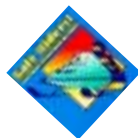


# New York State Snowmobiler's Guide

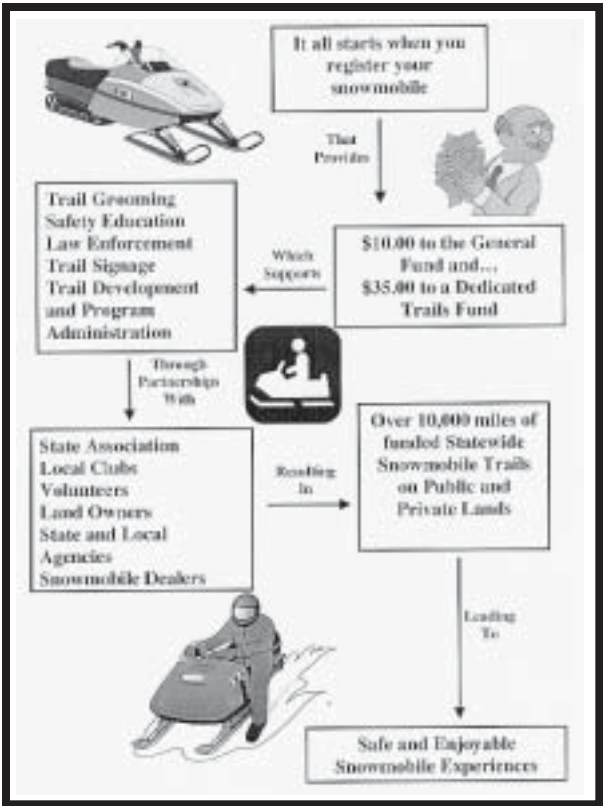
A handbook for  
recreational riding  
in New York State



**New York State Office of Parks,  
Recreation and Historic Preservation**

Planning Bureau-Snowmobile Unit

**Web site:** [www.nysparks.com](http://www.nysparks.com)



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# New York State Snowmobiler's Guide

*A handbook for recreational riding in New York State*



September 2004



**Effective August 29, 2001:** It is a violation for any snowmobiler to fail to yield the right of way to a groomer.

Visit our web site at: [www.nysparks.com](http://www.nysparks.com)

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# Introduction

*Welcome to winter!* We are glad you can join in the snow season fun. Snowmobiling is an increasingly popular form of winter recreation, with over 172,000 snow machines now registered in New York State. You have the opportunity to enjoy thousands of miles of snowmobile trails in numerous outstanding scenic areas of our state. Many of these trails are supported by snowmobiler registration dollars.

This handbook is intended as a comprehensive, easy-to-use reference guide for people who snowmobile here in New York. It contains practical information for all snowmobilers whether they are experienced or novice, resident or visitor, and adult or youthful operators. The handy check lists included can be copied for use on many occasions.

As you enjoy operating your snowmobile in the great outdoors, please remember to ride safely, to respect the rights of others, and to protect and care for the natural environment around you. If you do, you and everyone else will be able to enjoy the pleasures of snowmobiling for many years to come.

Happy trails!

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# Legal Requirements To Operate A Snowmobile In New York State

## Operator Requirements

Anyone who is at least eighteen years old may operate a snowmobile in New York State without any other qualification except as defined by state and local laws regulating that operation. However, it is recommended that all operators complete a recognized snowmobile operation course of instruction. See the section on Rider Training for more information on the New York State Snowmobile Safety Education Program.

Youths ages 10 through 17 years old may operate a snowmobile without adult or other supervision if they have completed a snowmobile safety training course recognized by the State of New York. The Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation will issue a snowmobile safety certificate to youths who successfully complete this course. Youths who do not hold this certificate are subject to the same restrictions as children under the age of 10 years. See the section on Rider Training for more information on the New York State Snowmobile Safety Education Program.

Children under 10 years old may operate a snowmobile only on lands owned or leased by their parent or guardian, except when accompanied by a person 18 years or older, or by a person over 14 years old who holds a snowmobile safety certificate.

However, a child under 10 years old or a youth who does not hold a snowmobile safety certificate may not operate a snowmobile on or across a highway at any time.

## Registration

Any snowmobile operated in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), even if it is registered in another state or province, except under certain special circumstances. Registration is not required for snowmobiles operated exclusively on the owner's property, or for snowmobiles

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operated in approved competitive events, or for snowmobiles owned and operated by the United States government. Exemptions are also made for snowmobiles covered by a valid registration of a neighboring state or province and operated on a border trail that occasionally and sporadically crosses into New York State, and is specifically designated as a cross-border trail by the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

The registration is the proof of ownership and may be used to sell the machine.

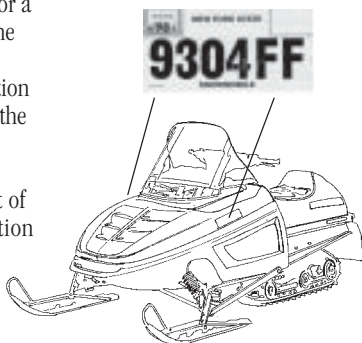
Registration is done at time of sale by the selling dealer. A snowmobile obtained in a private sale or from an out-of-state source may be registered by the new owner at any Motor Vehicle office or by a dealer participating in the state's prepaid registration program.

Registration numbers are permanently assigned to a snowmobile when it is registered for the first time. These numbers stay with the machine from owner to owner until it is destroyed or permanently removed from the state.

DMV-provided registration number decals must be displayed on both sides of the cowling of the snowmobile at all times. The cowling is defined as the forward portion of the snowmobile surrounding the engine and clutch assembly. Snowmobile manufacturers provide specific space on snowmobile hoods for this purpose. Refer to your owner's manual for more information. Any display position behind the snowmobile cowling (tunnel or seat area) or on the windshield is illegal and could result in an expensive citation for violation of the registration law.

Snowmobiles first registered prior to August 1995 must display owner-provided registration numbers on both sides of the cowling. They must be of block type, at least three inches tall, and in a contrasting and reflectorized color. A hyphen or a space must appear between the last number and the letters.

Yearly registration validation stickers must be displayed in the upper left hand corner of the DMV-provided registration number decals, or to the left of the owner-provided registration numbers.



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Snowmobiles already registered in another state or province must be registered at a Motor Vehicle office or a snowmobile dealer who participates in the state's prepaid registration program. Snowmobiles legally registered in another state or province are NOT required to display the New York State registration number decals, only the yearly validation stickers. The stickers must be displayed next to the home state or province registration sticker or number.

### **Snowmobile Registration Materials Check List**

- A completed Snowmobile Registration Application form MV-82SN
- Proof of ownership as described below
- Proof of payment of sales tax (if required) OR form DTF -802 as described below OR the tax may be paid at the motor vehicle office
- Proof of your identity and date of birth (for example, a driver's license)
- A check for the correct fee payable to the "Commissioner of Motor Vehicles"

*The requirements for proof of ownership and sales tax clearance for a snowmobile registration are:*

#### **DEALER SALE:**

If the snowmobile was purchased NEW from a DEALER in New York State or elsewhere, provide:

1. A Manufacturer's Certificate or Statement of Origin (MCO/MSO)\* and
2. A Bill of Sale showing seller's and buyer's name and address, date of sale, year, make, model, Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), engine displacement or power (cc/hp), purchase price, dealer facility number (if a NY dealer), dealer tax identification number, and authorized signature. If the Bill of Sale shows that the dealer collected sales tax, it serves as proof of sales tax payment. Only an original or carbon copy of the Bill of Sale is acceptable - a photocopy is NOT acceptable.

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If the snowmobile was purchased USED from a DEALER and was PREVIOUSLY REGISTERED in New York or elsewhere, provide:

1. The registration/transfer stub signed by the owner, or similar proof of ownership issued by another jurisdiction\*, and
2. A Bill of Sale as described above.

If the snowmobile was purchased USED from a DEALER and was NEVER REGISTERED anywhere, provide:

1. The MCO/MSO signed over to the dealer and
2. A Bill of Sale as described above.

#### PRIVATE OWNER SALE:

If the snowmobile was purchased USED from a PRIVATE OWNER and was PREVIOUSLY REGISTERED in New York or elsewhere, provide:

1. The registration/transfer stub signed by the owner, or a similar proof of ownership from the jurisdiction of origin\*, and
2. A form DTF-802 (Statement of Transaction - Sale or Gift of Motor Vehicle, All Terrain Vehicle, Vessel, or Snowmobile) signed by the buyer. If the snowmobile is 7 years old or newer, the back of the DTF802 MUST be signed by the seller. If it is older than 7 years, DTF-802 or a Bill of Sale must be submitted. The Bill of Sale must include the buyer's name and address, date of sale, year, make, model, model number, color, Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), engine displacement or power (cc/hp), and purchase price. You will pay the sales tax at the Motor Vehicle office.

