OHV Safety Summit Notes and Recommendations

California State Parks, McClellan Training Center

August 23, 2022

# Agenda

Projected Outcomes

* Current safety issues
* Accident trends
  + How to reduce accidents
* Methods to increase OHV safety training
* Safety Messaging
* Path Forward
  + Short-term goals
  + Long-term goals
* Safety week planning ideas

# Current ROV Safety Issues and Concerns

The following comments refer to issues and concerns about safety education and messaging, user skills and behaviors, laws, and regulations.

## Issues with Safety Classes

* Difficult to teach safety messaging during an in-person class
* In-person classes are expensive because they require dedicated locations and staffing
* Existing logistical concerns with outside providers giving classes on public lands because of government-required insurance requirements
* Voluntary training is not working

## Law Enforcement Discussion

* The primary cause for collision is the unsafe speed for the conditions
* Law enforcement officers (LEOs) have seen an increase in OHV users, an increase in ROV users, an increase in speeding, a decrease in safety and vehicle use
* There are many unskilled riders and a decrease in driving skills
* Helmets are not used, using the wrong helmet type, or people are not securing the strap
* New users do not understand vehicle capabilities
* Speed enforcement is difficult without specific technology like lidar. See CVC 38305 speed law
* Regulatory stickers and signs are often ignored
* Law enforcement's goal is to deter bad behavior
  + Law enforcement has limited means to enforce behaviors
  + More rules are difficult to enforce. Need to increase education
* Citations
  + LEOs should write tickets more to enforce the CVC
  + Citations only touch a very small population and not the masses
  + When the tickets don't stick, it makes law enforcement lose their credibility, and then the community will share it
  + They can only stop people when it is based on the law
  + Increasing enforcement can curb bad behaviors, but be careful about using enforcement only

**Ocotillo Wells**

* Increase in the number of users, specifically with ROVs because they are becoming more popular. It takes very little skill set to use, and they don't know how to read terrain or use safety equipment.
* Excessive speed for conditions
* Lack of proper safety equipment and use
* People not using the strap on the helmet
* Very few people are using the window nets on the side by sides
* No helmet requirement off-road, but you rarely see someone without a helmet
* People don't know what they don't know.

**Hungry Valley**

* Exceptionally high usage in the busy season
* ATVs and ROVs with helmets on that are too small/too big and then not strapped correctly
* Hungry Valley was 95% dirtbikes before. Now it is 85% ROVs that are bombing on the trails. Split new/old users. Some want to go as fast as possible as quickly as possible
* Large language barrier when stopping to educate the users. The demographics of users have changed drastically

**Oceano Dunes**

* Noticing the OHV community has changed in the last six years
* Less than 50% of those are now wearing appropriate safety clothing
* So many visitors are first timers
* Folks who are coming out don't know how dangerous vehicles can be
* Messaging needs to be more "blunt."

**Hollister Hills**

* Created a card in English and Spanish about helmets. On one side, the card shows the helmet strapped. The other side shows how to put the helmet on correctly.
* People are renting ROVs that are powerful, and they don't know how how to use them
* LEOs see snowboarding helmets, airsoft helmets, and bicycle helmets
* LEOs have seen people use child car seats in ROVs. Young children should not be in ROVs. Car seats are not designed for ROV use.
* Issue with some two-way trails that are not wide enough for both direction traffic

**Prairie City**

* Created a tagline for people to learn to ride
* Not as many accidents there
* People are using the ultra 4 track without helmets
* Helmets too big or not strapped
* Speed is a huge issue. Prairie City is small, but there is all-out riding with a mix of new and old riders on the track
* People are interested in classes, but the Environmental Training Center is not promoted for public training
* It was known as a motorcycle park, and now the ROVs are taking over the small motorcycle trails. They go out into the tailing piles and do not know what is on the other side.
* How do we better use the educators in the park? The environment is important, but the safety aspect is more important
* Need a unified message

**BLM**

* Law Enforcement worked better in the Imperial Dunes to help reduce medical calls
* El Centro- 29% ATV vs. 22% in ROVs in the Imperial Dunes this past year.
* Need to educate the public about BLM as a whole.
* If the OHV grant program was modified to focus on the outcome of the safety summit strictly, it might help
  + Adjustment to categories and limits, changes in the point system
  + Cannot apply to safety and education together because of the dollar cap

**USFS**

* Need to collaborate with partners to help with messaging
* Get message farther and wider, even with small videos

