



# Wisconsin Snowmobile Laws



## IMPORTANT LAW CHANGE

**No person shall operate a snowmobile in the following manner: During the hours of darkness at a rate of speed exceeding 55 miles per hour.**

This pamphlet is not a complete set of snowmobile laws. However, it supplies the essential information. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions, contact the Department of Natural Resources personnel or your local law enforcement authorities.

Check with local governing agencies for local ordinances.

This publication is available upon request in alternate formats for visually impaired persons. Please contact Corinne Billings at (608) 264-9246 to request an alternate format.

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Department of Natural Resources  
Box 7921 Madison, Wisconsin 53707

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/es/enforcement/safety/snoed.htm>

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The development and maintenance of Wisconsin's extensive network of snowmobile trails is accomplished through the efforts of thousands of snowmobile club members and private citizens. Their volunteer time is spent performing the crucial tasks of negotiating with landowners for trail easements (70% of the trails are on private lands), pre-season preparation, brushing, grading, signing the trails, trail grooming, safety inspections of the trails and fund raising to support the trail projects.

Please consider joining a snowmobile club—your help is needed. By staying on the trail, you show your respect for the hard work of the local clubs and the rights of the property owners who have graciously allowed snowmobiling across their land.



Helpful tips are noted with this symbol.

## Registration

All snowmobiles operated in Wisconsin must be registered.

**Residents**—As a resident of Wisconsin, you have two main options of registering your snowmobile.

- ◆ **Public registration**—Allows you to operate your snowmobile on any area open to public riding and on private property with the appropriate permission. Public registrations are valid for 2 years, which begins July 1 and expires June 30 two years later. The proof of registration must be carried with you while riding and must be presented to an enforcement officer when requested. Fee—\$30.
- ◆ **Private registration**—Allows a private property owner to register a snowmobile for his/her use or an immediate family member's use. However, the snowmobile can only be used on the owner's/immediate family member's private property or lands leased by the owner/immediate family member. The proof of registration must be carried with you while riding and must be presented to an enforcement officer when requested. Fee—\$0.

**Display**—Unless there is an exception, your snowmobile must display current registration decals, which must be prominently visible on both sides of the cowling.



**Nonresidents**—As a nonresident, you may operate your snowmobile in Wisconsin with your state's current registration as long as the decal or proof of registration is prominently displayed and the snowmobile and the machine has not been in Wisconsin for more than 15 consecutive days. The proof of registration from your home state must be carried with you while riding and must be presented to an enforcement officer when requested. However, you should be aware that an out of state registered snowmobile that is in Wisconsin for longer than 15 days *must* be registered in Wisconsin.

- ◆ **Trail Pass.** In addition, an out of state registered snowmobile must display a Wisconsin *Nonresident Snowmobile Trail Pass* anytime it is ridden on the trails. *Nonresident Snowmobile Trail Passes* can be purchased at any DNR office or license vendor. The *Nonresident Snowmobile Trail Pass* is valid for one year and must be displayed directly on the front of the snowmobile windshield. Once attached, it cannot be transferred to any other snowmobile. Fee—\$18.

❄️ *Avoid a registration rush and potentially delaying your snowmobile trip by mailing your snowmobile renewal to the DNR right after you receive your reminder notice.*

**Antique registrations**—Snowmobiles, which were built in 1966 or earlier, may be registered as an antique. The registration is available for Wisconsin residents only and does not expire as long as the applicant owns the machine. Fee—\$20.

### How do I register my snowmobile?

- ◆ **Snowmobiles already registered in Wisconsin**—The DNR will mail a notification to you reminding you the snowmobile registration needs to be renewed. You can not legally ride until you have the current decals displayed on the snowmobile or you have an exception such as a “validation”.
- ◆ **Snowmobiles purchased from a dealer**—The dealer will help you with the process and provide you with a copy of the application called a “validation”. You must keep the “validation” on the snowmobile any time you ride as proof that the fees have been paid and until you receive your Registration Certificate and decals in the mail.
- ◆ **Snowmobiles purchased from someone other than a dealer**—You must fill out a registration application and have the form **validated at any DNR Service Center** prior to riding. You must keep the “validation” on the snowmobile as proof that the fees have been paid and until you receive your Registration Certificate and decals in the mail. Make sure the seller gives you the signed certificate at the time of the sale.

**Lost or destroyed registrations**—If your certificate or registration decals are lost or destroyed, you can apply for a duplicate(s) on a form (#9400-210) provided by the DNR, accompanied by a fee of \$5. See your Local DNR Service Center for the form and have it validated before you ride.

**Transfer of Ownership**—If you sell or transfer the ownership of a snowmobile, you must sign the certificate and ALL other certificates or registrations to the new owner at the time of sale or transfer. Fee—\$5

**Change of address**—Within 15 days of changing your address, you must notify the DNR in writing, stating your new address and the certificate number for the machine you own. At the same time you must write your new address on the registration certificate.

**Junked snowmobiles**—If you are going to junk a snowmobile, write “Junked” across the face of the certificate and return the certificate to the DNR.

**Dealer Registration**—If you are a snowmobile manufacturer, dealer, distributor, rental agency, or any combination thereof and engaged in business in this state, you must register with the DNR and obtain a commercial snowmobile certificate. The DNR will then issue you 3 reflectorized plates. You must attach one plate in a clearly visible place on each snowmobile that you lease, offer for rent, offer for sale or otherwise allow to be operated as part of your business. Fee \$90. You can purchase additional plates from the DNR. Fee—\$30 per plate.