If the snowmobile was purchased from a PRIVATE OWNER and was NEVER REGISTERED anywhere, provide:

1. The MCO/MSO signed over to the new owner\*, and
2. The original owner's Bill of Sale and sales tax receipts from all subsequent transfers between individuals, and
3. A form DTF-802 (Statement of Transaction - Sale or Gift of Motor Vehicle, All Terrain Vehicle, Vessel, or Snowmobile) signed by the buyer. If the snowmobile is 7 years old or newer, the back of the DTF802 MUST be signed by the seller. If it is older than 7 years, a DTF-802 or a Bill of Sale must be submitted. The Bill of Sale must include the buyer's name and address, date of sale, the year, make, model, model number, color, Vehicle Identification

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Number (VIN), engine displacement or power (cc/hp), and purchase price. You will pay the sales tax at the Motor Vehicle office.

*\* Owners of snowmobiles that are registered outside of New York State who are registering for the first time in New York State must provide a photocopy of the same ownership documents required in their home state (MCO/MSO, registration/transfer stub, and/or Bill of Sale/invoice). No sales tax is due on snowmobiles already registered in another jurisdiction.*

To transfer a registration from another state, to transfer due to death of the owner, or if the previous proofs of ownership are not available, contact the nearest Department of Motor Vehicles Office.

## **Trail Fund**

Most of the New York State snowmobile registration fee is a surcharge that is placed in the NYS Snowmobile Trail Development and Maintenance Fund. This dedicated fund is used to return monies to local areas as grants-in-aid for snowmobile trail maintenance and law enforcement programs. Some of it is also used for snowmobile information and safety programs, and for snowmobile trails on state lands. Over 10,000 miles of snowmobile trails in New York State are now partially supported by this fund.

For more information on the Trail Fund, contact the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. See the Information Resources Section for contact details.

## **Insurance**

All snowmobiles operated on any part of a roadway or shoulder of a highway in New York State must be covered by minimum liability insurance.

New York State Parks law requires snowmobilers to carry liability coverage in the minimum amount of \$10,000 for an accident involving one person, \$20,000 for an accident involving two or more persons, and \$5,000 for property damage from one accident.

Proof of insurance must be carried by the snowmobiler and must be displayed on request of any magistrate, law enforcement officer, or anyone who has suffered personal injury or property damage as a result of the snowmobiler's actions.

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## Trail Permits

Unlike some other states and provinces, neither the State of New York nor the state user association requires a paid trail permit (or trail pass) in addition to NYS registration for use of snowmobile trails.

However, some local areas in New York State may require a paid trail permit for the use of certain trails. These trails do not receive support from the NYS Snowmobile Trail Development and Maintenance Fund.

Certain New York State Parks do require a no-charge trail permit for snowmobiling in the Park after dark or for special events. Some Parks may change a vehicle use fee at entrances as well. Check with each individual park on these requirements.

## Documents Required

Snowmobilers must carry registration and proof of insurance documents on their person at all times while snowmobiling. These documents must be produced at the request of any law enforcement officer or magistrate. Insurance documentation must be produced at the request of anyone who is injured or suffers property damage as a result of operation of a snowmobile.

Holders of snowmobile safety certificates must carry the certificate when they are snowmobiling.

These documents should always be carried on your person and never left in the snowmobile.

## Equipment Required

Anyone operating or riding on a snowmobile in New York State must wear an approved safety helmet except when operating on property owned by the operator or passenger.

Any snowmobile operated in New York State must meet minimum equipment requirements:

1. Working muffler. The sound produced by a snowmobile manufactured after June 1, 1980 must not exceed 73 decibels on the A scale [dB(A)].
2. Head light. The white or amber head light must be sufficient to reveal persons and vehicles at a distance of at least one hundred feet in normal atmospheric conditions.
3. Tail light. The red tail light must create a red light that is plainly visible for a distance of at least five hundred feet to the rear during darkness under normal atmospheric conditions.

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4. Reflector material. A minimum of sixteen square inches of reflective material must be mounted on each side of the cowling.

New snowmobiles offered for sale in this state normally provide all of this equipment. The New York State registration sticker also meets the reflectorized material requirement.

## **Operational Restrictions**

Snowmobiles may not be operated in any unsafe or reckless manner, or in any way that harasses other people or wildlife.

It is UNLAWFUL to operate a snowmobile:

1. at a speed greater than reasonable or prudent under the surrounding conditions
2. in any careless, reckless, or negligent manner
3. while the operator is intoxicated
4. without the required lights
5. on the tracks of an operating railroad
6. in any tree nursery or planting in a manner that damages growing stock
7. on private property without the consent of the owner
8. towing a sleigh or toboggan except with a rigid tow bar
9. in any way that the operator fails to yield to an emergency vehicle approaching from any direction
10. in any way that fails to comply with a lawful order from a police officer
11. on a frozen body of water within one hundred feet of a skater, ice fisherman, ice fishing house, or other person not on a snowmobile except at the minimum speed required to maintain forward motion
12. within one hundred feet of a dwelling between 12 midnight and 6 AM at a speed greater than the minimum speed required to maintain forward motion

## **Operation On Highways**

Operation of snowmobiles on highways depends on the classification of the highway and the prevailing conditions.

1. Snowmobiles MAY NOT be operated on the New York State Thruway, other interstate highways, or other limited access highways. The only exception to this law is during a snow

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emergency as declared by the Thruway authority or other agency having authority over the highway in question.

2. Snowmobiles MAY be operated on the shoulders and inside banks of highways, other than limited access highways, PROVIDED that the highways have been designated AND posted for snowmobile use by the governing authority (State of New York for state highways, county government for county highways, town government for town roads, etc.).

Snowmobiles may also be operated on designated highways for a distance not to exceed 500 yards to gain access to operational areas or trails adjacent to the highway.

Again, an exception to this law may occur during a snow emergency as declared by the agency having authority over the highway in question.

3. Snowmobiles MAY be operated on the OUTSIDE banks of highways other than limited access highways.
4. Snowmobiles MAY be operated on highways, other than limited access highways, when necessary to cross a bridge or culvert.
5. Snowmobiles MAY be operated on county, town, city, or village highways which are customarily unplowed and unused by wheeled vehicles during the winter months. These roads must be designated as such by the governing authority.
6. Snowmobile operation on any highway MUST be in single file on the right hand side of the road, except to overtake and pass another snowmobile.
7. Snowmobiles MAY NOT pull a person on skis or in a sleigh, sled, or toboggan on or across any roadway.
8. Snowmobiles MAY make a direct crossing of any highway other than limited access highways at any time of day provided that:
  - a.) the crossing is made at approximately a ninety degree angle, and at a place where no obstruction prevents a quick and safe crossing
  - b.) the snowmobile is brought to a complete stop before crossing the highway
  - c.) the snowmobile operator yields the right of way to all oncoming highway traffic



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## Special Events *(Including Organized Competition)*

Sponsors of special snowmobile events, such as festivals and organized racing competitions, must obtain a Special Event permit from the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Applications must be submitted in writing at least 15 days in advance of the event. See the Information Resources section for contact details.

Snowmobiles operated at approved special events are exempt from registration requirements and from provisions concerning lights and mufflers.

## Accidents and Accident Reporting

Despite the best precautions, accidents do occur. In case of an accident involving a snowmobile, the operator must stop immediately.

The operator is legally obligated to render assistance, to the best of his or her ability, to other persons affected by the accident. The operator is also legally obligated to show his or her certificate of registration, and youth operator's certificate (if required), and to identify himself or herself by name, address, and snowmobile identification number IN WRITING to any person who is injured or suffers property damage. If the person suffering the injury or property damage cannot be located at the accident site, the snowmobile operator is legally obligated to file an accident report with the nearest police agency within 24 hours.

**Any snowmobile accident resulting in a personal injury, or in property damage exceeding \$100, must be reported to the nearest law enforcement agency or magistrate, with a copy sent to OPRHP. The operator of any snowmobile involved in a reportable accident must file a complete written report within 7 days of the accident.**

Snowmobile accident report forms are provided by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and are available at any police station or from the Office of Parks. See the Information Resources Section for contact details.