**CHP**

* See OHVs on highways. It makes it difficult to enforce because the groups are so large
* Technology surpassing the laws because we can only enforce what is in the vehicle code
* Homemade or special purpose vehicles. Effects VIN verification
* Increase in the combined use of highways
  + Inyo county
  + Local popularity in the rural areas
  + The main concern is safety, visibility

## Vehicle Design and Type

* ROVs are too easy to drive and create an illusion of safety
* ROV has a roll cage and a seat belt. People feel they can do whatever they want
* Industry looking at vehicle designs -- need to make safety design features mandatory nationwide
* Vehicle design has changed over time and may not be compatible with trail design
* Need to be an activist for better and safer vehicle design
* Sand car designation with higher cc's, ROVs
* Issues with no helmet requirements and consider how it affects sand cars and buggies
* Consumer product safety is looking at debris penetration for ROVs. Floorboards are not very strong and looking to force manufacturers to strengthen plastics.

## Advertisement

* OHV advertising has been challenging, and the content does not represent the current messaging
* Some manufacturer ads promote irresponsible use, are too flashy, and are unsafe

## Social Media and Online Safety Messaging Issues

* TikTok and YouTube have different audiences, and content influences people
* Dune destroyer videos are not effective

## Other Issues

* Dealers cannot advocate or encourage training for insurance reasons
* OHV trust fund is losing money from transfers to the general fund. Gas tax funds no longer go to the OHV trust fund
* Remove dealer liability by providing a video from CORVA, or CAL 4x4
* The legislative approach takes time to create and pass
* Land use planning -- government failed in planning for ROV use, trail use, directional trails, studies of vehicle use
* The regulatory approach takes time to create and pass

# Existing Safety Education Content and Campaigns

**Tread Lightly**

* Icon added to some of the materials to help get information out
* Consistency in messaging in multiple states
* Challenge of understanding a different way of presenting materials

**OHMVR Division**

* PORTS (Parks Online Resource for Teachers and Students) -- distance learning program for school children. State Parks is creating a curriculum to connect schools with SVRAs to teach safety and other topics.
* OHV Safety Week -- got on Los Angeles Morning News shows to promote safety week
* OHMVR Outreach and Education Program is evolving over time and with visitor needs and learning styles
* Tiktok and youtube for younger groups. Cover just one or two topics per video to help reinforce training.
* OHMVR Grants and Cooperative Agreement Program's safety education grants.

**Other Providers**

* Fleishman Hillard Inc is a PR campaign firm that produces ad campaigns for snowmobile and ATV safety. Jack Randy was the company representative in Sacramento.
* ROHVA created short videos for social media for use by anyone
* See the Division of Boating and Waterways' boating card as an example of how to increase the skill sets of users better
* ASA created safety billboards, small signs on restrooms, and information meetings with dealers at a special event at a park. They found an increase in people spreading safety messages to friends.
* Colorado "Save the Trail" Program is an example
* Michigan -- can get cards online
* Audrey Mason, San Diego Off-Road Coalition, can promote on Dirt Radio

# Assessing existing programs and conditions

* Identify the goal. Is it to increase safety for all OHVs or focus only on ROV safety?
* Goals need to be specific and measurable
* Why aren't current methods working? More data is needed to help assess the root problems.
* Collect data about past campaigns. Review past ATV safety training and compliance campaign program. What worked and what failed? The division had addressed this before when three-wheelers were introduced. The division hired a person who just focused on this messaging.
* Identify the audience. Is it new ROV users, kids, adults, everyone?
* Identify existing tools and needed tools. Test existing messaging and evaluate the effectiveness
* Identify if the problem is vehicle-specific or OHV safety overall
* Review how money is being spent on OHV safety grants
* Upgrade data collection to up-to-date injury and crash statistics
* How will we measure success?
* Assess how we use social media, benefits, and problems. It takes time to post and reach a wide age range.
* Who delivers the messaging? People may not listen to the government

