

The C.A.R.E.S Initiative



**Advertising and Marketing Interpretative Document
For Off-Highway Vehicle Manufacturers and Distributors**

To be read in conjunction with COHV Code of Ethics
Prepared by:
The Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council

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Introduction

Canadians expect more and want more from manufacturers and distributors of consumer products. The ATV and off-road motorcycle industry wants to be the leaders in promoting safe and responsible use of their products.

Today's customer is much more knowledgeable and aware when it comes to product features, user safety and preserving the environment, especially when it involves all-terrain vehicles and off-road motorcycles.

This is as much a priority for our industry as it is for the riding public, because in advertising and marketing, perception is everything. For all-terrain-vehicle and off-road motorcycle manufacturers and distributors who want to communicate the benefits of a product, such as performance, ruggedness and safety, the challenge is to create clear, concise and exciting images that are also accurate and responsible.

Inconsistent or inappropriate presentation of products in advertising or marketing could negatively impact our industry as a whole and result in negative public perception of our business and the products we sell.

The COHV and its member companies believe advertising should be empathetic. Imagine if your son, daughter, spouse or other loved one is purchasing or riding an ATV or off-road motorcycle. What kind of message would you want to convey?

Our guiding principles

The COHV has formulated five basic attributes that all-terrain vehicle and off-road motorcycle advertising and marketing should reflect.

They are:

C = Clarity

A = Accuracy

R = Responsibility

E = Environmental awareness

S = Safety

These are the five cornerstones of all ATV and off-road motorcycle advertising and merchandising. They should be the fundamental values on which the creative process is based. Once the advertisement is completed, check its contents against the five attributes above. If the message echoes them clearly and loudly, then your ad will meet the criteria.

With all members of our industry following these guiding principles, the public will distinguish us as an industry that truly C.A.R.E.S.

Practical Recommendations and Measurements of Compliance

Here are some examples on how to structure your messages to an increasingly aware public.

1. Clarity

- Do be clear and concise
- Always explain technical features in understandable language
- Do explain the practical benefits of technical features of a product
- Do not use innuendo or words or statements that have double meaning

2. Accuracy

- Do be accurate and truthful at all times
- Only make claims that can be verified on demand – preferably by an outside, objective group
- Always be careful with product comparisons in advertising
- Do focus on the unique features and benefits of your product

3. Responsibility

- Always be ethical in every statement you make
- Never mislead the public through self-serving or one-sided statistics
- Do not use hyperbole. Willful exaggeration to enhance a product's appeal is inappropriate
- Never create unjustified expectations for a product in an advertisement
- Always be absolutely clear about sales – including duration, price and product availability

4. Environmental awareness

- Any type of vehicle can impact the environment. Even people-powered vehicles such as bicycles can damage our environment if ridden in a careless way. In recent years, ATVs and off-road motorcycles have come under increased scrutiny. All it takes is one advertisement to tarnish the image of all riders and the industry. It is vitally important that your advertising continuously promote respect for nature. Bottom line: make your advertising messages environment-friendly and more of the riding public will take note. This is not just the right thing to do as an industry; it will benefit Canada, Canadians and the communities we live in.

Here are examples of phrases you should and should not use when developing your creative:

- Do not say "wilderness". It may incorrectly imply the use of vehicles anywhere including inside parks, protected areas, meadows or forests. "The great outdoors" is a better alternative
- Do show vehicles on existing trails. Rock and gravel surfaces provide the best natural surface. Staying on designated trails help protect more sensitive environments by reducing erosion
- Never make statements showing domination over nature
- Do not say, "blaze a new trail." Blazing a new trail is not sending a responsible message. Straying from existing trails may destroy plants, disturb wildlife and could increase soil compaction or erosion
- Do show vehicles that are clearly under the control of the operator and have all wheels on the ground – except that wheel(s) may leave the ground slightly and momentarily as part of normal operation
- Do not portray vehicles riding through rivers, streams or other sensitive ecosystems such as wetlands, marshes, bogs, barrens or deep mud holes
- Do depict rider actions that demonstrate awareness of, and concern for, the natural environment and wildlife. Show them using a bridge to avoid water or show them beside water and sensitive ecosystems, not in them

5. Safety

- Safety is a crucial element in all vehicle advertising and should be considered a primary responsibility for all ATV and off-road motorcycle industry members. In all cases, you should not depict a product being ridden in an unsafe manner, or portraying it in a use for which it was not intended. Because more and more youth and children are riding ATVs and off-road motorcycles, added caution is a must.