## Trailers and Trailer Registration

Trailers manufactured specifically for snowmobiling are usually the best choices. Your tow vehicle should be big enough and have enough power to handle the trailer easily or you will put yourself and your snowmobiles in a very dangerous situation.

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All trailers operated on New York State's public highways must be registered, inspected, and display a license plate with an annual validation sticker. The vehicle used to tow the trailer must be insured. You must provide the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles with all required items to receive a valid registration and license plate for your trailer:

### **Trailer Registration Materials Check List**

- A completed Application for Vehicle Registration form MV-82
- Proof of ownership - a complete Bill of Sale AND one of the following: an MCO/MSO for a new trailer, OR a signed Title document for a 1973 or newer used trailer weighing more than 1,000 pounds unloaded, OR a signed transferable registration for a used trailer not requiring a Title
- Proof of payment of sales tax OR tax may be paid at the motor vehicle office
- Proof of your identity and date of birth
- A check for the correct fee payable to the "Commissioner of Motor Vehicles"

Custom-built trailers must meet all equipment requirements of section 375 of the Vehicle and Traffic Law, and must be assigned a vehicle identification number by the Department of Motor Vehicles. Contact your local DMV office for more information on this. Contact your county's weights and measures office for local weighing stations.

## **Law Enforcement**

All law enforcement officers of the state, including Sheriffs, local and State Police, State Park Police, Environmental Conservation Officers, and Forest Rangers are authorized to enforce snowmobile laws and regulations.

Law enforcement agencies actively patrol New York State snowmobile trails. It is increasingly common to find a road block or a trail block manned by officers checking compliance with legal requirements, frequently at the request of the organized snowmobile user community.

State law enforcement aid is available to municipalities for law enforcement programs. For more information, contact the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. See the Information Resources Section for contact details.

## Sources of Helpful Information

### Publications

There are numerous national snowmobile publications, and they are a good source of general information on the sport. Many are available through subscription and on larger news stands from late summer through early spring. Others are available through special interest organizations such as racing associations, brand-owner clubs, and old snowmobile collectors' clubs.

Publications specific to snowmobiling in New York State are listed in the Information Resources Section.

Many local snowmobile clubs publish very informative newsletters for their members.

### Snowmobile Clubs

Snowmobile clubs are usually excellent sources of information, and a great way to connect with other snowmobilers.

Membership often includes newsletters, product information, trail maps, and social opportunities.

Most clubs are organized on a local geographic basis and are active for several months of the year. Most have low annual dues (typically \$10 to \$25 per family per season), and welcome new members. Clubs generally expect members to participate in some of their events, which include meetings, trail development and maintenance, and charitable and public service activities.

There are over 200 local snowmobile clubs in New York State, with at least one club in virtually every county outside of New York City. Contact the New York State Snowmobile Association (NYSSA) or *New York Snowmobiler* newspaper to locate the snowmobile club in your home area. See the Information Resources Section for contact details.

The New York State Snowmobile Association (NYSSA) is a representative organization advocating the interests of snowmobile clubs located all across the state. NYSSA actively works to educate the public and government of snowmobile needs and serves as a source of

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information about snowmobiling. The NYSSA web site can be found at <http://www.nyssnowassoc.org>.

## Trail Maps

A current trail map will help keep riders on the approved trails and legal roads, allowing avoidance of an expensive citation or worse. But remember that any map can be made obsolete by decisions made after the map was printed. Double check with local sources for the latest updates before riding in any area.

Snowmobile clubs are often the best sources of trail maps. Consult the New York State Snowmobile Association or *On The Trail* newspaper to locate clubs in the areas you wish to ride. See the Information Resources Section for contact details.

Trail maps are also often available at a small charge from local merchants. In some areas, trail maps are provided free of charge by tourism agencies.

Trail maps are also available at no charge for many public lands. Contact your local State Park, State Parks Region Office, or DEC Region Office to obtain them. Refer to the Information Resources Section for contact information.

A New York State Snowmobile Corridor Trail map is available from the Office of Parks in Albany. This map is not a guide for riding. But it does show how snowmobile trails are being organized into Corridor Trails that cross county lines to allow long range riding. It also lists some sources of local maps.

## Weather Forecasts

Staying aware of the winter weather allows more enjoyable snowmobiling and avoidance of being caught on the trail or on the road in potentially life-threatening conditions. Make it a habit to check the weather forecast before setting out for a road trip or a day of riding.

Local weather forecast information is available from radio and television stations, newspapers, and even from phone directories in some cities. However, this information may not cover the area where you plan to ride.

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The Weather Channel, available on many cable television systems, is an excellent source for a broad-based perspective on the weather. It shows national and regional trends as well as local forecasts.

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) maintains weather forecasting bureaus with their own radio stations across the country. These stations broadcast frequent updates of current conditions and complete regional weather forecasts, usually on a twenty-four-hour-a-day basis. NOAA weather broadcasts can be heard on radios that receive the 162 megahertz broadcast band. Small, easy-to-use weather radios are available from many sources including specialty electronics retailers and mail-order catalogs. Retail prices start under \$15.

NOAA weather radio stations are found in these locations in and near New York State on these frequencies:

Albany	162.550 MHz	Mt. Greylock, MA	162.525 MHz
Binghamton	162.475 MHz	New York City	162.550 MHz
Buffalo	162.550 MHz	Riverhead	162.475 MHz
Burlington, VT	162.400 MHz	Rochester	162.400 MHz
Elmira	162.400 MHz	Stamford	162.400 MHz
Erie, PA	162.400 MHz	Syracuse	162.550 MHz
Kingston	162.475 MHz	Towanda, PA	162.550 MHz
Little Valley	162.525 MHz	Watertown	162.475 MHz
		Wellsboro, PA	162.475 MHz

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## Get Ready To Ride

### Rider Training

New York State is a leader in snowmobile education, and offers operator training for snowmobilers 10 years old and up. Courses are taught by experienced snowmobilers who volunteer their time to make the sport safer and more enjoyable for everyone.

Snowmobilers under the age of 18 are strongly encouraged to complete the NYS Snowmobile Safety Education Course. This course covers the fundamentals of safe snowmobiling. Successful completion of this course results in the award of an NYS snowmobile safety certificate. This certificate grants the holder the privilege of operating a snowmobile without adult supervision.

Courses are usually sponsored by snowmobile clubs, agricultural extension offices, law enforcement agencies, or similar groups, and are available in fall and early winter. Contact a local snowmobile club or law enforcement agency to inquire about local course availability. If there are no courses in your area, contact OPRHP in Albany for more information. See the Information Resources section for assistance.

### Pre-Season Preparation and Post-Season Storage

Proper maintenance of your snowmobile, particularly pre-season preparation and summer storage preparation, helps insure many miles of trouble-free riding during the winter. These handy comprehensive checklists will help riders keep their snowmobiles in the best possible operating condition. Consult the owner's manual for the manufacturer's recommendations and specifications which differ from model to model.

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## Pre-Season Preparation Check List

- Check the spring repairs list for necessary actions and take care of any problems noted
- Chassis check - Inspect track, track tension & alignment, track studs, skid frame & mounting bolts, hyfax, idler wheels & wheel bearings, shocks & springs, steering system, skis & ski alignment, ski runners, tighten ski bolts, check all other fasteners, and repair as needed
- Engine check - Inspect throttle cables, choke cables, fuel filter, fuel line fittings, exhaust system springs, fan belt or coolant level, spark plug wires & caps, starter rope & recoil action, remove exhaust block rags, and service or repair as needed
- Check water level, charge up, and install battery
- Check drive chain tension and chain case oil level - add recommended oil if needed
- Grease all fittings - don't forget the speedometer drive fitting under the driven clutch
- Clean faces of both clutches and install/replace drive belt - follow manufacturer's recommendations on clutch lubrication & replace belt if 1/8-inch narrower than specification
- Add some fresh gas and run sled on jack stand to burn out storage oil in engine
- Check all lights and kill switch operation
- Check brakes for proper operation
- Install new properly gapped spark plugs
- Top off oil tank
- Add owner's manual, tool kit, spare parts, and tow rope
- Apply new registration validation stickers
- Wash and wax snowmobile thoroughly
- Apply vinyl protectant to seat cover and soft plastics

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## Summer Storage Check List

- Wash and clean-up the snowmobile
- Inspect thoroughly and make a written list of any problems for repair in the fall
- Grease all fittings thoroughly
- Touch up painted surfaces (remove rust before painting)
- Apply vinyl protectant to seat cover and soft plastics
- Fog lower end of engine with aerosol oil squirted into carbs
- Pour 2 oz. of oil into each cylinder, then pull engine over slowly to coat cylinder walls
- Drain gas from tank or treat with fuel stabilizer
- Drain gas from carburetors (not required on fuel injected machines)
- Remove drive belt and spare - store flat in a cool, dry place
- Remove battery, check water level, and charge up
- Remove luggage, tools, and spare parts to store separately
- Block off exhaust pipe and other entrance passages with rags to keep rodents out
- Raise the back of the snowmobile up on a stand or block to get track off the floor
- Cover the machine with a breathable covering

## **Ride Planning**

Pre-ride planning is the foundation of safe and enjoyable snowmobiling. Planning a ride and organizing the equipment ahead of time decreases the chances of problems on the trail.

