

**NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT (EXCERPT)**  
**Act 451 of 1994**

**324.81133 Operation of ORV; prohibited acts; crash helmet and protective eyewear required; exception; assumption of risk.**

Sec. 81133. (1) An individual shall not operate an ORV:

(a) At a rate of speed greater than is reasonable and proper, or in a careless manner, having due regard for conditions then existing.

(b) During the hours of 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise without displaying a lighted headlight and lighted taillight. The requirements of this subdivision are in addition to any applicable requirements of section 81131(12).

(c) Unless the vehicle is equipped with a braking system that may be operated by hand or foot, capable of producing deceleration at 14 feet per second on level ground at a speed of 20 miles per hour; a brake light, brighter than the taillight, visible from behind the vehicle when the brake is activated, if the vehicle is operated during the hours of 1/2 hour after sunset and 1/2 hour before sunrise; and a throttle so designed that when the pressure used to advance the throttle is removed, the engine speed will immediately and automatically return to idle.

(d) In a state game area or state park or recreation area, except on roads, trails, or areas designated for this purpose, notwithstanding section 72118; on other state-owned lands under the control of the department where the operation would be in violation of rules promulgated by the department; in a forest nursery or planting area; on public lands posted or reasonably identifiable as an area of forest reproduction, and when growing stock may be damaged; in a dedicated natural area of the department; or in any area in such a manner as to create an erosive condition, or to injure, damage, or destroy trees or growing crops. However, the department may permit an owner and guests of the owner to use an ORV within the boundaries of a state forest in order to access the owner's property.

(e) On the frozen surface of public waters within 100 feet of an individual not in or upon a vehicle, or within 100 feet of a fishing shanty or shelter or an area that is cleared of snow for skating purposes, except at the minimum speed required to maintain controlled forward movement of the vehicle, or as may be authorized by permit in special events.

(f) Unless the vehicle is equipped with a spark arrester type United States Forest Service approved muffler, in good working order and in constant operation. Exhaust noise emission shall not exceed 86 Db(A) or 82 Db(A) on a vehicle manufactured after January 1, 1986, when the vehicle is under full throttle, traveling in second gear, and measured 50 feet at right angles from the vehicle path with a sound level meter that meets the requirement of ANSI S1.4 1983, using procedure and ancillary equipment therein described; or 99 Db(A) or 94 Db(A) on a vehicle manufactured after January 1, 1986, or that level comparable to the current sound level as provided for by the United States Environmental Protection Agency when tested according to the provisions of the current SAE J1287, June 86 test procedure for exhaust levels of stationary motorcycles, using sound level meters and ancillary equipment therein described. A vehicle subject to this part, manufactured or assembled after December 31, 1972 and used, sold, or offered for sale in this state, shall conform to the noise emission levels established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under the noise control act of 1972, 42 USC 4901 to 4918.

(g) Within 100 feet of a dwelling at a speed greater than the minimum required to maintain controlled forward movement of the vehicle, except under any of the following circumstances:

(i) On property owned by or under the operator's control or on which the operator is an invited guest.

(ii) On a forest road or forest trail if the forest road or forest trail is maintained by or under the jurisdiction of the department.

(iii) On a street, county road, or highway on which ORV use is authorized under section 81131(2), (3), (5), or (6).

(h) In or upon the lands of another without the written consent of the owner, the owner's agent, or a lessee, when required by part 731. The operator of the vehicle is liable for damage to private property caused by operation of the vehicle, including, but not limited to, damage to trees, shrubs, or growing crops, injury to other living creatures, or erosive or other ecological damage. The owner of the private property may recover from the individual responsible nominal damages of not less than the amount of damage or injury. Failure to post private property or fence or otherwise enclose in a manner to exclude intruders or of the private property owner or other authorized person to personally communicate against trespass does not imply consent to ORV use.

(i) In an area on which public hunting is permitted during the regular November firearm deer season, from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., except as follows:

