



**New Mexico Department of Game and Fish**  
*Conserving New Mexico's Wildlife for Future Generations*

A close-up photograph of a person wearing a camouflage-patterned helmet and goggles, with a "SCOR" brand strap visible. The person is wearing a camouflage jacket. The background is a solid orange-red color.

# **New Mexico Off-Highway Vehicle Guide**

**Safety, Laws and  
Where To Ride**

# Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) in New Mexico

Under the **Off-Highway Vehicle Act** (66-3-1001 through 66-3-1021 NMSA), New Mexico law defines the following as OHVs:

- All-terrain vehicle (ATV).
- Off-highway motorcycle (OHM).
- Recreational off-highway vehicle (ROV).
- Snowmobile.

**Vehicles exempt** from the provisions of the Off-Highway Vehicle Act include:

- Motorcycles and other vehicles registered for use on public streets.
- OHVs being used for agricultural purposes.
- OHVs used exclusively on private land only.

**New Mexico residents** must title and register OHVs with the New Mexico Motor Vehicle Division to operate the vehicles legally on public lands. Registration costs up to \$53 for two years.



New Mexico resident (left) and nonresident (right) decals must be prominently displayed on vehicle(s) as required on information provided when issued.

**Nonresidents** whose OHVs are not registered or not in compliance with another state's off-highway vehicle registration, user fee, or similar rule demonstrated by certificate of registration must obtain a use permit to operate legally on public lands in New Mexico.

**Non-resident permit** fees are \$48 for two years or \$18 for 90 days. Permits are available at all New Mexico Department of Game and Fish offices and online: [www.B4URide.com](http://www.B4URide.com) or [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us).

### **Fees from OHV registration**

are used to fund OHV safety training and public outreach and to fund grants for trail improvements and law enforcement. To learn more visit: [www.B4uRide.com](http://www.B4uRide.com).



# Youth Safety Requirements

**Riders younger than 6** shall not operate an ATV on public land.

## **Riders younger than 18 must:**

- Complete an approved OHV safety course.
- Carry a safety permit issued to prove course completion.
- Wear an approved, securely fastened helmet and eye protection.
- Never carry a passenger, even on or in an OHV designed for passengers.
- Be visually supervised by an adult unless they have a valid drivers' license.
- Operate an ATV or recreational off-highway vehicle (ROV) meeting age appropriate size-fit requirements as established by rule of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF).

## **Approved OHV safety courses**

include hands-on courses offered by:

- New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.
- ATV Safety Institute (ASI)
- Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) Dirt Bike School, and
- New Mexico-specific online safety courses with links available at [www.B4URide.com](http://www.B4URide.com).

ATV manufacturers may provide ASI safety training with each first-time new ATV purchase. Ask dealer for details.

For more information about OHV safety training in New Mexico, contact: **(505) 222-4712** or visit online: [www.B4uRide.com](http://www.B4uRide.com).

# Protective Gear Requirements

## Safety helmets

All off-highway motor vehicle operators and passengers younger than 18 shall wear safety helmets that comply with federal (DOT) or European Union (ECE) safety standards. A DOT or ECE sticker permanently affixed to a safety helmet is prima facie evidence of compliance.

## Eye protection

All off-highway motor vehicle operators and passengers younger than 18 and all adult operators of an OHV operated on a paved road shall wear eye protection that meets or exceeds Vehicle Equipment Safety Commission Standard VESC-8 and more generally known as goggles, safety glasses or a faceshield attached to the helmet. Additionally, the protective eyewear must be free of scratches, give a clear view to both sides and be fastened securely as per the manufacturer's requirements.

For more information on standards for protective gear visit:  
[www.B4uRide.com](http://www.B4uRide.com).



# Prohibited on Public Lands

## It is illegal for any person to operate an OHV:

- Carelessly, recklessly or in a negligent manner that endangers the person or property of another.
- While under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs.
- In pursuit of and with intent to hunt or take a species of animal or bird protected by law.
- In pursuit of or to harass livestock in any manner that negatively effects the condition of the livestock.
- Upon or within an earthen tank or other structure intended to water livestock or wildlife—except if the off-highway motor vehicle is on an off-highway motor vehicle route designated by the landowner or land management agency.
- In a manner that directly negatively effects or interferes with persons engaged in agricultural practices.
- In excess of 10 mph within 200 feet of a business, animal shelter, horseback rider, bicyclist, pedestrian, livestock or occupied dwelling.
- Unless in possession of the person's registration certificate or nonresident permit.
- Unless the vehicle is equipped with a spark arrester approved by the Forest Service, provided that a snowmobile is exempt from this provision.