Think about a ride plan in terms of starting and ending time, the number of trail miles to be covered, places to obtain gas and food, and possible emergency actions. Remember, it gets cold quickly when night falls, and many businesses close in the evening.

Riders should always check the weather for the area they plan to ride. This is particularly important when temperatures hover near freezing, and around the Great Lakes where impressive totals of lake effect snow can pile up very quickly.

Snowmobilers should always ride in groups because there is safety in numbers. This is another very good reason for belonging to a snowmobile club.



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Finally, always tell a responsible person where the group is going and the expected return time. That way, if the group is overdue, action can be taken to provide assistance.

### Pre-Ride Check List

- Snowmobile checked over and serviced, with fuel & fluids topped up
- Riding partner(s) obtained
- Weather checked
- Ride route planned
- Maps, compass, and other navigation equipment packed
- Tell someone responsible about destination and return time

## Personal Preparation

Snowmobiling requires physical and mental preparation. Good general physical condition allows riders to deal with the exertion and muscular demands that are peculiar to snowmobiling.

Long all-day trips or multiple day touring require physical stamina beyond that required for shorter rides. Getting plenty of sleep, and eating hearty and nourishing meals before and during a ride is good preparation to insure the necessary stamina. Drink plenty of water. Body fluids are diminished by sweating in even the coldest weather.

Snowmobilers should ride only when physically fit, well rested, and sober. Make it a personal point not to ride when ill, over-tired or over-excited. Mental fatigue or inattention can lead to poor judgment and unpleasant consequences. Never ride under the influence of medications that may create drowsiness or nervousness. And never, ever, ever ride under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.



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Personalizing a snowmobile for the operator's size, weight, and riding style, and making safety modifications to the machine are discussed in the NYS Snowmobile Safety Education Course. We suggest that all snowmobilers take the course and use the information to better prepare themselves and their machines for enjoyable and safe riding.

## **Apparel, Helmets, and Eye Protection**

### ***Snowmobile Apparel***

Lack of attention to snowmobile clothing and equipment is an invitation to disaster. Clothing and equipment that are specifically engineered for snowmobiling will usually provide better performance than items that are not designed for the rigors of the sport.

Better quality snowmobile suits often use waterproof/windproof materials that increase comfort in windy, cold, and wet conditions. Some snowmobile suits also have additional safety features like reflective striping or flotation foam.

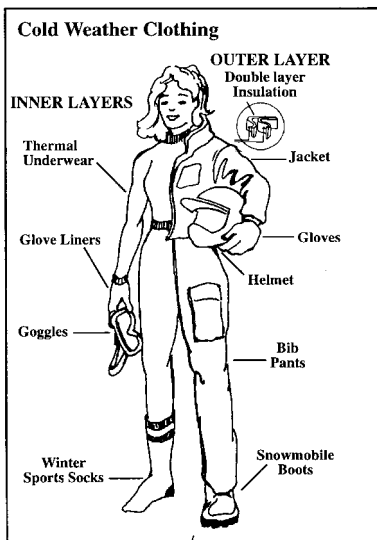
Layering is the best way to dress because it is warmer and allows adjustment for changing conditions. Since each individual is different, and since temperature, humidity, wind chill, and amount of protection from your snowmobile's windshield can vary greatly, there is no one correct combination of clothing for all snowmobiling.

As a rule, a rider should start with a foundation layer of underwear and socks that will wick perspiration moisture away from the skin. Inner garments made from materials like polypropylene or proprietary moisture management fabrics will keep a person drier and more comfortable. Add a warm and non-restrictive layer of outer clothing, and a sweater or sweatshirt as needed. Be careful not to overdress in warmer weather, as that can often lead to being sweaty and uncomfortable, which could lead to more serious problems like hypothermia. Trial and error is the only way to find out what any specific individual needs to keep warm in any given set of conditions, but most people don't need to drag out the "long johns" until the temperature dips into single digits.

<b>U.S. ARMY WIND CHILL INDEX</b>							
<i>(Equivalent Temperature in cooling power on exposed flesh under calm conditions)</i>							
TEMP.	30	20	10	0	-10	-20	-30
WIND MPH							
10	16	2	-9	-22	-31	-45	-58
15	11	-6	-18	-33	-45	-60	-70
20	3	-9	-24	-40	-52	-68	-81
25	0	-15	-29	-45	-58	-75	-89
30	-2	-18	-33	-49	-63	-78	-94
35	-4	-20	-35	-52	-67	-83	-98
40	-4	-22	-36	-54	-69	-87	-101

*(Wind speeds greater than 40 mph have little additional chilling effect)*

Boots and gloves designed for snowmobiling are generally warmer and longer lasting than general purpose winter wear. Since feet sweat more than any other part of the body, most people are more comfortable in socks that wick moisture away from the skin. Consider adding sock and glove liners to the snowmobile outfit for very cold weather. Wear a neckie, a dickie, or a turtleneck sweater for neck warmth. Never wear a scarf because a loose end could get caught in moving parts and strangle the wearer. A helmet liner, or balaclava, will provide some face and neck warmth as well as permit your helmet to slide on more easily. There are also various styles of face masks to provide additional protection for very cold weather.



## Snowmobile Helmets

New York State law now requires all snowmobile drivers and passengers to wear a Snell or DOT approved safety helmet except when operating on private property owned by the driver or passenger.

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Helmets provide warmth, impact protection, and a platform for eye protection. A helmet must be properly fitted and buckled up to provide protection. It should be snug but not uncomfortably tight.

Snowmobile helmets are different than motorcycle helmets because they must resist fogging the face shield which can greatly impair rider vision. Many snowmobile helmets have vents that can be adjusted to regulate air flow for fogging resistance. Most also have double lens face shields because they resist fogging better than the single lens types found on motorcycle helmets.

Most importantly, buckle up. If your helmet comes off your head, it won't protect you when you need it most. More useful information about helmets, including an explanation of helmet performance ratings, is covered in the NYS Snowmobile Safety Education Course.

## **Eye Protection**

Eyes must be protected from snow and ice crystals in the air, from snow or objects kicked up by the snowmobile in front, from overhanging branches that can whip the face, and from the glare of winter sunlight, even on overcast days.

Helmet-mounted flip shields are the most popular type of eye protection, partly because they provide the most warmth. Some riders prefer goggles, and some goggles are available with prescription lenses installed.

During the day, reflection of sun rays off the snow can cause visual discomfort. Sunglasses reduce light overload (glare), improve focus by blocking blue light, and some can enhance contrast with their tint. Most importantly, they protect the eyes from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays that can rob sight over time. Sunglass construction features and correct tint selection for various riding conditions is covered in the NYS Snowmobile Safety Education Course.

Tinted lenses of any kind should never be worn after dark, as any tint will tend to reduce the amount of light transmitted, making vision more difficult.

## **Personal Equipment**

Personal equipment takes up little space but could make a lot of difference in an emergency. These items should be carried where they can be reached quickly and easily.

Always carry a flashlight with good batteries. A ride may run late, and when it does, there will often be a need for a light for map reading or

emergency repairs. It is also smart to carry a general purpose utility tool like or a Swiss Army knife or a Leatherman® tool.

When riding on frozen bodies of water, a set of ice picks is a very worthwhile accessory. But it must be on the rider's person to be useful in case of immersion in icy water.

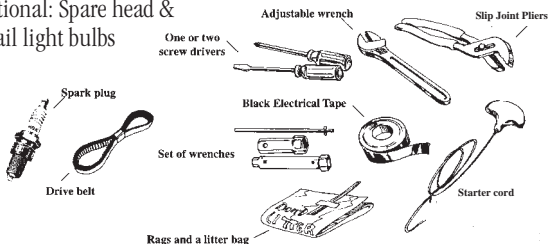
Perhaps the ultimate piece of personal equipment is a cellular telephone. Just remember that cellular service is not available everywhere.

