7/01/2012 - Rear License Plate Requirement for ATVs & UTVs

For public UTV & ATV registrations, in addition to the 2 side decals furnished by DNR, owners will be required to furnish their own rear plate: This change was added after many discussions over the years with various experts and user groups based on surveys and meetings with the purpose of keeping our trail access.

- Plate will be minimum of 4 inches in height and 7 ½ inches wide.
- Plate must be white
- Black lettering a minimum of 1 ½ inches high with a minimum 3/16 inch stroke
- Need only the 4 registration numbers and two letters that follow –same as on the registration decal
- Owner shall maintain the plate so it is in legible condition
- Plate shall be attached to the rear of the vehicle



Plates can be made or purchased. WATVA has plate suppliers listed on our WATVA web site. See: <http://www.watva.org/index.php/wisconsin-atv/atv-utv-license-plates>  
Additional information on following pages!

## Effective 7/01/2012 - UTV (side x side) registration program becomes permanent program

The following list summarizes the bill:

- Creates a new UTV decal
- UTV public registrations will be \$30 / 2 years
- UTV visitor owners will be able to purchase non-resident trail passes
- UTV's will be included in the ATV snowplowing law
- Tampering with UTV hour meters and odometers / same protection as ATV
- User generated funding for trails
- Maximum passenger & seating requirements
- Definition of the UTV
- Private / agriculture UTV registration will be exactly the same as ATV private registrations



**Question - "Are we going to be fined if our new plates are splattered with mud or bent/marred as we back into rocks/trees, etc, which occasionally happens when off-roading?"**

Answer is "Possibly yes, it will be similar to when our side decals gets covered in dirt or mud. The same common sense solution applies, wash or wipe it off. Simply make the rear plate "legible", just as we are required to do for the side decals when they become unreadable. We are hard core riders ourselves; we've been testing rear plates for quite some time as to their functionality. This was not difficult or a hardship to any of our test unit riders."



**Question - "Where exactly is the plate supposed to be mounted- center, right, left?"**

Answer is "Simple, clearly visible from the rear". The rear plate placement is quite flexible, the wording allows a person to fit the plate in any number of locations as long as it can be seen and is visible from the rear.

**Question - "Do I have to replace the rear plate every two years when my new side decals come with the updated registration?"**

Answer is "No", the biannual decals change colors every two years; the numbers remain the same for as long as the machine is registered in Wisconsin. While you will receive new decals upon renewal, the plate and number/letters thereon remains constant, no additional actions are required.

**Question - "Why do we need the rear plate?"**

Answer - When it comes to the reason(s) for the rear plate, they are not only for more visible than the side decal for credentialed law enforcement; their purpose is to also assist in "peer reporting". Our organization has many local club members and hundreds of trained trail patrol ambassadors that volunteer thousands of hours each year doing their part to keep our trail systems open for all. For the law abiding, rule following ATV riders, indeed this is a small price to pay because of the few who constantly ruin it for everyone by choosing to ride illegally and inappropriately. Last year our Ride Smart Trail Patrol Ambassadors logged over 55,000 trail miles and just under 6,000 hours across Wisconsin trails. These dedicated volunteers fill out and send in trail reports for each outing. These reports are recorded and logged, complete with occasional pictures sent in to document off trail excursions and/or trail damage that will require additional volunteer time and dollars to fix or rehab.



This trail patrol program is legislatively authorized and done in cooperation with the bureau of law enforcement (DNR). These trail patrol ambassador volunteers are background checked and trained, along with re-certification requirements to stay current on Wisconsin laws and trends. They also communicate with and assist various county recreational sheriff deputies. The general roles as trail ambassadors is to aid, assist and educate the general ATV public, help those that ask for directions, assist with machine breakdown problems, spot and report or fix small trail issues such as downed trees across trails or culvert / washouts, sign replacements etc.

The trail patrol ambassador's are also the eyes and ears for credentialed law enforcement when the situation calls for it. Every one of the trail ambassador's is an avid ATV / UTV enthusiast. They are often some of the local club's most dedicated members that meet with local municipalities and land managers that have ATV trail issues that need to be rectified. Without these great people working on behalf of the sport, the alternatives for ATV trail problems that come up because of improper and/or illegal use is to simply close trails and routes. The Trail Patrol program has proven to be a much



better alternative, taking pride in providing for our current and future riders in the ATV / UTV sport. These dedicated people deserve the kind of tools that make their jobs easier; the rear plate is one such important tool. In these instances of obvious illegal riding when the rider has complete disregard for friendly advice, our trail ambassadors' need an easier and accurate means for reporting these criminals to our law enforcement professionals.