# Recommendations

## Safety Education Messaging Recommendations

Timing Priority

* B: Lots of great existing content. Create a central depository for access to the information that is being disseminated. Use existing content for more purposes. Collaborate with land managers on existing online resources.
* A: Educate the public before they arrive at their destination
* C: Safety curriculum needed for schools. Create an elective for students to take an OHV safety class
* A-C: Diversify safety education programs. Use various training methods and styles for in-person classes
* A: May need to focus on trail safety first. Focus messaging on shared use of trails and safe riding techniques.
  + Increase trail etiquette information and messaging. Teach hand signals for trail riding.
* B-C: Need blunt, honest messaging. Example -- Need safety videos that show how improper vehicle use can hurt you. "Red asphalt" approach to safety videos. Videos of someone who has been injured in an accident if they would have had safety gear on had a spotter, etc.
* ?Use a dirt bike safety approach to ROV safety?
* B-C: Use wrecked ROVs for interpretive talks
* A-C: Carrot and stick approach -- welcome people, make training and safety fun but enforce rules
* A-C: Make safety part of the culture
* C: Make safety training mandatory
* C: Safety day sponsored by manufacturers
* A-C: Provide dealers with safety videos and packets
* A: "Head on a swivel" needs to be taught to all riders

Operation Priority

* A: Messaging needs to be tailored to gender, age, language, culture, and family groups
* A-B: Simplify the message and use humor
* A-B: Operate only on a maximum of 80% of your abilities.
* B-C: Use training cards. Mandatory ATV/ROV/MC safety card before admittance
* Do not make the messaging media brand or place specific. Use universal messaging (need some clarification on this)

## Safety recommendations where people recreate

* B-C: Increase volunteer patrol on trails, volunteer contacts on trails
* A: Enforce speed limits on trails
* C: Consider special weeks/days that are dedicated to one-way travel

**Trails**

* B-C: Conduct trail assessments in known problem areas. Are blind areas and terrain adding to the accidents?
* C: Improve trail design for safety. Trail design changes -- review/assess trail design and safety
* B-C: Consider turning accident-prone trails into one-way directional trails
* B-C: Trail limiters
  + User-created companion trails were made because some users on one user type (bike, e-bike, motorcycle) want to ride next to a side by side but not be in the line of "fire."

**Signage**

* Include trail messaging where there are accidents (need more specifics about this)
* A: Need consistent messaging on public lands, especially signage
* A-C: Increase in regulatory signage in OHV areas. Ensure signs are multilingual. Place signage in areas where people gather, like restrooms and campgrounds.
* A: Use mobile billboards and LED boards at entrances
* C: Create generic OHV safety interpretive panels for order by anyone for their site

**Gear**

* A: Offer helmet checks at entrances (what are we checking – guidelines need to be made clear to the staff – are we asking if they have one, or looking at safety issues with the helmet? Needs clarification)
* C: Create a helmet library at SVRAs or helmet exchange program

## Advertising Recommendations

* C: Billboards are highly effective. It should include industry and manufacturer involvement to promote safety.
* B-C: Burma-shave/sequential message sign design for billboards or trailhead banners. (Burma-Shave was an American brand of brushless shaving cream, famous for its advertising gimmick of posting humorous rhyming poems on small sequential highway roadside signs.)
* B-C: Humane society commercial example -- it is blunt and draws you in
* C: Ads need to come from manufacturers
* B-C: Use celebrity riders for public safety announcements or safety talks
  + Need to identify either funding for their appearance or those who would do the work as a public service

## Safety Gear Improvements

* A-C: Require whip flags on the center top of the car. Use lighted WHPP flags (current Superintendent’s Order requires whip/flag mounted at rear – manufacturer mounts are usually at the rear of the vehicle)
* C: Install proximity sensors to alert drivers of oncoming traffic
* C: 5-point harnesses in ROVs
* A-C: Nets on doors
* B-C: Develop equipment guidance documents for the public, such as how to prepare for the terrain and conditions
* C: Technology that could beep in a helmet that let someone know that another vehicle was coming toward you (like an aircraft transponder – device in vehicle emits a signal, receiver in helmet picks it up. Technology has been around a long time but requires either a specific frequency (would involve the FCC) or Bluetooth (near proximity). Lots of questions about this)

## Incentives

* B-C: Use incentives to reinforce safety (T-shirts, hats, gloves, goggles, coupons, etc…)
* B-C: "Saved by the helmet" award
* C: Incentives for helmet safety and classrooms

## In-person class recommendations

* A-C: Don't abandon classes altogether. When you take a class, it is not a punishment since you increase your driving skill sets
* A: Small classes that are held more often
* A: Make in-person classes fun
* C: Onsite training certification should be required per vehicle type and last a lifetime
* C: Start training online and include mandatory onsite training
* C: Free helmet with a class (or other safety item)
  + Program in Ohio that gives away a saved by a helmet award or some other type of safety gear
* B-C: Toolkit follow-ups with those that have taken the class. When they sign up automatically send an email with all the information for the program, what to bring, video, etc.