## Emergency Equipment

Every snowmobile should be equipped with some basic items for emergency use. These items can be organized into small containers or pouches and stored under the hood, in the rear storage compartment, or in luggage attached to the snowmobile. These items could make the difference in getting home with relatively little inconvenience or facing what might be a life-threatening situation.

### Repair/Recovery Kit Check List

- Owner's manual
- Tool kit, with a few added items like 6-inch locking pliers, an adjustable wrench, wire, electrical tape, duct tape, and a single-edged razor blade
- Spare spark plugs pre-gapped to your snowmobile's specifications
- Spare drive belt
- Spare ski runners with new nuts and a wrench to fit them
- Rags or paper towels and a litter bag
- Siphon hose
- Tow rope
- Optional: Spare fuel filter
- Optional: Spare head & tail light bulbs



## Survival Kit Check List

- First Aid kit - assorted band aids, antiseptic, head ache & upset stomach relief
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Chemical heating pack(s)
- Candy bars, granola, dried fruit, beef jerky or other concentrated high-energy food
- Plastic whistle
- Paper and pencil
- Space blanket
- Optional: Signal flares and/or a mirror

First aid kit



Flash light



Candy Bars



Waterproof matches

Rope

Knife



Compass and Map

Survival equipment can get much more involved for serious long distance touring or riding very remote areas. Consider adding other items as needed including canned heat or other fire starters, a cup to heat water in, bouillon cubes and/or instant coffee packets, additional food items, candles, a large sheet of plastic, safety pins, a utility knife, a small saw or hatchet, snow shoes, an extra flashlight or spare batteries, a knit hat, a pair of work gloves, and even a cellular telephone.

## **Trailing**

Make sure that the tow vehicle is up to the task, with proper equipment including a heavy duty flasher. The ball size of the tow vehicle must match the coupler on the trailer.

The trailer must be properly registered and inspected, and have a current license plate and validation sticker in place.

Since snowmobiles are very heavy, a tongue jack (or caster) can save painful back strain when attaching or unhooking a loaded trailer.

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Always make sure that the trailer is securely attached to the tow vehicle. Check to see that the coupler is locked down over the ball by pulling upwards on the tongue after closing the lever. Cross the safety chains when attaching them to the tow vehicle. Check the trailer brakes (if the trailer has them) to make sure that they work, and check all the lights before leaving.

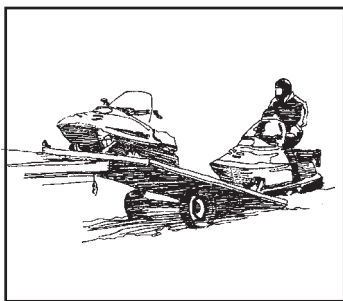
It is also very wise to carry a spare tire and wheel assembly, and a jack and lug wrench to change it with.

## Safe loading and unloading practices

The safest way to load snowmobiles onto a trailer is to walk them up onto the trailer deck. A rubber mat attached to the deck will provide better traction for loading and unloading. Ride the snowmobile to the edge of the deck or loading ramp. Then get off, and walking slowly along side of the sled, squeeze the throttle just enough to move the machine onto the trailer. Keep the other hand ready to use the brake while doing this. Be very careful not to overshoot. When the snowmobile has reached the correct point, kill the engine, set the parking brake, and secure the snowmobile to the trailer before loading the next one. Release the parking brake if it is hydraulic.

Approximately 60 percent of the weight of the snowmobiles must be positioned ahead of the trailer axle. Otherwise, the trailer will tend to wander badly, making it difficult and unsafe to tow. In an extreme situation, the trailer will fish-tail violently with the potential to break loose from the tow vehicle or cause the driver to lose control of the rig.

Never transport a snowmobile backwards on a trailer. This upsets the trailer loading causing fish-tailing. On an open trailer, wind pressure can rip the windshield off the backwards snowmobile.



*Loading sled on trailer*

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When unloading, you may be able to start the machine and walk it forward off the trailer deck, or you may have to pull it off backwards onto the ground.

## **Protecting snowmobiles for transport**

When trailering a snowmobile, the snow machine should be secured to the trailer at both ends. Always install the ski tie-downs properly, and use a web strap to tension the back end of the sled to keep it from bouncing around.

On an open trailer, cover the snowmobile for transport. Secure the cover completely so it won't flap in the breeze and destroy itself. Special effort is required to protect the snowmobile's front suspension from road grit and debris which will literally sand-blast it to the point of severe damage or even failure. There are many types of protection, ranging from enclosed trailers to front shields to special fabric gaiters and covers that wrap around the suspensions or enclose the entire front of the snowmobile.

## **Trailer maintenance**

Trailers need maintenance and are required to be inspected at state authorized inspection stations. Comprehensive pre-season preparation, a monthly check of key systems, and a quick once-over before each trip will pretty well eliminate troublesome and potentially very expensive problems on the road.

Some items, like lights, brakes, and the license plate should be checked before each use. Electrical connectors need frequent cleaning, and trailer dealers sell inexpensive small brushes designed specifically for this job.

Tires dry rot as they age, and any tire showing side-wall or tread cracks should be replaced immediately. The tire/rim assembly will lose air pressure even while sitting unused. Air pressure in a tire decreases about 1 pound for every 10 degree (F) drop of ambient air temperature. Inflation pressures are specified for 70 degree weather. This means that a tire which was inflated to the manufacturer's specification on a warm day in October will be significantly under inflated on a sub-zero February morning. Since under-inflation is a leading cause of tire failure, inflation pressures should be checked frequently with a gauge in the winter. But never inflate a tire beyond the maximum pressure shown on the tire side wall. And don't forget to maintain your spare tire.



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## **Trailer Maintenance Check List**

- Frame check: frame, decking, tie-down points, axle, springs, loading ramp
- Wheel check: repack wheel bearings annually, brakes, tighten lug nuts, tires (condition, inflation pressure)
- Electrical check: all lights, clean connectors, electric brake, battery condition
- Tongue check: tongue & pivot, hold-down pin, coupler, safety chains, tongue jack
- License check: plate bracket, license plate, validation sticker
- Spare check: wheel and tire (proper inflation), jack and lug wrench

## **Trailer theft prevention**

A trailer loaded with snowmobiles is an inviting target for thieves to simply tow away, so lock up the trailer. The best locks prevent insertion of a ball in the coupler.

Another strategy is to use a trailer tire boot that prevents the trailer from rolling. Just make sure that the spare tire is not accessible when using this type of security device.

It's also a good idea to lock the trailer onto your tow vehicle when unattended. With a receiver-style hitch, lock the receiver, too. But remove the lock when beginning to tow. In the event of an accident, quick removal of the trailer could be critical.

## While You Are On The Trail

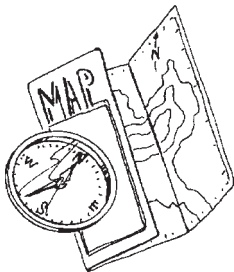
### Navigation

Navigation on the trail is an easy-to-learn skill, with several tools readily available. Like any other skill, it is enhanced by regular practice.

A common method of learning a particular trail or area is by following a friend or acquaintance who knows the territory. This usually requires some repetition. The key is noting landmarks that are not likely to change.

Trail maps are an important tool. Most of the Tug Hill region, much of the Adirondacks, some state parks including Allegany and Letchworth, and numerous DEC land management areas have snowmobile trail maps. Many clubs and county club federations publish maps that cover other areas of upstate New York. Snowmobile trail maps can vary considerably in quality and content. Sometimes changes are made after the map is printed, so always check with local sources for the latest information.

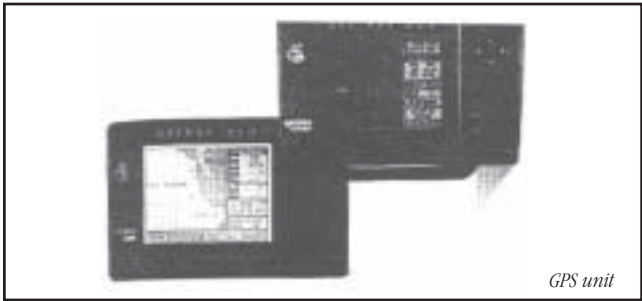
A compass is another important navigational tool. Snowmobilers should know how to use a compass and always carry one. Inexpensive



compasses are often included in trail and survival kits, as part of other tools, and even on snowmobile suit zipper fobs. Compasses are available at sporting goods stores and through hunting and hiking catalogs.

