

OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES, POWERED EQUIPMENT, AND BOATING SAFETY

1. PURPOSE

This Notice outlines the basic policy requirements for APHIS programs to adopt and follow regarding the use of off-highway vehicles, boats, powered industrial lift trucks, other equipment normally used for materials handling such as drills, electric screw drivers, and chain saws. The information in this Notice will be incorporated into the Safety and Health Manual when it is revised.

2. DEFINITIONS

- a. Off-Highway Vehicles. Motorized vehicles such as All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), snowmobiles, treefellers/buckets, and utility vehicles that are intended for farm/ranch/commercial use performing light duty work.
- b. Motorcycles/Trail Bikes. Two-wheeled motor powered vehicles.
- c. Powered Industrial Equipment. Equipment powered by either electricity or combustible fuel intended for use in materials handling and transfer. Examples are: forklifts, bobcats, backhoes, and trenching equipment.
- d. Chain Saws. Electric or combustible fuel powered saws designed for wood cutting.
- e. Boats. Vessels designed for transportation upon bodies of water.

3. POLICY

It is APHIS policy that all operators of the above defined equipment be trained on safe work practices for the respective equipment, and that the personal protective equipment specified will be provided and worn.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Operators of motorcycles/trail bikes will be licensed as appropriate by the State of residence motor vehicle licensing authority. The completion of a Motorcycle Safety Foundation training program, or the successful completion of a licensing authority practical test, as appropriate, is required for operators.

Employees assigned a motorcycle/trail bike for duty purposes that do not have the proper endorsement will be offered the opportunity to attend the appropriate training at local office expense in order to obtain the endorsement. Employees that do not have the appropriate license endorsement will not operate the equipment. Appropriate helmets will be worn at all times while operating motorcycles/trail bikes, and local/regional management may require program specific equipment, such as face shield, gloves, chaps, etc., to be worn in addition to the helmet.

- b. Off-highway vehicle operators will, at a minimum, complete training as required by the equipment manufacturer. Training for this equipment is often performed at the dealer, when purchased, or by the ATV Safety Institute. ATV Safety Institute recommendations for personal protective equipment include helmets being worn on ATVs. Employees will follow the manufacturer's guidelines for personal protection for all such equipment not addressed by the ATV Safety Institute. Where provided on utility vehicles, the seat belt restraints will be worn while the vehicle is being operated.
 - (1) Supervisors will ascertain any and all local ordinances regarding the use of ATVs and other off highway vehicles, and to ensure employees are complying with them.
 - (2) Local/regional management may set forth more specific local requirements.
- c. Powered industrial equipment operators will be trained to safely operate the specific piece of equipment. Forklift operations have statutory requirements for training, inspection, labeling, and refueling/recharging. These requirements are found in 29 CFR 1910.178, Powered Industrial Trucks (click on link below).
http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_id=9828&p_table=STANDARDS
The standards for training of operators and safe working practices will be followed.
- d. Operators of other equipment may be required to perform site specific work using trenching equipment, backhoes, skid steer loaders (bobcats, etc.). Any employee operating this equipment must be trained, per the manufacturer. It is incumbent upon the supervisor, regardless of whether the equipment is APHIS-purchased, -leased or -rented to ensure employees are trained by a competent person (such as an experienced, qualified operator or equipment manufacturer/dealer training specialist) before beginning operations with the equipment, unless more specific training is required by either the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or the manufacturer.

- e. Chain saw operators will meet the requirements set forth in 29 CFR 1910.266 http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=9862 and ANSI B175.1-1991 “Safety Requirements for Gasoline Powered Chain Saws,” http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/logging/sections/directives/log_chainsaws_cpl2119.html for training, personal protective equipment, tool maintenance and inspection, and safe work practices.

NOTE: APHIS is increasingly involved in operations where the use of chain saws and other tree service equipment may be required to perform certain duties. These duties mirror many of the functions of logging which is among the most dangerous of all occupations.

- (1) All work involving the use of chain saws will be performed by qualified personnel. All personnel performing work such as tree felling must be qualified as fellers/buckers, etc.
- (2) To the greatest extent possible, work involving the felling/bucking of trees will be by trained, qualified, cooperating forestry resource agency personnel, or professional tree service personnel.

- f. Boats and their operators will meet the inspection/training/equipment provisions of the respective jurisdiction having authority (e.g., State wildlife or parks and recreation department, U.S. Coast Guard, local harbor authorities).

- (1) Supervisors are charged with becoming familiar with the local requirements, establishing appropriate local policy if required, and ensuring employee compliance with these standards.
- (2) Boat operators/crew members may be required to attend boating safety/water survival training by either the licensing authority or respective program management.
- (3) Should local/regional management identify additional safety equipment needed for personal protection against recognized hazards, not addressed by local authorities, they may direct and provide the equipment as needed for employees.
- (4) It is a requirement that a personal flotation device be worn by APHIS employees at all times while operating a boat that is underway or anchored. Underway is defined as any time the boat is not secured to either a dock or trailer.

- (5) APHIS employees, including headquarters employees on assignment, will not board a vessel to perform inspections while it is underway. Any exceptions must be approved by the Regional Director and must be in extreme situations when a major pest risk is found. Applicable personal safety equipment must be utilized (e.g., life preservers, head protection, etc.).

5. ADDITIONAL FEES

Consistent with previously issued requirements for training/licensure (such as for commercial drivers' licenses) in property requirements to operate special equipment, costs for training and additional license fees, if any, will be borne by the Agency at the local level.

6. INQUIRIES

- a. Inquiries regarding this Notice should be directed to the APHIS Emergency Management, Safety, and Security Division; Safety, Health, and Environmental Protection Branch (SHEPB), at 301-436-3115.
- b. This Notice can be accessed on the Internet at: www.aphis.usda.gov/library

/s/

Marilyn L. Holland
Deputy Administrator
MRP Business Services