

SNOWMOBILE - LAWS

Registration

Registering your snowmobile is important and is required by the law in every province. You must register in order to operate your snowmobile on the trails and areas open to the public.

In most cases, your registration fee goes back into the province's snowmobile program to provide trails and riding areas.

Once you have paid the registration fee, you will receive a certificate and adhesive decals.

This certificate should be carried on the snowmobile. The decals are to be attached permanently to the snowmobile as directed by the information supplied with your certificate.

If these decals are not attached to the snowmobile, you may be stopped by law enforcement.

Roads

While on the snowmobile trail, you may encounter a road that may need to be crossed.

These are some rules to follow for your safety as well as automobiles and pedestrians.

- Reduce your speed and come to a complete, safe stop at the road. You never know what might be heading toward you on the road. Remember to keep your speed slow so that you can stop at the road and not slide into oncoming traffic.

- Stand tall on the running boards to see and to be seen. When coming upon the road, change your riding position from sitting to standing. This is to help you better see the traffic and also so traffic can see you. Automobiles have the right-of-way on the road, so wait for the traffic to clear first.
- Cross directly or as straight as you possibly can across the road. Remember that concrete and pavement do not allow for the same steering control as snow does.
- Cross slowly and carefully; do not cross the road at high speeds.
- When you encounter roads along the trail you are riding, you will need to be aware of what roads you can and cannot ride on. These laws, prohibiting snowmobiles on certain roads, were set in place for your safety and the safety of automobile drivers. Always check with the jurisdiction in the local area where you will be riding since local laws and rules regarding roads may vary significantly from one area to the next.

You can ride on certain plowed roads only:

- If the road is designated with a route sign and as a snowmobile route
- If the trail crosses the road
- If there is an ordinance allowing you to ride from your house to the trail; check the local regulations
- If there is an ordinance allowing you to ride directly from the motel/hotel to the trail; check with local officials
- If you encounter a bridge, culvert, or

roadway and the road is the only way around it

- If the road is not normally plowed to remove snow; you cannot operate on unplowed roads after a snowfall, if the street is normally plowed
- If there is a special event and snowmobiles are allowed to travel on the roads

Rules of riding next to all roads:

- Generally, ride as far away from the plowed roadway as is safe and/or practical
- Always comply with all posted signs, including the speed limit for the road
- At night, dim your headlights if operating in the road ditch against oncoming vehicle traffic on the road

Violations

These are violations that can occur while riding a snowmobile.

The most dangerous of the three would be DUI, (driving under the influence).

Driving Under the Influence (OWI/DUI)

Drinking and driving laws pertain not only to automobiles, but also to snowmobiles. Alcohol greatly impairs your sense of balance, coordination, and judgment.

A vast majority of all snowmobile accidents are caused by alcohol. Never drive your

snowmobile while under the influence. Operating while intoxicated can greatly increase your chances of being injured or killed, or killing someone else.

DUI is not only limited to alcohol but illegal drugs are also considered an DUI. Penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs can be severe.

Eluding Police Officers

While you are riding the trails, a law enforcement officer can stop you if he/she thinks he/she may have a reason to. If signaled to pull over, do so immediately in a safe manner.

Failure to stop, or eluding the police, can result in high fines and possible jail time.

Trespassing

Never travel off the snowmobile trail marked with route signs. Always travel on trails approved for snowmobiles. Trespass violations, even those that appear minor, are one of the leading causes of trail closures.

Stay on marked trails and respect the fact that private property owners let you snowmobile on the trails through their property.

Restrictions

Age

The minimum age to operate a snowmobile can vary by province. For many it is 15 or 16, as young as 12, or as old as 18. Be sure to check your local laws, or the area you plan to ride. Some

provinces may also require that you pass a safety certification course to operate a snowmobile.

Again, check with the area you will be snowmobiling in to be sure of age restrictions and safety certification requirements.

Exhaust

Exhaust systems that have been modified and are louder than factory exhausts are often illegal. Many provinces prohibit the operation of excessively loud machines and restrict the sound level. Since the exhaust system comes tuned and in working order from the factory, it should not be modified.

Speed/Distance

Always obey all posted speed limits. Some areas also have laws related to speed when riding in proximity to other people, homes, or occupied buildings.

Some areas may require that if you happen upon pedestrians, you must stay 100 feet from them at a speed of 10 mph. This includes hikers, cross-country skiers, even snowmobilers who have stepped off their machine.

Also, when riding near a residence between the times of noise ordinances, you must not travel faster than 10 mph.

Property Restricted areas

There are certain places that snowmobiles may not be allowed to operate. These areas are generally, but not always, posted with signs indicating that snowmobiling is not

allowed. These places are generally restricted:

- airports,
- railroad property,
- cemeteries,
- sacred Native American lands,
- school properties,
- designated Wilderness areas,
- designated wildlife winter range,
- most private property.

Ordinances

Be sure to check the local ordinances or laws that are enforced in the places that the trail runs through. The ordinances can include speed limits, routes, and trail access.