A much more high-tech approach to navigation is the Geographic Positioning System (GPS). This system uses satellites and a hand-held receiver to allow you to plot your progress over a trail. It retains

manually-entered check points so that users can retrace their route to the starting point. There are some inherent terrain and accuracy limitations, and GPS units cost a few hundred dollars. But they can make long-distance riding much easier. See local sporting goods stores and hunting catalogs for more information.



Celestial is a much overlooked method of navigation. It is totally free and very easy to use as long as the heavenly bodies necessary can be seen.

During the day, remember that the winter sun is in the southern part of the sky, and that it progresses from east to west as the day goes on. Simply referring to sun position and movement over time will allow a rider to keep track of the general direction of travel. The same thing can be done at night with close observation of the movements of the moon and stars. Libraries are the best source of detailed information on the night sky.

## Trail Markers and Signs

Trail markers and signs are designed to communicate information about the trail to the rider. In order to establish a degree of uniformity throughout North America, the International Association of Snowmobile Administrators (IASA) has established some basic sign standards for all snow belt states and provinces. Here are the common signs seen on New York snowmobile trails.



### **Snowmobile Permissive**

Indicates trails and use areas where snowmobiles are permitted to operate. Colors are green and black on white.



### **Snowmobile Restricted**

Indicates trails and areas where snowmobiles are NOT permitted to operate. Colors are red and black on white.



## Stop

Indicates a significant hazard trail or road intersection. Snowmobiles **MUST** come to a complete stop and yield to cross-traffic before proceeding. Color is red and white.



## Stop Ahead

Indicates that there is a stop sign 200 feet or more ahead. Probably the most important sign on a trail because it warns of a potentially hazardous situation ahead. Color is usually red and yellow.



## Yield

Indicates that snowmobiles should yield the right of way to other traffic at trail intersections, driveway crossings, or other similar situations. This sign does **NOT** require the snowmobile to come to a complete stop. Color is usually red and white, but may be black and yellow.



## Caution

Indicates a hazard of some sort in the trail 50 to 100 yards ahead. A sign on each side of the trail indicates an extreme hazard. Color is usually black and yellow.



## Bridge Ahead

Indicates a bridge in the trail 50 to 100 yards ahead. Color is usually black and yellow.



## Directional Arrow

Indicates a sudden or significant change of direction in the trail ahead. Used to mark dangerous turns. Color is usually black and yellow, but may also be orange and white.



## Trail Blaze or Blazer

Indicates the path of the trail. Reassures riders unfamiliar with the trail, and guides groomers after storms when they are re-opening the trail. Color is usually solid orange, or orange and white.



## Speed Limit

Indicates the maximum lawful or recommended speed in miles per hour for the trail section. Color is usually black and white.



## Corridor Trail number

Indicate that the rider is on an NYS Corridor Trail. They are high volume primary routes that provide access to significant use areas and concentrations of snowmobilers, and are supported with Trail Fund money. Color is brown and yellow.



## Secondary Trail number

Indicates that the rider is on an NYS Secondary Trail. They are medium volume routes that connect local attractions and concentrations of snowmobilers to Corridor Trails, and are supported with Trail Fund money. Color is brown and yellow.



## Facilities

Indicates the availability of gas, food, lodging, telephone, and repair services. Color is usually white on blue or dark brown.

Other trail signs with messages like “No Entry - Trail Closed”, “Skiers On Trail”, “Winter Wheat”, “New Seeding”, or “Snowmobile Trail - No Wheeled Vehicles” are designed to provide additional information for safe and responsible riding. Please heed the messages on these signs.

Finally, be aware that sign theft is a growing problem, **so *don't* assume that every hazard is properly identified with a sign.**

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## Group Riding

Group riding is by far the safest way to snowmobile. There is safety in numbers, as well as the companionship of others who enjoy the outdoors in winter. An organized group can cover ground easily, quickly, and safely without constant disruptions IF they make sure that everyone's snowmobile is in good operating condition and serviced properly, and IF they follow a few basic procedures.



### Leader and Tail Rider

The first step is to choose a leader and a tail rider. The leader should be an experienced rider who best knows the area and the trail. The tail rider should be the next most knowledgeable and experienced. The leader and tail rider count and agree on the number of people in the group. This number should be checked periodically to make sure everyone is accounted for.

The group leader handles navigation, designates the road crossing methods (see below) and sets the pace for the group. He or she signals all turns and oncoming traffic to riders behind.

The tail rider always rides last, insures that everyone is accounted for, assists anyone who has a problem, keeps count of any departed riders, and never lets anyone fall behind.

### Group Riders

The group should stay together at all times, in single file. Riders should change positions in the line only with great care. No one should ever pass the leader or fall behind the tail rider. If riders leave

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the group, they should tell the tail rider, who can advise the leader at the next stop.

Riders should leave adequate following distance. Three or four sled lengths is a good following distance for normal trail speeds. Increase following distance as trail speeds increase.

All riders must relay hand signals to the rider behind them. This is critical at turns. Make sure the rider following makes the correct turn. If the following rider is out of sight, stop and wait for the rest of the group to catch up.

## Trail signals

Standard trail signals should be used to communicate within the group and to oncoming riders. Every snowmobiler should be familiar with the following trail signals.



## Road crossings with a group

The safest way to cross a road with a group is to post a road guard. This person will dismount and take a position that permits sight down the road in both directions. The road guard's job is to signal the other riders when it is safe to cross and stop them when it is not.

Usually the rider immediately behind the leader becomes the road guard. When everyone has crossed, the road guard drops back into the group just ahead of the tail rider. The new second in line becomes the

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road guard at the next crossing. This method is called rotating road guards.

An alternative method of road crossings is called designated road guards. One or two of the most experienced riders are pre-designated as road guards for all the road crossings. When a crossing is completed, the leader must stop the column and allow the road guard(s) to pass the other riders and return to a position just behind the leader prior to the next road crossing. This method is best suited to riding with a group of beginners, children, or unusually slow riders.

## **Trail Etiquette**

You will be sharing the trail with other users no matter where you ride. They may be other snowmobilers, grooming equipment, other recreational users, road users if the trail is on a road, and, most definitely, wildlife. Most, if not all, will have just as much right to the trail as you do. How you approach their presence makes a great deal of difference in how safe the trail is for everyone.

Stay to the right of the trail at all times. Always assume someone is coming the other way, because sooner or later someone will. Staying to the right is very important in limited sight areas like on a hill or on a curve. But, always beware of vehicles that are parked on the right side of the trail or road. You don't want to hit them.

When you meet an oncoming group of snowmobilers, slow down and give them as much room as possible. If the trail is narrow, one group (usually the smaller one) should stop and yield the right of passage. A group going down a hill should usually yield to one going up.

You should also be aware of faster riders overtaking you from behind. Keep to the right to allow them to pass. If the trail is narrow, pull off and stop until they go by.

One of the most important aspects to sharing the trail with other snowmobilers involves how you position your snowmobile when you stop. Never block an intersection. Never stop side-by-side on a trail. Never stop in the middle of a trail.

Groomer encounters can be difficult. Groomers usually warn you of their presence with flashing yellow warning beacons. It is a violation for any snowmobiler to fail to yield the right of way to a groomer.

When encountering automobiles and trucks on shared-use roads, stay to the right, go slow, use the kneeling or standing position to be more easily seen, and always yield to the wheeled vehicles.



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Encountering other snow trail users is an opportunity to make friends for snowmobiling. You are an ambassador for our sport whether you like it or not. Other users will judge all snowmobilers by the way you act. A smile, a wave, and a friendly, positive attitude will go a long way in making them feel more comfortable about us. That helps our sport in every respect.

When you encounter skiers or snow walkers, slow down to the minimum to maintain forward motion. When you have gone well past them, slowly accelerate back up to cruising speed so as not to spray them with snow.

When you encounter dog sledgers or horseback riders, slow to a crawl, and yield the way. If there is the slightest doubt about the behavior of the animals, stop and shut off your motor. Let the people with the animals control the encounter. The animal owner may well wave you on by. If so, pass at a minimum speed. When you have gone well past them, slowly accelerate back up to cruising speed so as not to spray them with snow or scare the animals with sudden noise.

If you encounter ATVs or motorcycles, remember that they do not have the control and maneuverability of a snowmobile, and must be given lots of room.

