

Native Solutions Ltd 1/09/2020



UTV's and Access to Job Sites.

Thought that this might be a good reminder about UTVs (Utility Terrain Vehicles) and how we can't get a false sense of security with them. Last week we had a pretty severe incident that luckily our Team Leader escaped with only a bit of whip lash and bruising.

He did all the right things, wore a helmet, seatbelt, used diff lock, low gear, was fully trained with his UTV units standards and had experience. It was a 2020 4-month-old Can Am that due to it being new had all the up to date safety features. All this helped him walk away alive.

The contributing factors were slippery track conditions from rain the previous night and unsafe access tracks. The UTV tyres caked up with mud and lost all traction. The track had stock on it from the farmer which pitted up the surface. The track also had slips along it from the banks letting go.

As a company we sat down and got to the root cause of this nasty incident and 2 things came back.

1. Poor access to the job site and with a small amount of rain made it treacherous.
2. One thing was missed, walking the track.

With these in mind I really urge companies to make sure their staff walk UTV tracks before they drive them, especially if they have had a change in conditions from the previous day. Make sure authorised riders do a risk assessment before they ride to ensure they eliminated the hazards or find another safer option if the risk is too high.

One thing that as an industry we would really like to see change is Main Contractors, farmers, forestry consultants and Landowners ensure tracks are safely accessible before sub-contractors arrive. We will be now making sure that all our blocks have safe access for our employees, even if this means 'stop work' until the tracks are fixed, or an alternate safer route is sourced. Checks will be put in place for our Main Contractors to complete before we commence work to help ensure our safety standards are met.

As an industry I hope that others will take heed to this very scary life-threatening situation and follow suit to ensure their contractors provide a safe working environment. We all need to work collectively to make a safer workplace for our employees.

