



Snowmobiling Safety

Across a special part of North America, summer weather is uncertain but winter always brings snow. More than 10 million people look forward to that blanket of white and the pleasures of enjoying the outdoors on snowmobiles.

Many things make snowmobiling fun: the breathtaking beauty of a snow-filled woods, field or mountain; the precision performance of a well-designed machine; the satisfaction of traversing the winter landscape with friends and family.

Yes, snowmobilers savor the winter world, and that calls for extra responsibility. Training, experience and awareness are all traits of the accomplished snowmobiler.

Snowmobiling is fun, but it's work, too. It challenges the body and mind, and that's part of the reason you're so relaxed at the end of a day of snowmobiling. While you are riding, the wind, sun, glare, cold, vibration, motion and other factors work together to affect both driver and passenger.

Alcohol magnifies and distorts those challenges and can quickly turn an enjoyable outing into a situation that's hazardous for you and others.

Alcohol and snowmobiling, simply, do not mix.

Forget that myth that alcohol warms up a chilled person. It opens the blood vessels and removes the feeling of chill, but it does nothing to increase body heat. Instead, it can increase the risk of hypothermia, a dangerous lowering of the body's core temperature. With alcohol, you may only feel warmer, while your body chills dangerously.

Alcohol increases fatigue, fogs your ability to make good decisions, and slows your reaction time. It's part of a formula for disaster. And don't forget— **MOST PROVINCES HAVE LAWS PROHIBITING THE OPERATION OF A SNOWMOBILE WHILE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL.**

- You have two good guides available for snowmobile maintenance: the owner's manual that came with the machine and a dealer. Consult both to make sure your machine is kept in top form for dependable, enjoyable fun.
- Your local club or association may also conduct safety and maintenance programs.
- Before each ride, follow the "pre-op" check outlined in your owner's manual.



Follow the rules

Regulations on sled registration and use are different in various parts of the snow-belt. Check with natural resource and law enforcement agencies and snowmobile dealers or clubs in the area you are visiting to make sure your ride results in legal and hassle-free snowmobiling. Remember, too, that some states and provinces have age restrictions for snowmobile operation, often requiring that children are supervised by adults.

Safe crossing

Be careful when crossing roads of any kind. Come to a complete stop and make absolutely sure no traffic is approaching from any direction. Then cross at a right angle to traffic.

Dress appropriately

- Wear layers of clothing, so that you can add or remove a layer or two to match changing conditions. A windproof outer layer is especially important, as are warm gloves or mitts, boots and a helmet.
- Make sure your helmet is safety-certified, the right size and in good condition. A visor is essential for clear vision and wind protection and the chin strap should be snug.
- Wear glasses or goggles that offer protection from the sun.

Take a friend

Don't snowmobile alone. Not only is snowmobiling more fun with family and friends, it's safer too!

File A plan

Airplane pilots and boaters file flight and float plans, respectively, so that others know where to look if they're overdue.

"Snow plans" describing your machine and your planned route can be time- and life-savers. Leave only with your family or friends.

Like those who file travel plans, always let your family and friends know you're back or have arrived at your destination. No one likes needless searches.