

# Motorised off-road traffic in the Alps



What the Club Arc Alpin (CAA) says about it

[www.club-arc-alpin.eu](http://www.club-arc-alpin.eu)

## Vroooooom!

The Alps, which are relatively small in a global context, play host to approximately one fifth of total global tourism and are home to two thirds of the world's cable cars and ski lifts! The Alps are crisscrossed by roads, cable cars, high voltage lines, paths, and tunnels and strewn with hydroelectric plants and tourism centres; most large Alpine valleys are now urban networks with a high population density.

And yet the Alps are still – increasingly so – one of Europe's most important reserves of nature, landscapes, mountain wildernesses and biodiversity. This natural and landscape value must be secured in the long term, firstly for obvious protective reasons. Secondly, these alpine nature landscapes offer the opportunity to actively experience natural wildernesses and to practice sports close to nature and grow by interacting with nature in an undisturbed state. So that this remains true for our children and grandchildren, we face the challenge of developing our use of the Alps in a measured and sustainable way and to set certain limits for ourselves.

In some regions of the Alps a new use has expanded over the past 10 years: Motorised off-road vehicles of all types allow access to alpine roads and paths, and even away from roads and paths. This is particularly noticeable in the winter, when snowmobiles allow even high mountain areas to be accessed.

## Illegal!

**In almost every country of the Alps there are clear and restrictive legal regulations for motorised traffic.** However, in some areas the authorisation process for exceptions is very lax and there is hardly any monitoring, much less any punishment of breaches of the law.

This leads to certain alpine areas, especially in winter, being invaded by wild snowmobile riders, something which is extremely disruptive not only to animals which require extreme peace in the winter, but also to winter hikers and climbers. These rides often take place on the pretext of transport to isolated accommodation, but are obviously abusive when examined closely. During the summer people enjoy rides on so-called quads and other all-terrain motorised vehicles in quiet alpine areas away from the actual roads.

## CAA – Mountaineering Charter and the position of alpine associations

In its 2008 "Mountaineering Charter" the CAA formulated its position on motorised traffic in general as follows:

The restriction and control of the technical means of access as well as the use of all kinds of motor vehicles for mountain sport we regard as part of our efforts for conservation of the environment in the mountains

All the alpine associations assembled in the CAA have clear positions regarding motorised off-road traffic in their regulations and guidelines on the protection of nature and the environment, which is a **clear "NO"** to any motorised activities outside of the legally authorised roads. Exceptions are clearly defined and authorised transports of materials or persons to locations which could otherwise not receive the necessary supplies.

### **CAA demands to the authorities and tourism groups**

On the basis of its charter and the positions of its member organisations the CAA demands the following regulations for motorised off-road traffic.

Category of road/path	Regulation of motorised off-road traffic
Off-road	Prohibited without exception
Hiking and alpine paths	Prohibited without exception
Forestry and agricultural roads	Prohibited for tourist transportation. Transport of materials in clearly established exceptional cases with authorisation certificate from the authorities
Public roads	Use according to the applicable road traffic regulations

**The CAA invites the authorities and tourism groups to firstly orientate themselves according to these guidelines, and secondly to monitor illegal use and to punish it. This is the only way to sufficiently maintain one of the most important tourist qualities of the Alps, that is to say their quiet and privacy.**

Resolved at the general assembly in September 2009 in Innsbruck.