To report an OHV violation, visit online:

[www.B4uRide.com](http://www.B4uRide.com) or contact: **800-366-4868**.

# Respect the Land

Much of New Mexico's public land is managed for multiple uses, including off-highway vehicle recreation. When done safely, responsibly and in the right place(s), OHVs can be an appropriate way to enjoy our beautiful backcountry. Thanks to the Off-Highway Vehicle Act, the state has the resources to manage OHV use.

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish encourages responsible recreational use of our public lands to:

- Leave the land healthy and unspoiled.
- Protect our traditions, customs and culture.
- Preserve wildlife and habitat
- Allow the continued enjoyment of these lands by our families and for future generations.

Please be considerate and respect other users of our lands, including ranchers and livestock, private landowners, wildlife, equestrians, hikers and mountain bikers.

For more information about treating public lands respectfully, visit Tread Lightly! online:  
[www.treadlightly.org](http://www.treadlightly.org).

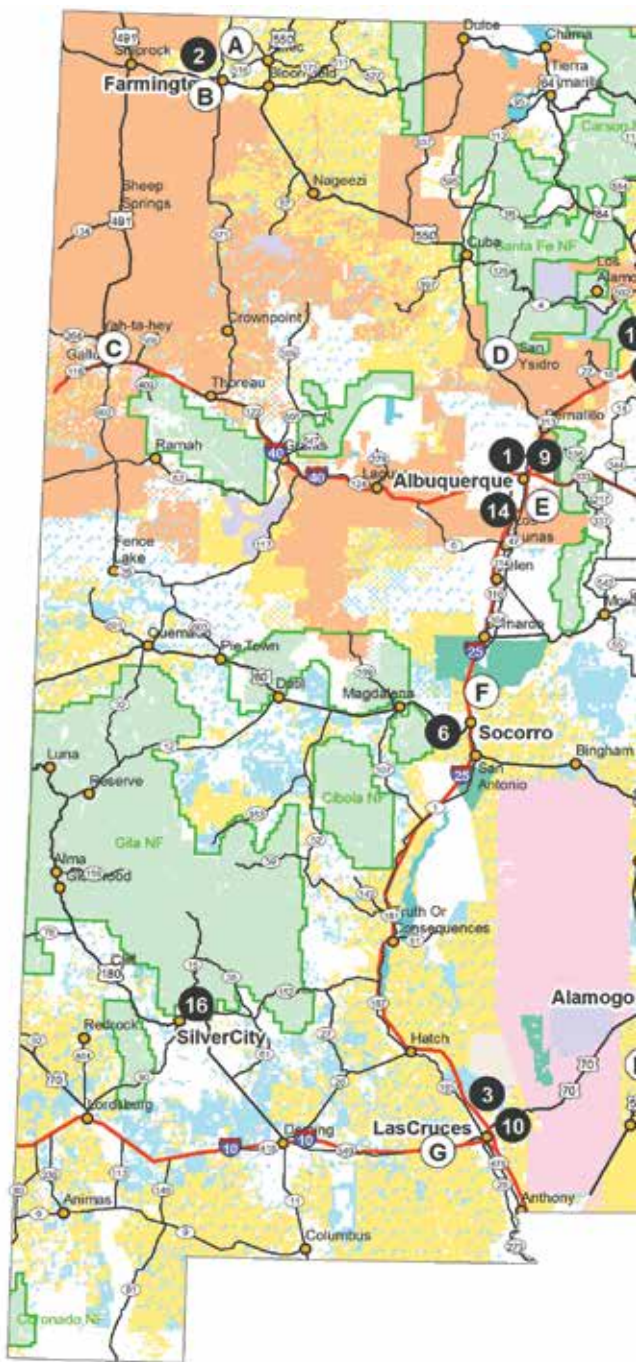
**tread lightly!**®

ON LAND AND WATER



# Know before you go!

Contact local authorities or land management agencies to get information about rules and conditions before using your OHV.







See the following page for descriptions of map locations A–M and 1–19.



# Where to Ride in New Mexico

**Areas marked A-M** on the preceding map indicate designated OHV areas. Other BLM and USFS lands are open to OHVs on designated routes only. For more information about OHV recreation areas, contact the responsible land management agency listed below. (The address shown may be the facility location or the agency office location.)