## Social Media and Online Messaging Recommendations

* \*\*How people learn has changed. People watch more videos and less hands-on learning. Online videos reinforce learning in class
* A-C: Create videos on every vehicle type possible, trucks and trailers included
  + Produce short safety videos for social media platforms
  + Find ways to repeat them. Builds muscle memory
  + Push the dealers and manufacturers to encourage and promote safety videos. It may not work because of liability and insurance reasons.
  + Ricky and Matt have a plan to approach the users
* C: Need to use a better type of technology for videos, like virtual reality
* C: Create computer-simulated crashes as training videos
* \*\*Use YouTube video "fails" as training (there were pro/con discussions about this – could work as both positive and negative reinforcement for an action)
* B-C: Collaborate with land managers to share existing online resources
* A-C: Make safety training videos more fun
* B-C: Sponsor ads on social media influencer videos and popular programs

## Funding Needs and Potential Sources

* C: Increase funding for safety and education OHV grants
* C: Pay staff dedicated to safety education (I think this meant “dedicate a position”)
* C: Need funding for safety messaging campaigns
* C: Create trail stickers as funding mechanisms
* C: Increase entrance fees and camping fees at SVRAs and use the money for safety education
* B-C: Sponsor a park, OHV area, "adopt a park" program
* C: Increase private funding and investment
* C: Safety fund for education -- money from vehicle registration
* C: Update OHMVR grant program legislation to increase funding for education and safety. Will need to revise PRC 5090.50. OHMVR Grant allocation formula is currently based on an outdated SB 242 formula.
* C: Update OHMVR Grants program to increase funding for local law enforcement -- also PRC 5090.50
* C: $10m funding taken to use to pay for messaging
  + Work with legislature to get the funds of $833K per month to the general fund
  + SB1 redirect and what happened to it? Why doesn't it go to the trust fund?
  + Percentage of money from registration that goes directly to safety and cannot be used for anything else
  + ORV trail sticker/pass and money are used by DNR to be used on the trails. Even though they are street legal, they should be required to purchase a vehicle to have them help offset the fee since there is no registration fee
* C: Look at the CHP percentage of funds from registrations and see about using that money for safety. No oversight on the funds ($4 registration add-on)
* B-C: Look for a sponsor for education and safety outreach at specific parks
  + Look to manufacturers to assist with funding
  + What regulations must be pursued to allow for private sponsorship of safety outreach?

## Other Recommendations and Approaches

* A-C: Develop a marketing plan
  + Best message and what to spend money on
  + Plan with multiple tactics to get all of it at once
  + Test the message through surveys of riders
* C: Require insurance, especially liability insurance
* C: Insurance companies could give discounts for compliance
* C: Needs to be a mandate to have the training like that of street motorcycle training
* A-C: Registration -- give safety materials with DMV registration
* C: Long-term license -- start voluntary and go to mandatory
* B-C: Educate the judiciary about state laws, regulations, and department policies.
* B-C: Establish a best practice for the rule, disseminate the information and then enforce the rules
* A: OHV culture -- closely knit group. Need to welcome new riders into the community.
* B-C: Engage gear manufacturers to participate in safety training videos, messaging, and promotional materials
* B-C: Senate resolution on OHV safety -- need to bring attention to it
* C: Enforcement -- track repeat offenders and increase their registration fees
* C: Industry looking at vehicle designs -- need to make safety design features mandatory nationwide
* C: Legislation possible, such as ROV and UTV classification requirements for safety with different types of vehicles
* B-C: E-bikes should participate in this conversation – CHP developing safety videos for ebikes by September 2023

## Target Audiences

* A: Need more youth involved with message development
* A-B: Increase youth involvement and parental support with safety training
* Kids feel empowered to demonstrate better safety on trails
* A: Clubs have changed in how they meet. Most are online only and no longer in person
  + \*\*Important – figure out how to engage the groups who organize online, especially those from non-traditional OHV cultures and backgrounds

## Recommended Next Steps

* A: Gather incident and safety campaign data, analyze, and make recommendations
* A-C: Coordinate messaging between organizations, clubs, and government agencies
* A-C: Increase volunteers who teach safety classes
* B-C: Increase classes on public lands (I believe this had to do with not being able to offer classes on federal property due to insurance requirements)
* A-C: Advertise existing training better

## Priority Rankings

A: 1-6 months

B: 6-12 months

C: Beyond 1 year