If you are lucky enough to encounter wildlife on the trail, slow down or stop entirely so as not to alarm the animals. You'll get a better look that way. Never chase or harass wildlife.

No matter who you meet on the trail, ride sharefully. It protects your right to ride.



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## Riding To Protect The Trail

Good riders always ride to protect the trail. They know that it is the product of considerable effort by snowmobilers to obtain landowner permission, construct and mark the trail, and groom it to smooth the surface.

Protecting the trail begins with waiting until there is enough snow to ride. Three inches is the minimum. Once there is enough snow, protect the trail by staying on it. Don't litter or take souvenirs. Riding off the trail, littering, or taking souvenirs can anger landowners and result in loss of the trail.

Good riders also make it a point not to run modified exhaust systems that annoy neighbors, particularly in the late evening and early morning hours.

Riding to protect the trail also means riding to protect the trail

**PLEASE STAY  
ON TRAIL**

surface from damage. Moguls are formed by uneven compaction of snow by snowmobile traffic. Formation of moguls is encouraged and amplified by poor snowmobile operation habits.

Quick starts, hard cornering, gunning the throttle, and hard braking all dig up snow from the smooth trail surface and deposit it in small piles that become seeds of big moguls. Additional traffic hammers the surface, and the bumps grow as the softer spots turn into dips.

As the surface continues to deteriorate, the moguls get bigger as the dips between them are dug into holes. This makes restoring the trail surface with a groomer much more difficult. Once the trail has started to mogul up badly, it is almost impossible to obtain the uniform snow compaction needed to keep a smooth trail.

In extreme cases, the moguls get so big that inexperienced riders will tend to apply power at the bottom of the hole to get up over the next mound, thereby digging even more snow out of the hole and making the bad moguls even worse. Try to maintain constant throttle pressure at all times, even when riding through large moguls.

Hard cornering, with hard braking into the turn, followed by gunning the throttle to power slide through, will result in most of the snow being thrown to the outside of the trail. This produces a high berm on the outside of the turn and eventually bare ground at the bottom of the turn. At this point, the trail is much less safe when riders pass each other going in opposite directions.

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The best way to ride to protect the trail surface is to ride smoothly. Take off gently and slowly roll on the power to accelerate up to cruising speed. Maintain constant throttle pressure to cruise at a steady speed. Avoid drag race starts, hard cornering, gunning the throttle, and panic stops that damage the trail. And keep your speed reasonable.

Don't ride a trail that has just been groomed. A groomed trail needs several hours to set up or it will quickly deteriorate to the ungroomed condition. Take another route instead.

If everyone cooperates and rides to protect the trail, we will keep our trails open, have fewer off-trail trespass problems, and our trails will stay much smoother much longer.

## **Speed, Alcohol, and Drugs**

Snowmobiles have a better power-to-weight ratio than other land vehicles, and significantly higher performance capabilities than most drivers are accustomed to having. Excessive speed on the trails has become a serious problem, leading to accidents, injuries, landowner reluctance to allow trails, and outright trail closures. It is one of the two major factors in most of the fatal snowmobile accidents in New York State. Some snowmobilers like to go fast. But save it for organized competition under safe, controlled conditions. See the Information Resource Section for contact information on racing associations.

Do everyone a favor and keep your speed on the trail in check. Few trails in our state will safely permit sustained speeds above 40 miles per hour, and even that is too fast on bumpy, narrow, or unmaintained trails. Posted speed limits on roads apply to snowmobiles, too. You should never exceed the New York State statutory 55 miles per hour speed limit on roads posted for snowmobiling.

Don't let others pressure you into riding over your head. If something unexpected happens, the result could change your life forever.

Never, ride under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Alcohol distorts your perceptions, lowers your body temperature, slows your reaction time, and impairs your natural sense of caution. Operation under the influence of alcohol is the other of the two leading contributors to serious and fatal snowmobile accidents in our state.

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Don't drink and ride, and don't let other people talk you into drinking before or during a ride. You can always relax with your choice of a social beverage when the ride is over. For the safety of everyone, zero tolerance for alcohol is the only way to ride. Remember, you may never get a second chance to turn down that drink.

**EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 1, 2003**, The threshold for snowmobiling while intoxicated was lowered to .08 Blood Alcohol Content (BAC). New York State law provides tough penalties and sanctions for people convicted of snowmobiling while intoxicated or impaired by drugs. If someone is convicted of these charges, then their privilege to operate a snowmobile, as well as their snowmobile registration, could be suspended. Refusal to submit to a chemical test is grounds for immediate suspension of one's privileges to operate a snowmobile, pending a hearing.

## Emergencies

The best way to deal with a snowmobile emergency is to avoid it entirely. To do this, maintain your sled, plan your ride, dress appropriately, and ride responsibly. But if an unforeseen problem does occur, be ready to deal with it.

If lost, backtrack if possible. If backtracking is not possible, stay put and wait to be found. You did tell someone responsible where you were going, didn't you? In case of heavy weather or major mechanical malfunction, build a fire, erect shelter, remain with the sleds, and stay as warm and dry as possible until help arrives.

Medical problems can present the most pressing emergencies. Frostbite, hypothermia, and snow blindness are some of the most common problems.

Frostbite is the crystallization of fluids and soft tissues of the skin. The skin becomes flushed, then progresses to a white or grayish-yellow tone. Mental confusion sets in and judgment is impaired. In advanced cases, shock is present and death becomes a real possibility. Minor frostbite is treated by slowly warming the afflicted area. Severe frostbite requires a physician's care. Avoid frostbite by dressing properly and limiting exposure in very cold weather.

Hypothermia happens when the body loses heat faster than it can generate it. This can happen even in relatively warm weather. Symptoms

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start with uncontrolled shivering, loss of motor skills, sleepiness, and slurred speech. Treat victims by warming them. The best way to prevent hypothermia is to stay dry and avoid consumption of alcohol.

Snow blindness results from light overload. Symptoms are severe headache, dizziness, sensitivity to light, and seeing stars. Treat victims by getting them into a totally dark area if possible, or at least indoors, low light situation. Avoid snow blindness by using high quality sunglasses that absorb at least 90% of the harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays of the sun.

Frostbite, hypothermia, and snow blindness and how to treat them are covered in more detail in the NYS Snowmobile Safety Education Course.

Snowmobilers can be even better prepared to deal with a medical emergency if they have had Red Cross training in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Contact the local Red Cross chapter for more information.

Above all else, in any emergency, clear thinking is absolutely necessary. Stay calm. Stay together. Plan a course of action. Conserve resources and use them wisely. If you can get to help, get it as quickly as possible.

## **Theft Prevention**

Snowmobile theft is a growing problem, and many stolen sleds are never recovered. The harder it is for a thief, the more likely he will pass on your sled and try an easier target. But, keep your registration on your person and have your machine insured for theft just in case the worst does happen.

*Here are a few steps you can take to safeguard your snowmobile:*

- Park your sled where it will be hard to steal. Never leave it on top of a snow bank or any place else where it can be easily loaded into a truck. If possible, park it where you can see it.
- Never leave an ignition key in an unattended snowmobile, even for a few moments, even in your own yard.
- Lock up your sled if it is going to be left unattended. The best lock systems use cables or heavy chains to secure snowmobiles to each other or to objects like large trees or steel posts.

