

Ministry of Transportation

Office of the Director
Highway Operations Management Branch

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January 4, 2021

Dear Municipal Stakeholder,

I am pleased to announce that effective **January 1, 2021**, the province has expanded the on-road opportunities for off-road vehicle riders in some parts of Ontario. Off-road vehicle riders are expected to experience enhanced trail access resulting from the increased on-road connections to Ontario's off-road vehicle trail network. The changes apply only to municipalities listed in Ontario Regulation 8/03 and amend the way permitted off-road vehicles are allowed on-road access to municipal highways.

In municipalities listed in [Ontario Regulation 8/03](#), permitted off-road vehicles will be allowed by default on municipal highways unless the municipality has an existing by-law that restricts their use or creates a new by-law to prohibit or restrict the use of some or all off-road vehicles. These new provisions replace the previous requirement that municipalities had to enact a by-law to permit off-road vehicles to operate on municipal highways. The updated regulations can be found at [Ontario Regulation 316/03](#), and [Ontario Regulation 863](#).

It is important to note that the on-road access rules for off-road vehicles in municipalities that are not listed in Ontario Regulation 8/03 will continue to be subject to the existing regulatory framework under Ontario Regulation 316/03 and these municipalities are not affected by this change.

The equipment configuration and performance requirements for off-road vehicles as set out in Section 10 of Ontario Regulation 316/03 also remain unchanged. The *Highway Traffic Act* prohibition of drivers of any motor vehicles causing the vehicle to make unnecessary noise, for example through modification, also applies and violations are subject to fines.

In order to support municipalities with these changes, the ministry has provided a Municipal Guidance Document (attached) to help municipalities decide whether they need to take action to revoke, update or pass new by-laws related to on-road access by off-road vehicles on the highways under their jurisdiction.

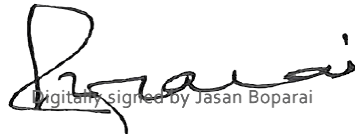
I ask you to kindly forward this notice and the attached Municipal Guidance Document to municipal staff responsible for traffic safety and those responsible for enforcing off-road vehicle laws in your area. Although changes have been previously announced on the Ontario Newsroom site and there will be a communication in the backgrounder issued by the Premier's Office, municipalities should ensure that the public and off-road vehicle riders are made aware of the rules in their area.

If there are any questions regarding off-road vehicles licencing, operation or equipment requirements referenced in the attached guidance material, please contact Angela Litrenta, Manager, Road Safety Program Development Office at (416) 235-5130 or Angela.Litrenta@ontario.ca.

If there are any questions regarding amendments to Ontario Regulation 316/03, and Ontario Regulation 863, please contact Ron Turcotte, Head, Safety Information Management Section, Provincial Traffic Office at (289)-407-9880 or Ron.Turcotte@ontario.ca.

Thank you for your assistance in communicating this change.

Sincerely,



Digitally signed by Jasan Boparai

Jasan Boparai
Director

Attachment – Municipal Guidance document

Effective January 1, 2021, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) is changing the way the province manages how off-road vehicles (ORVs) are allowed on-road in some municipalities.

The use of ORVs on highways is controlled under Section 191.8 of the [Highway Traffic Act](#) (HTA), [Ontario Regulation 316/03](#) made under the HTA, and municipal by-laws passed in accordance with the legislation and regulations. Currently, ORVs that meet the requirements in Ontario Regulation 316/03 are allowed on some provincial highways and municipal highways where a municipality has passed a by-law allowing the use of such ORVs on highways under their jurisdiction.

WHAT’S NEW?

Effective January 1, 2021, all ORVs that meet the requirements in Ontario Regulation 316/03 for ORVs permitted on-road, will be allowed by default on municipal highways under the jurisdiction of municipalities listed in [Ontario Regulation 8/03](#) unless the municipality has a by-law prohibiting or restricting the use of some or all such ORVs.

Municipalities that are not listed in Ontario Regulation 8/03 will continue to be subject to the existing regulatory framework and are not affected by this change. In these municipalities, ORVs will continue to be allowed only if the municipality has passed a by-law to allow permitted ORVs on municipal highways under their jurisdiction.

Municipal
Considerations

Municipalities listed in Ontario Regulation 8/03 will continue to have the authority and make decisions about ORVs through by-law to:

▶ Prohibit ORVs on some or all highways



▶ Permit only specific ORVs on road



▶ Prohibit ORVs at specific hours of the day



▶ Impose additional lower speed limits



Local municipalities listed in Ontario Regulation 8/03 that wish to prohibit ORVs; or restrict the permitted types of ORVs; or restrict the time of day or the season when permitted types of ORVs are allowed on-road; or establish lower speed limits for these vehicles; may need to pass a new by-law.

Where a local municipality affected by the change has an existing by-law providing a blanket permission for ORVs on all municipal highways, the by-law would not be in conflict with the new regulations. If an existing by-law only permits some ORVs or restricts ORVs to only some highways, the municipality may have to revoke the by-law and pass a new by-law as outlined above if the municipality wishes to continue such restrictions.

There is no change to the enforcement of laws related to the use of ORVs. Any issues with the day-to-day operations of police services and the actions of police officers related to ORVs should be raised with the local chief of police or their designated representatives. All set fines can be found on the [Ontario Court of Justice website](#).

This document is provided primarily as a guide. For additional information please refer to the *Highway Traffic Act*, associated regulations and visit [Ontario.ca/ATV](#) for information and tips related to the operation of ORVs in Ontario.






Provincial Requirements

Off-road Vehicles Allowed On-road

Effective July 1, 2020, MTO made changes to add off-road motorcycles (ORM) and extreme terrain vehicles (XTV) to the existing list of ORVs permitted on-road. These two new ORV types are in addition to the currently permitted 4-wheeled ORV types.

MUNICIPAL BY-LAWS: Effective July 1, 2020, the two new ORV types added to the list of ORVs permitted on-road can be allowed on municipal highways in accordance with the HTA and Ontario Regulation 316/03.

ORV is a general term used to capture several different vehicles designed for off-road use, however, only certain off-road vehicles that meet the requirements in Ontario Regulation 316/03 are permitted on-road:

All-Terrain Vehicles	<p>“A “single-rider” all-terrain vehicle (ATV) is designed to travel on four tires, having a seat designed to be straddled by the operator, handlebars for steering control and it must be designed by the manufacturer to carry a driver only and no passengers.</p>	
	<p>A two-up ATV is designed and intended for use by an operator or an operator and a passenger. It is equipped with straddle-style seating and designed to carry only one passenger.</p>	
Side-by-Sides	<p>A recreational off-highway vehicle (ROV) has two abreast seats, typically built with a hood, and uses a steering wheel instead of a motorcycle steering handlebar.</p>	
	<p>A utility terrain vehicle (UTV) has similar characteristics to an ROV but typically also features a box bed. UTVs are generally designed for utility rather than for recreational purposes.</p>	
New Off-Road Vehicle Types	<p>Extreme Terrain Vehicles (XTVs), commonly referred to as Argos are 6+ wheeled off-road vehicles capable of riding in multiple terrains, including through water. These vehicles sometimes come with tracks, however, tracked versions are not being permitted on road and are restricted to off-road use only.</p>	
	<p>Off-Road Motorcycles (ORMs) are 2 wheeled off-road vehicles that come in varying configurations such as, but not limited to: Recreational ORM, Trail ORMs or Competition ORM.</p>	