



ALL TERRAIN VEHICLES (ATV), UTILITY TERRAIN VEHICLES (UTV) & SNOWMOBILES

new: ✓ rescinds: 42.1 ✓ amends: All previous		cross-reference: accreditation standards: NYSLEAP Standard(s): 33.3, 41.3, 42.1, 42.4, 43.6 & 55.3
effective date: February, 2012	amend date: September, 2021	

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Order is to establish and describe the objectives for the Tompkins County Sheriff's Office All-Terrain Vehicles, Utility Terrain Vehicles and snowmobiles and to provide guidelines for their use.

II. POLICY

All-terrain vehicles (ATV), utility terrain vehicles (UTV) and snowmobiles provide a police presence and enforcement in areas otherwise inaccessible to standard police practices and provide the ability to respond to and support special events and calls for service. It is the policy of the Tompkins County Sheriff's Office to properly equip and maintain vehicles that will be utilized for accomplishing the office's mission, goals, and objectives.

III. DEFINITION

All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV): For the purposes of this policy, an ATV is any four-wheeled vehicle designed for the operator to ride by straddling the seat and is equipped with a handlebar for steering.

Snowmobile: For the purpose of this policy, a snowmobile is a motor vehicle with a revolving tread in the rear and steerable skis in the front, for traveling over snow.

Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTV): For the purposes of this policy, a UTV is a four-wheeled vehicle designed for use in rough terrain that is designed to carry the driver and at least one passenger in a "side by side" configuration and equipped with a steering wheel; all enclosed within a frame or cab.

IV. SITUATIONS FOR USING AN ATV, UTV AND/OR SNOWMOBILE

- A. During special events when additional vehicles are necessary, or where special circumstances exist during the event.

- B. To conduct searches, surveillance or investigations where travel to and from the location is impractical by other means of transportation.
- C. During investigations or surveillance where the suspects may also be utilizing a similar vehicle in an effort to resist or hinder apprehension.
- D. To effect any medical or other rescue operation as may be necessary.
- E. Patrol of the county's trail system(s)
- F. Education of the public through safety course.
- G. Any other situation as authorized by the Sheriff.

V. GUIDELINES FOR USING AN ATV, UTV OR SNOWMOBILE

A. Training required for operation:

- 1. Except in an emergency and when approved by a supervisor, the Office ATV, UTV and snowmobile(s) may only be operated by authorized members who have been trained in, have experience with, or who have shown proficiency in, the operation of such vehicles. Each member assigned to one of these specialized units will be required to attend a certification course through NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.
- 2. When utilized in trail or rough terrain situation, any employee who has not completed the approved training may only ride as a passenger.

B. Authorization for operation:

- 1. Deployment of the Sheriff's Office ATV, UTV or snowmobile shall be authorized by a Lieutenant, or higher authority. In an emergency situation, deployment may be authorized by a Sergeant, but notification shall be made to a Lieutenant as soon as practical.

C. Equipment and Uniform

- 1. All personnel operating an ATV shall wear protective equipment authorized and provided by the Sheriff's Office. The equipment will include, but is not limited to:
 - Safety Helmet (DOT approved)
 - Protective eyewear or face shield
 - Over-the-ankle-boots
 - Any additional protective equipment deemed necessary
- 2. All personnel operating a snowmobile shall wear protective equipment authorized and provided by the Sheriff's Office. The equipment will include, but is not limited to:
 - Snowmobile helmet
 - Winter jacket

- Snowmobile bibs
 - Snowmobile gloves
 - Snowmobile boots
3. All personnel operating an ATV, UTV or snowmobile shall wear the uniform approved by the Sheriff.
 4. The ballistic vest shall be worn at all times, in accordance with *G.O. 704 Body Armor*
 5. Any additional equipment or clothing may be worn if necessary due to weather conditions or as authorized.
 6. A list of special equipment assigned to the unit, including individualized equipment, will be kept and maintained by the Road Patrol Lieutenant.
 7. The following equipment will be available on all ATV, UTV and snowmobiles:
 - Individual First Aid Packet
 - Hand held spotlight/flashlight
 - Emergency blanket
 8. The ATV, UTV and snowmobile shall be marked with lettering to indicate that it is a Sheriff's Office vehicle.
 9. All personnel operating an ATV, UTV and snowmobile will maintain access to two-way radio communications.

D. Operation

1. The Sheriff's Office ATV, UTV and snowmobile will be operated at all time with due regard for safety of the operator, other office members, and the public.
2. The Sheriff's Office ATV and UTV when operated on a public highway will be within the confines of the NYS Vehicle and Traffic laws as well as the vehicle operation guidelines as set forth in the Tompkins County Sheriff's Policy and Procedure manual.

Note: There may be occasions when operating the Sheriff's Office ATV and/or UTV on a public highway outside the confines of the NYS Vehicle and Traffic laws is operationally necessary. On such occasions, prior approval from a supervisor should be obtained and the vehicle shall still be operated within the guidelines set forth in the Tompkins County Sheriff's Policy and Procedure manual.
3. The Sheriff's Office snowmobiles shall be operated within the confines of the relevant sections of NYS Parks and Recreation Law pertaining to snowmobile operation. A Snowmobile Law Guide is located on the f:// drive under Special Programs, Snowmobile Patrol.

4. Use of the Office ATV, UTV and snowmobile is limited to operations as above in normal circumstances. The ATV, UTV and/or snowmobile shall not be used for routine traffic stops or pursuits.
5. Officers shall use caution not to cause unnecessary damage to landscaping or foliage and to the maximum extent possible operate the vehicle only on established roads and pathways.
6. The towing of Sheriff's Office ATV, UTV and snowmobiles shall only be done by office vehicles, unless otherwise authorized by the Lieutenant, or higher authority.
7. A locking device shall always secure the Sheriff's Office ATV, UTV and/or snowmobile trailer when not in use, and or when attached to the transport vehicle.
8. Members shall not allow civilians to operate, or ride upon (unless part of a rescue mission) the Sheriff's Office ATV, UTV or snowmobile.
9. Sheriff's Office ATV, UTV and/or snowmobiles shall only be used to tow privately owned recreational vehicles when the owner has exhausted all other resources, the vehicle is in a precarious position and towing can be conducted safely and prudently to limit risk to the Sheriff's Office vehicle.
10. Accidents involving Sheriff's Office recreational vehicles shall be handled in accordance with *G.O. 728 Police Vehicles*.

E. Maintenance

1. The Fleet Manager shall be responsible for the condition and maintenance of the ATV, UTV and snowmobiles. All vehicles will be equipped in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.
2. All ATV, UTV and snowmobile operators will be responsible for checking the vehicle before its use and for reporting any physical damage or mechanical defects noted. (Before operating the ATV, UTV or snowmobile the operators will physically and manually inspect all equipment, i.e. winch operation, lights, siren, emergency lights, all fluid levels etc.)
3. Any physical damage or mechanical defects incurred during use will be reported immediately to a supervisor. A county incident report should be completed if applicable.
4. Any requests for maintenance will be reported in writing to the fleet manager.
5. The Sheriff's Office ATV, UTV, snowmobiles and pertinent equipment shall be stored and properly covered at the Public Safety Building when not in use, unless otherwise authorized by the Lieutenant, or higher authority.

6. When stored, after use, the Sheriff's Office ATV, UTV and snowmobile(s) will be left in such condition that it is readily available for immediate response (i.e. fuel replenished, all grease points lubricated, consumable supplies replenished, mechanical defects reported or corrected, all mud and debris cleaned and removed, etc.)

By Order Of

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Derek Osborne".

Derek Osborne
Sheriff