- A** Glade Run OHV Recreation Area
- B** Dunes OHV Recreation Area; BLM Farmington Field Office: 6251 College Blvd. Suite A (agency), Farmington, NM 87402; (505) 564-7600
- C** Gallup Off-Highway Vehicle Park (Red Rocks Motorsports Association); City of Gallup Parks & Recreation Dept.: 139 Hasler Valley Road (facility), Gallup, NM 87301; (505) 870-7278
- D** San Ysidro Trials Area (trials motorcycles only)  
BLM Rio Puerco Field Office  
100 Sun Ave NE Ste 330 (agency), Albuquerque, NM 87109  
(505) 761-8700
- E** Montessa Park Off-Road Vehicle Area; City of Albuquerque, Parks & Recreation Dept.: 3615 Los Picaros Road SE (facility), Albuquerque, NM 87105; (505) 768-5300
- F** Johnson (Gordy's) Hill OHV Area; BLM Socorro Field Office: 901 S Highway 85 (agency), Socorro, NM 87801; (575) 835-0412
- G** Aden Hills OHV Area
- H** Red Sands OHV Area; BLM Las Cruces District Office: 1800 Marquess Street (agency), Las Cruces, NM 88005; (575) 525-4300
- I** Haystack Mountain OHV Area
- J** Mescalero Sands North Dune OHV Area; BLM Roswell Field Office: 2909 W Second Street (agency), Roswell, NM 88201; (575) 627-0272
- K** Hackberry Lake OHV Recreation Area; BLM Carlsbad Field Office: 620 E Greene Street (agency), Carlsbad, NM 88220; (575) 234-5972
- L** Manzanita Mountains Trail System (Cedro Peak); Cibola National Forest Sandia Ranger District: 11776 NM HWY 337 (agency), Tijeras, NM 87059; (505) 281-3304
- M** La Tierra MX Park; City of Santa Fe Parks & Recreation Dept.: NM 599 ½ mile south of Camino de los Montoyas, Santa Fe, NM 87507 (facility); (505) 955-2141

For more information visit [www.B4uRide.com](http://www.B4uRide.com).

**Locations 1–19** are local, BLM, NMDGF or USFS offices. Contact local agencies for more information.

- 1 BLM Alb./Rio Puerco Field Office: 100 Sun Avenue NE Suite 330, Albuquerque, NM 87109; (505) 761-8700
  - 2 BLM Farmington Field Office: 6251 College Blvd Suite A Farmington, NM 87402; (505) 564-7600
  - 3 BLM Las Cruces District Office: 1800 Marquess Street, Las Cruces, NM 88005; (575) 525-4300
  - 4 BLM Roswell Field Office: 2909 W Second Street, Roswell, NM 88201; (575) 627-0272
  - 5 BLM Santa Fe State Office: 301 Dinosaur Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87508; (505) 954-2000
  - 6 BLM Socorro Field Office: 901 S Highway 85, Socorro, NM 87801; (575) 835-0412
  - 7 BLM Carlsbad Field Office: 620 E Greene Street, Carlsbad, NM 88220; (575) 234-5972
  - 8\* NM Game & Fish SE Area Office: 1615 West College Blvd., Roswell, NM 87740; (575) 624-6135
  - 9\* NM Game & Fish NW Area Office: 7816 Alamo Road NW, Albuquerque, NM 87120; (505)222-4700
  - 10\* NM Game & Fish SW Area Office: 2715 Northrise Drive, Las Cruces, NM 88011; (575) 532-2100
  - 11\* NM Game & Fish NE Area Office: 215 Canyon Road, Raton, NM 87740; (575) 445-2311
  - 12\* NM Game & Fish Headquarters: One Wildlife Way, Santa Fe, NM 87507; 1-888-248-6866
  - 13 USFS Lincoln National Forest: 3463 Las Palomas, Alamogordo, NM 88310; (575) 434-7200
  - 14 USFS Cibola National Forest: 2113 Osuna Road NE, Albuquerque, NM 87113; (505) 346-2650
  - 15 USFS Santa Fe National Forest: 11 Forest Lane, Santa Fe, NM 87508; (505) 438-5300
  - 16 USFS Gila National Forest: 3005 E Camino del Bosque, Silver City, NM 88061; (575) 388-8201
  - 17 USFS Carson National Forest: 208 Cruz Alta Road, Taos, NM 87571; (575) 758-6200
  - 18 City of Santa Fe Parks & Rec. Dept.: 1142 Siler Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505; (505) 955-2141
  - 19 USFS Cibola National Forest Sandia Ranger District: 11776 Hwy. 337, Tijeras, NM 87059; (505) 281-3304
- \* Nonresidents may purchase OHV permits at New Mexico Department of Game & Fish locations or online:  
[www.B4Uride.com](http://www.B4Uride.com).