Here are the minimum safety standards when it comes to portraying your product.

- Never show an off-road motorcycle or ATV speeding, or giving the visual impression of excessive speed
- Do not portray the use of an off-road motorcycle or ATV in any manner or circumstance which is physically impossible or dangerous
- Do not portray any riding activity that requires exceptional experience or advanced skills, unless using the following disclaimer: "*Highly skilled operator under controlled conditions. Do not attempt these maneuvers if they are beyond your level of riding ability*"
- Always keep your messages consistent with all safety warnings on labels and in owner's manuals

- Do not advertise any product in any media whose audience is primarily under the riding age for that vehicle
- Do not infer that off-road motorcycles or ATVs are easy to ride in all types of terrain or riding situations
- Always recommend taking rider training and obtaining free safety information
- Always show the operation of an ATV or off-road motorcycle as complying with recommendations for proper training
- Do not depict off-road motorcycles or ATVs negotiating steep hills or slippery surfaces where traction may be seriously impaired
- Never suggest, even indirectly or by inference, that off-road motorcycles or ATVs can operate on pavement, roads, streets or highways
- Always show the proper age of a person on the appropriate size ATV or off-road motorcycle
- If showing a younger person riding an off-road motorcycle or ATV, always make sure the engine size corresponds to the youth's age as outlined in the owner's manual. For maximum safety, engine sizes from 70 cc to 90 cc may be used only by those aged 12 and over. ATVs with engine sizes greater than 90cc may only be used by those aged 16 and older. In other words, don't say ATVs are ideal for every family member or people of all ages.
- Children who are or appear to be less than 16 must be supervised by an adult riding on an off-road motorcycle or ATV, always show an adult supervising that child
- Do not promote ATVs or off-road motorcycles as competition vehicles unless they are specifically designed as a competition vehicle and then only in a closed course competition environment that is prominently identified as such
- Never show an ATV with more than one rider, unless the ATV is designed by the manufacturer to carry a passenger and that is clearly identified in the advertisement
- Never show an ATV or off-road motorcycle doing stunts, skidding or other risky maneuvers such as wheelies
- When depicting ATVs and off-road motorcycles, always make sure the rider is wearing proper protective equipment (helmet, eye protection, etc.) and that the vehicle is being operated safely (headlights on, cargo within recommended weight limits, etc.)
- Always include a public service statement, especially in print advertising such as: don't drink and drive, always wear a helmet, always supervise children, avoid excessive speeds, never ride on paved surfaces or public roads, then follow-up with some basic safety information on training and education.
- The following wording is suggested as a minimum but would need to be tailored depending on the specific advertisement
"Read and understand your operator's manual and always wear a helmet and protective gear. Remember to obey all safety regulations, don't drink and drive, avoid excessive speeds and never ride on paved surfaces or public roads. Be responsible, take a rider training course and respect the environment".

ATVs and Off-Road Motorcycles Designed for Competition or Racing Purposes

Despite the restrictions contained in Sections 4 and 5 **competition models** may be shown being ridden in an aggressive manner subject to the following conditions:

- Competition models are being shown operating on a closed course
- The product portrayal shows a portion of the track in the picture
- The product portrayal depicts the product being used in a manner consistent with the race activity
- All competitors must be appropriately dressed for racing
- Never show any rider performing stunts that would not be observed during normal race activity
- All advertisements must contain the following statement to indicate that the product is being used under sanctioned racing event conditions or on a closed course by a professional rider:

"Professional rider shown riding under sanctioned racing event conditions"

Promotion and Awareness of the C.A.R.E.S. Initiative

Even the best intentions can go astray without clear understanding and implementation of the national C.A.R.E.S. initiative. The COHV will focus on education and awareness across all segments of the industry from the manufacturers and distributors, to aftermarket distributors and retailers.

This policy comes into effect for any advertising developed on or after July 1, 2006 and must be applied to all 2008 and subsequent models.

The COHV believes that positive education fosters responsible recreation. By following these advertising guidelines, we can help preserve the environment for future generations and reduce ATV accidents by promoting all aspects of ATV rider safety.

Clarity. Accuracy. Responsibility. Environmental awareness. Safety. (The C.A.R.E.S. Initiative – Code of Ethics)