## Information Resources



### **New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation**

**Snowmobile trail, safety, and law enforcement programs  
administration, Special Events permits, and snowmobile  
accident reports:**

**NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation**

Planning Bureau-Snowmobile Unit

Agency Building One

Empire State Plaza • Albany, NY 12238

(518) 474-0446 Facsimile (518) 474-7013

Web Site: [www.nysparks.com](http://www.nysparks.com)

### **STATE PARKS REGIONAL OFFICES:**

#### **Allegheny Park Region**

Allegheny State Park

2373 ASP Rt. 1 Suite 3

Salamanca, NY 14479

(716) 354-9101

#### **Niagara Frontier Park Region**

Prospect Park

P.O. Box 1132

Niagara Falls, NY 14303-0132

(716) 278-1770

#### **Central NY Park Region**

6105 E. Seneca Turnpike

Jamesville, NY 13078-9516

(315) 492-1756

#### **Palisades Park Region**

Administration Headquarters

Bear Mountain, NY 10911-0427

(845) 786-2701

#### **Finger Lakes Park Region**

2221 Taughannock Park Road

P.O. Box 1055

Trumansburg, NY 14886-0247

(607) 387-7041

#### **Saratoga-Capital Park Region**

19 Roosevelt Drive

Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

(518) 584-2000

#### **Genesee Park Region**

1 Letchworth State Park

Castile, NY 14427-1124

(716) 493-3600

#### **Taconic Park Region**

P.O. Box 308

Staatsburg, NY 12580

(845) 889-4100

**Thousand Islands  
Park Region**

P.O. Box 247  
Alexandria Bay, NY 13607  
(315) 482-2593

To make a camping reservation,  
please call: 1-800-456-CAMP  
Visit our web site at:  
[www.ReserveAmerica.com](http://www.ReserveAmerica.com)



**New York State Department of Environmental Conservation  
Snowmobile trail information for DEC lands:**

**NYS Department of Environmental Conservation**  
Bureau of Public Lands  
625 Broadway  
Albany, NY 12233-4255  
(518) 402-9428  
[www.dec.state.ny.us](http://www.dec.state.ny.us)

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION REGIONAL OFFICES:  
DIVISION OF LANDS AND FORESTS  
DEC Region 3 Offices**

Stony Kill Environmental  
Education Center  
Route 9D  
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590  
(845) 831-8780

21 South Putt Corners Road  
New Paltz, NY 12561-1696  
(845) 256-3000

**DEC Region 4 Offices**

1150 Wescott Road  
Schenectady, NY 12306-2014  
(518) 357-2066

Route 10  
Stamford, NY 12167-9503  
(607) 652-7365

**DEC Region 5 Offices**

P.O. Box 296  
Route 86 • Ray Brook, NY 12977  
(518) 897-1200

Upper Hudson Street Extension  
P.O. Box 220  
Warrensburg, NY 12885-0220  
(518) 623-1200

Main Street Ext., P.O. Box 1316  
Northville, NY 12134-0458  
(518) 863-4545

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### **DEC Region 6 Offices**

State Office Building  
Watertown, NY 13601-3787  
(315) 785-2236

6739 U.S. Hwy.11  
Potsdam, NY 13676  
(315) 265-3090

RD #3, Box 22A  
Route 812  
Lowville, NY 13367  
(315) 376-3521

225 North Main Street  
Herkimer, NY 13350-0089  
(315) 866-6330

### **DEC Region 7 Offices**

1285 Fisher Avenue  
Cortland, NY 13045-1090  
(607) 753-3095

2715 State Hwy. 80  
Sherburne, NY 13460  
(607) 674-4036

### **DEC Region 8 Offices**

7291 Coon Road  
Bath, NY 14810  
(607) 776-2165

6274 East Avon-Lima Road  
Avon, NY 14414  
(716) 226-2466

### **DEC Region 9 Office**

182 E. Union  
Suite #3  
Allegany, NY 14706  
(716) 372-0645

215 South Work Street  
Falconer, NY 14733  
(716) 665-6111

## **New York State Department of Motor Vehicles**

### **Snowmobile and trailer registration information:**

#### **DMV Call Centers**

In area codes 212, 347, 646, 718, 917, call 1-212-646-5550 or  
1-718-966-6155

In area code 516, 631, 845, 914, call 1-800-342-5368

In all other area codes, call 1-800-225-5368

Outside of the State of New York, call 518-473-5595

Web Site: [www.nysdmv.com](http://www.nysdmv.com)



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## **New York State Department of Economic Development**

**Winter tourism annual publication** (*no charge*):

***New York State Winter Travel and Ski Guide***

**NYS Department of Economic Development**

Division of Tourism

One Commerce Plaza

Albany, NY 12245

(800) I LOVE NY

## **New York State Department of Transportation**

**Topographic maps and other map resources**

**NYS Department of Transportation**

Map Information Unit

State Office Building Campus

Building 4, Room 105

Albany, NY 12232

(518) 457-3555

## **Snowmobile trail user organization:**

**New York State Snowmobile Association (NYSSA)**

Jim Jennings, Executive Director

PO Box 612, Long Lake, NY 12847-0612

(518)624-3849 Newspaper: *New York Snowmobiler*

e-mail: jimjennings@nyssnowassoc.org

<http://www.nyssnowassoc.org>

## **Monthly snowmobile newspaper for New York:**

***On The Trail***

P. O. Box 456

East Syracuse, NY 13057

(800) 332-9202

(315) 437-9296

Facsimile (315) 463-5464

e-mail: OTTSnow@aol.com

Web Site: URL:<http://www.onthetrailsnow.com>

## The Snowmobilers' Code of Ethics

1. I will be a good sportsman and conservationist. I recognize that people will judge all snowmobilers by my actions. I will use my influence with other snowmobile owners and operators to promote sportsman-like conduct.
2. I will not litter trails or areas, nor will I pollute streams or lakes. I will carry out what I carry in.
3. I will not damage living trees, shrubs, or other natural features. I will go out only when there is sufficient snow so that I will not damage the land.
4. I will respect other people's properties and rights.
5. I will lend a helping hand when I see someone in need.
6. I will make myself and my vehicle available to assist search and rescue operations.
7. I will not interfere with the activities of other winter sportsmen. I will respect their rights to enjoy their recreational activity.
8. I will know and obey all federal, state, and local rules regulating the operation of snowmobiles in areas where I use my vehicle.
9. I will not harass wildlife.
10. I will not snowmobile where prohibited.

Adapted from *The Snowmobiler's Safety Handbook*, published by the Snowmobile Safety and Certification Committee, Inc. ©1995.

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# Metric Conversion Tables For Snowmobiling

## Distance

### Miles to Kilometers

1 .....	1.61
2 .....	3.21
3 .....	4.82
4 .....	6.44
5 .....	8.05
10 .....	16.09
15 .....	24.14
20 .....	32.19
25 .....	40.23
30 .....	48.28
40 .....	64.37
50 .....	80.47
100 .....	160.93

### Kilometers to Miles

1 .....	0.62
2 .....	1.24
3 .....	1.86
4 .....	2.49
5 .....	3.11
10 .....	6.21
15 .....	9.32
20 .....	12.43
25 .....	15.53
30 .....	18.64
40 .....	24.85
50 .....	31.07
100 .....	62.14

To convert Miles to Kilometers, multiply by 1.61.

To convert Kilometers to Miles, multiply by 0.62.

## Volume

### Gallons to Liters

1 .....	3.79
2 .....	7.57
3 .....	11.36
4 .....	15.14
5 .....	18.93
6 .....	22.71
7 .....	26.50
8 .....	30.28
9 .....	34.07
10 .....	37.85
11 .....	41.64
12 .....	45.42

### Liters to Gallons

1 .....	0.26
2 .....	0.53
3 .....	0.79
4 .....	1.06
5 .....	1.32
6 .....	1.59
7 .....	1.85
8 .....	2.11
9 .....	2.38
10 .....	2.64
15 .....	3.96
20 .....	5.28

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15 .....	56.78	25 .....	6.60
20 .....	75.71	30 .....	7.92
25 .....	94.64	35 .....	9.24
30 .....	113.56	40 .....	10.57
35 .....	132.49	50 .....	31.21
40 .....	151.42	60 .....	15.85
50 .....	189.27	70 .....	18.49

To convert Gallons to Liters, multiply by 3.79

To convert Liters to Gallons, multiply by 0.26

## Temperature

### degrees F to degrees C

75 .....	24
72 .....	22
68 .....	20
40 .....	4
35 .....	2
32 .....	0
25 .....	-4
20 .....	-7
15 .....	-9
10 .....	-12
5 .....	-15
0 .....	-18
-5 .....	-21
-10 .....	-23
-15 .....	-26
-20 .....	-29
-25 .....	-32
-30 .....	-34
-40 .....	-40

### degrees C to degrees F

23 .....	73
21 .....	70
19 .....	66
3 .....	37
2 .....	36
1 .....	34
0 .....	32
-1 .....	30
-2 .....	28
-3 .....	27
-4 .....	25
-5 .....	23
-6 .....	21
-7 .....	19
-8 .....	18
-9 .....	16
-10 .....	14
-15 .....	5
-20 .....	-4

To convert degrees Fahrenheit to degrees Centigrade, subtract 32 from Fahrenheit and multiply by .56

To convert degrees Centigrade to degrees Fahrenheit, multiply by 1.8 and add 32



# **You Make Snowmobiling Safe.**



George E. Pataki, Governor  
**State of New York**

Bernadette Castro, Commissioner  
**New York State Office of Parks,  
Recreation and Historic Preservation**

**Planning Bureau-Snowmobile Unit**  
Agency Building One  
Empire State Plaza • Albany, NY 12238

*Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Agency*