# Observe Signage on Public Lands

## Trail Management Signs



The Travel Management Rule requires each National Forest and Grassland to designate roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use by class of vehicle and time of year. Designated routes and areas will be identified on a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). Once an MVUM is published, motor vehicle use off designated routes is prohibited. It is the responsibility of the forest visitor to obtain a copy of the MVUM (available free of charge from Forest Service websites and offices) and to comply with the designations.

## Route Markers



## Destination Signs



# Vehicle Requirements

## Prevent Wildfires

New Mexico's OHV Act requires that all OHVs, except snowmobiles, operated on public lands, must be equipped with a U.S. Forest Service approved spark arrester.

## Noise Can Be Annoying

Any OHV sold for or operated on public land must produce less than 96 dB(A) when measured by the SAE J-1287 stationary sound test. USFS and BLM personnel have the equipment and the authority to conduct sound tests on machines that are too loud.

## See and Be Seen

Any OHV operated under conditions of reduced visibility, such as darkness, must be equipped with:

- One or more headlights powerful enough to see objects at least 150 feet ahead
- At least one taillight bright enough to be seen at 200 feet away under normal atmospheric conditions.

All OHVs operated on pavement must meet these requirements.

## Penalty Assessments and Fees

Penalties assessments for citations under the OHV Act range from \$71 for the first citation to \$450 for repeated violations. Counties and other jurisdictions will add administrative fees to pay Magistrate Court costs.

For information on New Mexico OHV laws and rules visit online:

<http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/ohv/ohv-laws-and-rules/>

# OHVs on Paved Roads

OHVs shall not be operated on any limited access highway or freeway. OHVs may cross a paved road after coming to a stop and yielding right-of-way to oncoming traffic. OHVs may ride next to a highway to get to or from an OHV area.

A local authority or the State Transportation Commission may designate paved roads in their jurisdiction(s) and may establish separate speed limits and additional restrictions where ATVs or ROVs may be operated, provided:

- The OHV has working headlight, taillight, brakes, mirrors and muffler.
- The operator has a valid driver's license or permits as required under the Motor Vehicle Code and OHV safety permit.
- The operator is insured in compliance with the Mandatory Financial Responsibility Act.
- The operator wears approved eye protection, and passengers under 18 years of age wear a helmet and eye protection complying with the OHV Act.

New Mexico residents using OHVs on paved roads must purchase a paved road use decal or plate from MVD. Nonresidents must have a paved road decal or plate from their home state or purchase one online at:

<https://onlinesales.wildlife.state.nm.us/>





New Mexico Department of Game and Fish  
Off-Highway Vehicle Program  
7816 Alamo Road NW, Albuquerque, NM 87120  
(505) 222-4728 • [www.B4Uride.com](http://www.B4Uride.com)



USDA Forest Service, SW Region  
333 Broadway SE, Albuquerque NM 87102  
(505) 842-3292 • [www.fs.fed.us/](http://www.fs.fed.us/)



New Mexico Off-Highway Vehicle  
Association (NMOHVA)  
13170 Central Ave SE, Suite B PMB #322,  
Albuquerque NM 87123  
[www.nmohva.org](http://www.nmohva.org)



New Mexico Trials Association (NMTA)  
<https://nmta.weebly.com/>

U.S. Bureau of Land Management  
P.O. Box 27115, Santa Fe NM 87502  
(505) 954-2000 • [www.blm.gov/nm/st/en.html](http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en.html)



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This document is not to be used as a substitute for New Mexico statutes or administrative codes. Its intent is to provide general information about state requirements for OHVs and OHV users. It is the responsibility of every owner and/or operator to know the law.

Statutes may be viewed online at:  
[https://laws.nmonesource.com/w/nmos/  
Chapter-66-NMSA-1978#!b/66-3-1001](https://laws.nmonesource.com/w/nmos/Chapter-66-NMSA-1978#!b/66-3-1001)

Rules may be viewed online at:  
<http://164.64.110.239/nmac/parts/title18/18.015.0003.htm>

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