



**Off Highway Vehicle (OHV)  
Safety Concerns  
Facilitated Learning Analysis**

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**Region 6**

**April 2011**

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*“The Facilitated Learning Analysis process promotes more effective dialogue through the disciplined practice of respectful interaction, in a group problem solving exercise. Perhaps most importantly, engaging in this process in a group dialogue can focus the conversation on how risks are seen differently between supervisors and employees. This helps daylight the gap between the hazards planned for and hazards actually encountered and can be a foundation for organizational learning.”*

## Facilitated Learning Analysis Implementation Guide, April 2011

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## 1. Prelude

This was a unique review following an injury accident to an employee. The accident itself was not the focus of this review but hi-lighted several concerns related to Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs), such as ATVs, UTVs and snowmobiles. Therefore the initial narrative of the accident simply provides a starting point for an open discussion. The Forest Supervisor, recognizing that the task of loading and unloading OHVs was not unique to one specific discipline, division or crew, contacted the Regional Office who convened a review based on the intent towards learning using the Facilitated Learning Analysis (FLA) process with regional representatives from Fire Operations Safety, Fleet Management and Occupational Safety and Health. Employees from various career fields participated to share their experiences, near miss events, mishaps, concerns and viewpoints. This led to a very rich and rewarding discussion that explored many different issues related to OHV training, use, transporting and loading / unloading.

## 2. Facilitated Learning Analysis Team

### Facilitated Learning Analysis Team

**Charles “Buddy” Byrd**, Regional Safety and Health Manager

**Shelby Gales**, Regional Interagency Fire Operations Safety Manager

**Dusty Rhoads**, Acting Regional Fleet Manager

### Support Team

**Donald Andreasen**, Safety and Health Manager, Siuslaw National Forest

**Janine Burgess**, OHV Crew Lead, Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area

**Opal Depue**, Supervisory Forestry Technician (Fire), Middle Fork RD

**Mike Mataresse**, Deputy Fire and Aviation Staff, Willamette NF

**Maricela Pace**, Assistant Fleet Manager, Willamette & Siuslaw NFs

**Winston Rall**, Regional Safety and Health Specialist, Region 6

**George Regas**, Safety and Health Manager, Willamette National Forest

**Nick White**, Engine Captain, McKenzie River Ranger District

## 3. Accident Background

After a full day’s work of assessing decommissioned forest service roads in a remote area of the forest, an employee was attempting to load an ATV onto the bed of an agency pickup truck. The angle of the ramp appeared steep to the employee, who was alone, but the employee proceeded to drive the ATV onto the ramp and into the truck bed. The employee was a very experienced ATV operator. As the employee and ATV rode up the ramp towards the top of the truck bed, the ATV began to flip backwards landing on the employee. The employee stood up and began to assess the condition of the ATV when a co-worker arrived. The co-worker was able to turn the ATV upright and loaded the ATV onto the truck bed using a different location, with a less dramatic angle of ascent. The employee involved in the initial mishap realized he had sustained injuries and was unable to drive the truck back to the yard. Contact was made with the employee’s work station who sent another employee out to assist with shuttling the injured employee and bringing the other vehicle back to the station. Upon arrival to the station, 911 was contacted and emergency medical services arrived.

## 4. Lessons Learned

- 1) Following the review, the employee stated “what I learned from this incident is that if you have any doubts (gut feeling) look for an alternate way to get the job done. This would go for any situation.”
- 2) The truck being used the day of the event presented a height difference from vehicles / equipment previously used, therefore increasing the ramp angle. Evaluate changes or conditions that can influence the angle of the ramps (ie. tire size, lift kit, terrain, road grade etc.).
- 3) When loading/unloading OHVs in the field, minimize your ramp angle.

## 5. Observations

- 1) This was the first time this vehicle had been utilized for ATV transport.
- 2) Loading/unloading procedures are not required training within the ASI (ATV Safety Institute) curriculum.
- 3) The use of ATVs is a highly skilled task that exposes employees to risk of serious injury while performing job duties. Employee ATV training may not equate to employee proficiency in the usage of ATVs. The agency does not provide the employee the opportunity to increase skill levels with on the job training.
- 4) Job Hazard Analysis’ (JHA) cannot fully address potential risks and mitigating measures for field related tasks that are site specific. The use of tailgate safety session can further identify site specific hazards.
- 5) At the time of this event, agency ATV training and certification requirements mandated employees complete an ASI training course before being permitted to operate an ATV.
- 6) Loading and unloading methods can vary from the district office to the field. Employees need to be comfortable with and aware of the various methods of loading/unloading.
- 7) Agency guidance specifying the length of ramps required when loading/unloading OHVs onto forest service vehicles did not exist prior to December 2010.

## 6. Recommendations and Follow-Up

- 1) The Regional Fleet Manager and Occupational Safety and Health Manager will disseminate the newly issued WO ID 6709.11-2010-05 policy that governs OHV use, training, Personal Protective Equipment, and so on, to line officers and members of the Regional Leadership Team (RLT) and members of this review.

- 2) When transporting OHVs, adhere to the requirements outlined in WO ID 6709.11-2010-05, understanding that transportation methods may be impacted by conditions at the work site, i.e., road conditions too rough to tow a trailer, no access to turn a trailer around, etc. The preferred hierarchy of transporting OHVs is as follows:
  - a) Via trailer
  - b) Into the beds of trucks using proper ramps and a winch
  - c) Into truck beds using proper ramps without the aid of a winch
- 3) Evaluate equipment or conditions that can influence the angle of the ramps (ie. tire size, lift kit, terrain, road grade etc.) prior to transporting OHVs.
- 4) Supervisors/Managers:
  - a) Create an environment where employees feel encouraged, and are even empowered, to express their concerns over work related risks even if it means stopping work.
  - b) Encourage the use of project-specific tailgate safety reviews to address changing risk conditions resulting from changing environmental factors, such as weather, temperature extremes, road conditions, wildlife, and so on.
  - c) Should look for opportunities to pair employees when performing field going work to enhance their proficiency in the use of OHVs and increase their safety.
- 5) Trailer training should be tied in with OHV training/certification.
- 6) Per FSH 7109.19, Chapter 10, paragraph 11.5, *“Obtain the Regional Director of Engineering or the delegated representative’s approval before making any alterations to equipment other than the addition, substitution, or removal of readily attachable components (such as mirror or tire and rim assemblies), or minor finishing operations (such as painting). This is necessary to avoid violating laws or regulations governing pollution standards, OSHA requirements, or certification of the final manufacturer.”*

## 7. Facilitator’s Observations

- 1) Kudos to the Forest Supervisor for requesting a facilitated review to discuss several complex issues that could be exposing employees to increased risk of serious injury.
- 2) It was amazing to see the level of engagement and willingness amongst employees to discuss these issues, share their concerns and brainstorm potential solutions to significant issues facing them today.
- 3) It’s critical to ensure appropriate subject matter experts are included in the review process for whatever issues are being reviewed, for example, fleet representatives for equipment/vehicle events, sawyer experts for chainsaw/crosscut events, and so on.