

SNOWMOBILE - EMERGENCIES

Stuck

Getting stuck is not necessarily an emergency, but can be if you're riding alone. It is a common and frustrating problem for even the avid snowmobiler.

Learning how to read the snow

Knowing the type of snow you are riding on can help avoid getting stuck. Your machine can easily sink if the snow is loose, light, deep or powder.

When these snow conditions occur, keep your RPM's and power high enough to keep momentum but don't overpower the machine; it can quickly dig the snowmobile's track into the loose snow and result in getting stuck.

If you get stuck

Be extremely cautious when trying to move your snowmobile. Over-exerting yourself can lead to back injuries and even a heart attack.

Have friends from your riding group help move your machine very carefully.

Do not get on your machine and rev up the engine to drive it out of the situation. This may cause your machine to sink even further.

Try these methods when stuck on flat ground:

- With your feet on the running boards, rock the snowmobile slowly from side to side while gently feathering the throttle
- Shut off the engine, clear the loose snow from

the track and try to pack the snow under the track for a firm base

- Try walking ahead of the machine and trampling a path in the snow to help reduce drag on the machine
- If you are carrying an avalanche shovel or small folding shovel, use the shovel to dig snow out from around and beneath the snowmobile, as well as to shovel a path in front of the machine

Getting stuck going uphill

- Shut off the machine and get off on the uphill side
- Turn the snowmobile around, so assess which direction is the safest and easiest to turn it downhill
- Trample the snow on the side of the snowmobile you choose to turn it toward and dig out the ski loop on that side if needed to gain a good hand-hold
- Grasp the ski loop on the side of the snowmobile you are turning toward and begin pulling the snowmobile around
- Continue to turn the sled 180 degrees until it's facing downhill. Use caution when on steep slopes so the machine does not roll over on you or take off downhill in an uncontrollable manner
- Start the snowmobile and drive it back down the hill

Stranded

In any emergency, you need to determine your best options. Your decisions should include all factors such as

- where you are,
- how far away help is,
- where you are in relation to the trail,
- if you are alone, a
- whether you or someone else is injured.

Always be sure to pre-plan your trip. The right amount of food, water, clothing, etc., can help tremendously if you have become stranded.

If you become stranded, the most important step is to remain calm. Once you are calm, you can assess the situation and attend to any injuries.

If you are not able to walk for help, you must prepare to conserve energy and seek shelter. Use your emergency kit to assist you during the emergency.

Provisions

If you have pre-planned for any emergency, you brought food and warming materials. Make sure to ration the food in case rescue is delayed. next move.

Shelter

Seek shelter immediately whether it is under a tree, under a shelf of a wall, a rock out cropping or a cave. You can even make a snow cave by digging into a snowdrift. Line the cave with whatever material you can.

If a fire is needed, use the matches from your emergency kit to help start a fire.

Where are you?

Now that you've assessed the situation and found some shelter, ask yourself where you are. Before your emergency, did you notice trail marks, road signs, rivers or any other markers that might help? Are there any geological features that may point you back onto the trail?

You should use your map, GPS unit, and/or compass to help you determine where you are and how to get back to the trail.

How far is help?

Once you have figured out your location, you can guess/estimate how far help is. This guess will also help you decide on whether you start walking or stay where you are. If it is close to nightfall or at night, the best choice is to stay by your snowmobile and build a shelter until daylight. Conserve your energy as much as possible to keep warm during the night.

Injuries

If any injuries happen during your trip, the first thing that needs to be done is to secure the accident scene to make it safe to ensure someone else does not also become injured. Then assess the situation.

Decide whether or not you need emergency services and if you do, call for or send someone for help immediately. The emergency operator may also be able to guide you with helping the injured.

If the victim is awake and responsive, ask them to tell you what is wrong. If what they say makes you

suspect a spinal injury, do not move the victim. By moving them, you may risk injuring them even more. If the victim is not responsive, assume they do have a spinal injury and do not move them.

Follow these do's and don'ts next:

- Do – Remain Calm
- Do – Treat the victim for major bleeding by applying direct pressure to the wound. This pressure can help slow or stop bleeding from the wound
- Do – Evaluate and if necessary treat the victim for shock:
 - Immediately following the crash or incident
 - Anytime a victim is or was unconscious
 - Following blunt trauma or severe jarring of the body
 - If a victim has broken bones
- Do – Keep the victim as dry as possible
- Do – Stabilize
- Do – Take precautions so that you do not become the victim of an accident yourself
- Do – Travel with an adequately equipped first aid kit

- Do – Take a basic first aid/CPR course; it could save a life

Don'ts:

- Do not offer or allow an injured person to drink any alcohol. Alcohol causes the body to lose heat and can induce hypothermia. Alcohol can cause

complications for medical staff who treat the victim

- Do not take or give drugs or medications, legal or not. Let medical professionals prescribe medications
- Do not attempt to set broken bones
- Do not overstep your training
- Do not move an unconscious victim unless there is no alternative

Shock

To treat shock, the victim should lie flat on their back and their legs should be elevated.

Keep them warm by covering them with extra clothing or a blanket.