- (i) During an emergency.
- (ii) For law enforcement purposes.
- (iii) To go to and from a permanent residence or a hunting camp otherwise inaccessible by a conventional wheeled vehicle.
- (iv) To remove legally harvested deer, bear, or elk from public land. An individual shall operate an ORV under this subparagraph at a speed not exceeding 5 miles per hour, using the most direct route that complies with subdivision (n).
- (v) To conduct necessary work functions involving land and timber survey, communication and transmission line patrol, or timber harvest operations.
- (vi) On property owned or under control of the operator or on which the operator is an invited guest.
- (vii) While operating a vehicle registered under the code on a private road capable of sustaining automobile traffic or a street, county road, or highway.
- (viii) If the individual holds a valid permit to hunt from a standing vehicle issued under part 401 or is a person with a disability using an ORV to access public lands for purposes of hunting or fishing through use of a designated trail or forest road. An individual holding a valid permit to hunt from a standing vehicle issued under part 401, or a person with a disability using an ORV to access public lands for purposes of hunting or fishing, may display a flag, the color of which the department shall determine, to identify himself or herself as a person with a disability or an individual holding a permit to hunt from a standing vehicle under part 401.
- (j) Except as otherwise provided in section 40111, while transporting on the vehicle a bow unless unstrung or encased, or a firearm unless unloaded and securely encased, or equipped with and made inoperative by a manufactured keylocked trigger housing mechanism.
- (k) On or across a cemetery or burial ground, or land used as an airport.
- (l) Within 100 feet of a slide, ski, or skating area, unless the vehicle is being used for the purpose of servicing the area or is being operated pursuant to section 81131(2), (3), (5), or (6).
- (m) On an operating or nonabandoned railroad or railroad right-of-way, or public utility right-of-way, other than for the purpose of crossing at a clearly established site intended for vehicular traffic, except railroad, public utility, or law enforcement personnel while in performance of their duties, and except if the right-of-way is designated as provided for in section 81127.
- (n) In or upon the waters of any stream, river, bog, wetland, swamp, marsh, or quagmire except over a bridge, culvert, or similar structure.
- (o) To hunt, pursue, worry, kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, worry, or kill an animal, whether wild or domesticated.
- (p) In a manner so as to leave behind litter or other debris.
- (q) On public land, in a manner contrary to operating regulations.
- (r) While transporting or possessing, in or on the vehicle, alcoholic liquor in a container that is open or uncapped or upon which the seal is broken, except under either of the following circumstances:
  - (i) The container is in a trunk or compartment separate from the passenger compartment of the vehicle.
  - (ii) If the vehicle does not have a trunk or compartment separate from the passenger compartment, the container is encased or enclosed.
- (s) While transporting any passenger in or upon an ORV unless the manufacturing standards for the vehicle make provisions for transporting passengers.
- (t) On adjacent private land, in an area zoned residential, within 300 feet of a dwelling at a speed greater than the minimum required to maintain controlled forward movement of the vehicle except under any of the following circumstances:
  - (i) On a forest road or forest trail if the forest road or forest trail is maintained by or under the jurisdiction of the department.
  - (ii) On a street, county road, or highway on which ORV use is authorized under section 81131(2), (3), (5), or (6).
  - (u) On a forest trail if the ORV is greater than 50 inches in width.
- (2) An individual who is operating or is a passenger on an ORV shall wear a crash helmet and protective eyewear that are approved by the United States Department of Transportation. This subsection does not apply to any of the following:
  - (a) An individual who owns the property on which the ORV is operating, is a family member of the owner and resides at that property, or is an invited guest of an individual who owns the property. An exception under this subdivision does not apply to any of the following:
    - (i) An individual less than 16 years of age.
    - (ii) An individual 16 or 17 years of age, unless the individual has consent from his or her parent or guardian to ride without a crash helmet.

(iii) An individual participating in an organized ORV riding or racing event if an individual who owns the property receives consideration for use of the property for operating ORVs.

(b) An individual wearing a properly adjusted and fastened safety belt if the ORV is equipped with a roof that meets or exceeds United States Department of Transportation standards for a crash helmet.

(c) An ORV operated on a state-licensed game bird hunting preserve at a speed of not greater than 10 miles per hour.

(d) An ORV operated for the purpose of towing a fishing shanty or supply shed over the frozen surface of public waters at the minimum speed required to maintain controlled forward movement of the vehicle or while traveling to and from a fishing shanty at a speed of not greater than 10 miles per hour. An owner of private property is not liable for personal injuries, including death, to an individual who operates an ORV as described in this subdivision without wearing a helmet while traveling on the owner's property.

(3) Each person who participates in the sport of ORV riding accepts the risks associated with that sport insofar as the dangers are inherent. Those risks include, but are not limited to, injuries to persons or property that can result from variations in terrain; defects in traffic lanes; surface or subsurface snow or ice conditions; bare spots; rocks, trees, and other forms of natural growth or debris; and collisions with fill material, decks, bridges, signs, fences, trail maintenance equipment, or other ORVs. Those risks do not include injuries to persons or property that result from the use of an ORV by another person in a careless or negligent manner likely to endanger person or property. When an ORV is operated in the vicinity of a railroad right-of-way, each person who participates in the sport of ORV riding additionally assumes risks including, but not limited to, entanglement with railroad tracks, switches, and ties and collisions with trains and train-related equipment and facilities.

**History:** Add. 1995, Act 58, Imd. Eff. May 24, 1995;—Am. 1998, Act 86, Imd. Eff. May 13, 1998;—Am. 2008, Act 240, Imd. Eff. July 17, 2008;—Am. 2008, Act 365, Imd. Eff. Dec. 23, 2008;—Am. 2012, Act 246, Imd. Eff. July 2, 2012;—Am. 2012, Act 340, Imd. Eff. Oct. 16, 2012;—Am. 2013, Act 119, Imd. Eff. Sept. 25, 2013;—Am. 2013, Act 249, Imd. Eff. Dec. 26, 2013;—Am. 2014, Act 147, Imd. Eff. June 4, 2014;—Am. 2016, Act 288, Imd. Eff. Sept. 28, 2016;—Am. 2018, Act 206, Eff. Sept. 18, 2018.

**Popular name:** Act 451

**Popular name:** NREPA

**Popular name:** Off-Road Vehicle Act

**Popular name:** ORV