Thankfully in most cases and situations the general ATV public heeds the advice and insights of our trail ambassadors who care deeply for the future of this sport. Many new riders simply aren't aware of the ethics and rules for responsible ATV riding; this is where the educational duties come into play during normal interactions between the riders and our ambassadors. Others however, are fully aware but when they think no one is watching or that no one can identify them, they then choose to make bad decisions that have an adverse impact on our trail access. The rear plate is yet another tool that will improve the effectiveness for our

trail patrol ambassadors. It's important to note that these champions for the sport don't get to enjoy unfettered riding opportunities because they end up working for the betterment of the larger group of ATV riders caused by those few lawbreakers whose actions are very visible and used by anti-ATV pundits content in their purpose of eliminating motorized trail access for anyone.

Our experience on this topic comes from actual trail observations and subsequent land manager follow ups to address issues of illegal trespass / off-trail riding. Know that our association's primary function is to protect the health and vitality of the ATV registration program. This "registration program" was enacted into law back in the 1985-86 legislative floor period. This organization was started for that purpose, it was the first "tool" needed to self-fund and then responsibly manage our trail systems. Since those early years, this organization continues to be proactive in working with the many different entities and government agencies that have an ultimate effect on our ability to maintain ATV trail access. This recent legislation was crafted over a 5 year period with involvement from our land managers from the Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA).

The majority of our trail systems are on county forest lands, under the jurisdiction of county foresters. We not only attend, but often end up in their workshops that are related to trail issues that create problems for their counties. We spend hours and hours listening and participating with these key folks for the sole purpose of taking the actions necessary to maintain our trail access. We also arrange and meet with state land managers and administrators; the same scenario exists on state lands that allow ATV use. Our groups of dedicated volunteers also meet with federal land managers, this is an entirely different level of bureaucracy we have to contend with to maintain our 200 + miles of trails on US Forest Service public lands. While all this public land is just that public, there are far more non-ATVers in the general public than there are ATVerS. Our sport needs all responsible riders to report illegal activities out on our trail systems. The rear plate may not be a fix all but it's certainly an improvement over what exists currently.



We have had many discussions, workshops and have taken trailside surveys as well as surveys within our ~ 100 ATV / UTV local clubs over the years on this topic. Our current goal and priority is to keep our trail systems open. At the same time we work very hard as a statewide association to negotiate additional trail and route extensions. For the most part our ATV and UTV riders are indeed a responsible community of outdoor enthusiasts. As there is with any large user group, we acknowledge we have a few people that choose to disobey “no trespassing laws”; these are the same riders who travel off signed and designated trails. When this law is repeatedly violated, we usually lose critical trail access. The rear plate is an additional “tool” that makes the owner of the machine more visible and ultimately more accountable for their actions. The main problem is not the number of off trail riders; it is the fact that they and their illegal actions are the most prominent and visible to our many land managers and decision makers that are charged with protecting the sustainability of the natural resources we have the privilege to ride on.



The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources began registering ATVs in 1986, and by the end of 1987 there were a total of 25,600 registered ATVs. Just ten years later, that figure more than tripled to 79,245. By the end of 2003, there were a total of 192,211 registered ATVs in the state. At the end of 2010, the DNR reports that ATV registrations were up to 287, 163! With the recent passage of the permanent UTV registration program law, adding in the number of new UTVs that will be in the mix, its conceivable Wisconsin will have over 300,000 registered machines very soon. With those kinds of increased numbers, it's imperative we anticipate the problems associated with that kind of growth and find solutions to address them.

This kind of proactive thinking will continue to provide for responsible management of our outdoor resources.

ATV and UTV trail planning and riding can indeed be done in a sustainable fashion but it does take a self-management approach that may not always be the most popular with those in the ATV public that have no idea or concept of what it takes to get a trail approved and then keep it open. There is so much work done by our local club volunteers and the state association leadership teams; we cannot stand by and let that go to waste. The Wisconsin ATV / UTV Association and our involved members care greatly about protecting the riding privileges we all currently enjoy. We will continue our work with state lawmakers, agencies and local decision makers to be sure we represent the best interest our law abiding and responsible ATV / UTV riders against those who seek to shut us out and down. Hopefully this in-depth explanation helps you explain to your riding friends why you are a proud member of one of the most recognized statewide ATV / UTV organizations in the country! Invite them to join at [www.watva.org](http://www.watva.org).