

SNOWMOBILE – RIDING

Starting Your Machine

First, you should always read the owner's manual on how to start your snowmobile. This is the best guide for your machine. Always follow the recommendations in the owner's manual.

Second, use the Pre-Ride Checklist before you start to ensure your machine mechanically is ready.

Third, to start it:

- Point the snowmobile in a safe direction
- Be ready to start it by kneeling or sitting on the machine
- Check the throttle by depressing it at least once to be sure it isn't frozen. When released it should return quickly to the idle position
- Check all important switches like key and safety switches, which should be in the "on" positions
- Depending on the machine, choke or prime the engine if it is cold

- If your machine starts electrically, turn the key to the "start" position and release the choke as soon as the engine starts
- If your machine is a manual start, pull the recoil starter cord until you feel resistance, then pull vigorously, but don't let the handle snap back
- Try not to flood the engine when starting the snowmobile. If the choke is used and the engine hesitates to start, stop before too much

gas is used. Wait a minute or two, and then try to start the engine again.

Riding Positions

Riding positions can vary with the type of terrain you are riding and also your own style. Each position has its own advantages. It is important for you to be familiar with each position so that you can safely and confidently navigate the trails.

Sitting - This is the safest and most common riding position. Position yourself on the snowmobile with your feet flat on the running boards. This will help cushion the effects of bumps on the trail and also keep your feet safe from the tracks or objects. When sitting, keep your body weight low so it will be easier to shift from side to side.

Standing - This position should only be used when you have visibility troubles in the sitting position. Be sure to keep your knees bent to absorb the bumps on the trail and keep your speed slow. Do not use this position for regular riding, for it can be hard to react to situations and doesn't allow quick control in case of an emergency.

Kneeling - This is a good alternative riding position to rest the body while riding at slow speeds. For this position, put your knees up under you on your seat. It can help with better visibility, but it is more difficult to keep your balance.

Semi-Kneeling - A semi-kneeling position, where one knee is up under you on the seat and the other foot is on the snowmobile's

running board, can be useful when riding in deep powder snow while riding at slower speeds. This will help with visibility and also help to control the snowmobile.

Posting - This is a semi-sitting position that is best suited for traveling over uneven terrain. Keep your feet flat on the snowmobile running boards and bend your knees. This will help with visibility too.

In A Group

When riding in a group, there are a few guidelines you should know.

- Snowmobiles should ride single file and not side-by-side. Some trails are not wide enough for two snowmobiles. This will also help when there is two-way traffic on a snowmobile trail.
- Follow the snowmobile in front of you at a safe distance that would allow you to stop or slow down in a safe manner. A good rule to follow is the 3 second rule:
When the person in front of you passes an object, note where it is and start counting. By the time you arrive at the same object, you should have counted no less than three seconds. If you counted to less than three, you need to allow more space between the riders in front of you to ensure time to stop safely.

Passengers

When riding with passengers, remember to ride safely and obey all laws including the

speed limit (as you should every time you ride).

You now have the responsibility of transporting, not only yourself, but also another person. You should never take any chances or risks while with a passenger.

Inform your passenger of how to ride with you on the snowmobile. Tell him/her to keep their feet flat on the running boards, firmly hold the handgrips, and to lean into the turns with you.

Riding Alone

It is recommended that you should use the buddy system and never ride alone. Always let someone know you are riding alone, where you are going, and when you will be back. Be sure you have your tool kit, emergency kit, and personal items kit with you before you ride out.

Night Riding

Riding at night can be as enjoyable as day riding, but extra precautions are a must before you ride out.

Be certain your headlights, taillights, and brake lights are working before you ride.

Carry extra bulbs with you, just in case.

Always drive at speeds that will allow you to stop safely if a dangerous object appears. Adjust your speed to snow conditions, other riders and basic safety reasons. It is important to ride at safe speeds under all conditions, not just for night riding.

Do not override your headlights, meaning that you are going so fast that you pass through the area illuminated by your headlights before you can stop

safely. Your stopping distance is greater than 200 feet or whatever your headlights illuminate.

Some trails can be narrow and can be hard to judge at night. Keep your speeds low so you can react to other oncoming riders and so it is easier to slow down.

Stay on all marked trails; follow trail signs, and speed limit signs while night riding. Be cautious when crossing roads and always be prepared to stop for anything at a moment's notice.

Snow Conditions

The weather can produce unpredictable snow conditions. Be sure to check the weather reports before you leave. Always be prepared for the unexpected.

Ice - Ice can form on trails and roads and can make the snowmobile difficult to operate. When you suspect ice may be present, be cautious by slowing your speed way down, taking corners very slowly, and stopping with ample space to safely stop.

Not taking precautions can lead to serious injury to you and/or your group.

Dirt - When trails are well used, they can develop areas of snow and dirt mixed together. These areas can be hard on the snowmobile. Take caution to not damage your machine when riding over these spots and check your snowmobile often for damage.

Powder - Fresh, powdery snow can be ideal for riding. Powdery snow can linger in the

air after snowmobiles pass over it. This snow dust can cut down on visibility for other riders to spot other snowmobilers, trail signs, stop signs, or other motor vehicles. Your speed should always be slower to accommodate for the powder.

Wet Snow - Wet snow can be great to ride on, but can also be difficult. Start out by driving slow, since wet snow can make steering your machine difficult. Wet snow can also accumulate on your clothing. You should be wearing the proper Riding Apparel so the wet snow does not soak into your clothes. If snow and moisture get into your clothing, frostbite can occur.