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HOLIDAYMAKERS URGED TO AVOID QUAD BIKE DANGER ABROAD

As holidaymakers start jetting off to foreign shores for a summer break, a Nottingham-based campaigning group has urged them to think twice before hiring quad bikes on foreign soil.

Whether by the Spanish coast or on a Greek island, quad bikes are becoming an increasingly popular way for tourists to get around. But Denise Kitchener, chief executive of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL), says a lack of advice from foreign hire companies, as well as a laid back attitude toward health and safety, could mean people are taking serious risks.

Denise said people may not realise how powerful the machines are. "Hiring a quad bike may seem like great fun, but the power of a quad bike is similar to a car or motorbike. We are really concerned that some foreign companies are not giving people enough instruction on how to handle the bike, or aren't insisting that people wear safety helmets," she said.

Someone who is well aware of the dangers is Daniel Brennan, from Surrey, whose holiday with friends to the Greek island of Kos turned to tragedy last year when they decided to hire quad bikes. Despite only having a provisional driving licence, Daniel was given a 250cc bike after a less powerful bike failed to start. The bigger bike's front wheels suddenly locked and Daniel was thrown into a tree, sustaining devastating injuries.

Daniel's mother, Christine, said he is lucky even to be alive. "He suffered horrific injuries, including severed nerves and damage to the frontal lobe of his brain, which now affects his personality and thinking ability. Daniel can still be left by himself, but now needs a great deal of care. The accident has knocked us all for six, and has had a major impact on our lives," she said.

To make matters worse, Daniel's insurance policy didn't cover him for this kind of accident. As a result, he and his family were unable to claim compensation from the quad bike company.

"We have been unable to claim any compensation for Daniel's injuries," she said, "so we are now fully dependable on the NHS."



Denise says simple precautions should be taken if people intend to hire a quad bike abroad:

- When taking out holiday insurance, let the insurance company know you intend to hire a quad bike so that you are given the right kind of cover.
- As with any ride-on vehicle, always wear a helmet whether on a road or terrain. Life may be more relaxed on holiday, but safety threats are just as real.
- Ask the hire company questions, particularly about safety precautions and company credentials, for example, how long have they been in business? Ask your holiday rep if the company is a reputable operator.
- Make sure you get clear guidance and instructions. If you are in any doubt, don't go ahead.

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Note to editors:

- APIL (Association of Personal Injury Lawyers) is a not-for-profit organisation, whose members are dedicated to campaigning for improvements in the law to help people who are injured or become ill through no fault of their own.
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