**Exemptions to registration**—Snowmobiles are exempt from Wisconsin registration if:

- ◆ The snowmobile is used *exclusively* for racing on a racing facility.
- ◆ The snowmobile is owned by the United States or a political subdivision of the state and used for enforcement or emergency purposes. The name and owner of the snowmobile must be displayed on the cowling.
- ◆ The snowmobile is registered under a DNR agreement with a Federally registered Indian Tribe or Band and operated for less than 15 days off of the reservation boundary.

❄️ *Renewing your registration is easy with our online process. See our Website at: [www.snowmobile.gov](http://www.snowmobile.gov).*



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## Age Restrictions and Certificate Requirements

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Any person who is at least 12 years old AND who is born on or after January 1, 1985 is required to possess a *valid Snowmobile Safety Certificate* in order to operate a snowmobile on public trails, lands or frozen waters. You must carry the certificate while riding and you must display it to a law enforcement officer when requested.

All snowmobilers under age 16 must obtain certification in a classroom certification course. Other forms of certification (CD ROM) are only available to persons 16 years of age and up. If you have already become certified, your certification is valid.

Age	Certificate Required	Exceptions
Born before 1/1/1985	No	
<b>Born on or after 1/1/1985, but at least 12</b>	Yes	<p>No certificate is required for persons operating on* lands owned or leased by the operator's parent or guardian.</p> <p>*This does not include land leased by an organization of which the operator, operator's parents or guardians are members.</p>
Under age 12	No	<p>A parent, guardian, or person 18 years old or older must accompany the child on the (same) snowmobile when operating on public areas.</p> <p>No certificate or adult accompaniment is required for persons operating on* lands owned or leased by the operator's parent or guardian.</p> <p>*This does not include land leased by an organization of which the operator, operator's parents or guardians are members.</p>

A *Snowmobile Safety Certificate* can be obtained by taking a DNR sponsored Snowmobile Safety Course. Local courses are typically offered in the late fall and early winter by volunteer instructors.



Many courses are advertised in the local newspaper. If you want to enroll in a snowmobile safety course, you should contact the nearest DNR Service Center or visit us on the web at:

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/es/enforcement/safety/upcoming.htm>

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## Rules for Operating a Snowmobile

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### Alcohol/Drugs

It is illegal to operate a snowmobile under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on any property that is held open to the public (generally this means—trails, routes lakes/rivers or corridors). It is also illegal to operate under the influence while on private property if you have a crash that involves personal injury and you did not have permission to ride there.



Wisconsin's maximum blood alcohol concentration limit is 0.08% and the limit is strictly enforced. However, a person can be under the influence of alcohol and in violation at lesser concentrations. Avoid alcohol altogether while riding.

You are required to provide a sample of your breath or blood if an officer has probable cause to believe you are operating a snowmobile under the influence. By operating a snowmobile on areas open to the public you have automatically consented to provide a sample of your breath, blood or urine to an officer who requests the test. If you refuse to provide a breath, blood or urine sample, you will be charged with an additional violation.



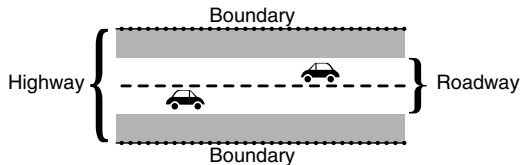
Each year, injury accidents and fatal crashes are caused by riding a snowmobile and consuming alcoholic beverages. Alcohol slows your reaction time and distorts your judgment.



Law Change— Due to recent legislation, riding with a detectable amount of an illegal drug has been enhanced.

## Roads

You cannot operate a snowmobile upon any part of any freeway, which is a part of the federal system of interstate and defense highways or on any part of any other freeway unless the DOT authorizes snowmobile use on that freeway.



Under most circumstances you cannot operate a snowmobile on any highway or road.

You can ride directly across any roadway having fewer than 5 lanes, but only after stopping and yielding the right-of-way to all vehicles approaching on the roadway. Crossings under this exception may be made only at a place where no obstruction prevents a quick and safe crossing. For purposes of this exception, "obstruction" includes, but is not limited to impairment of view and dangerous roadway conditions.

You can ride directly across a roadway having 5 lanes, in the manner specified above, but only if the DOT authorizes the crossing.

You can ride on any roadway, which is not normally maintained for other vehicle traffic by the removal of snow.

Unless it's prohibited and posted by the road's maintaining authority, you can ride on the roadway of highways to cross a bridge, culvert or railroad right-of-way, but only after yielding the right-of-way to all vehicle traffic.

You can ride on the roadway of county or town highways and city or village streets for authorized snowmobile events such as races or derbies.

You may operate a snowmobile next to a roadway with due regard to safety in the following manner:

- ◆ Along U.S. numbered highways, state and county highways at a distance of 10 or more feet from the roadway. Travel on the median of a divided highway is prohibited except to cross.
- ◆ Along town highways outside of the roadway. See the definition of a town highway in the definitions.
- ◆ During daylight hours, you may travel in either direction

regardless of the flow of vehicle traffic.

- ◆ At night, you must travel in the same direction as vehicle traffic in the nearest lane unless the snowmobile trail is located at least 40 feet from the roadway or the trail is separated from the roadway by a head lamp barrier and the snowmobile trail is approved by the DOT.

Other than a freeway, whenever it's impractical to gain immediate access to a snowmobile area next to the highway, you may operate your snowmobile next to and parallel to the roadway for the purpose of gaining access to and from the area of operation. Loading or unloading your snowmobile must be done with due regard to safety at the nearest practical point to the area of operation.

Snowmobiles traveling next to a roadway must observe roadway speed limits or speed limits as posted.

### Exceptions to road laws

Snowmobiles may be operated for emergency purposes on any highway during a period of emergency when an emergency is declared by the governmental agency having jurisdiction over the highway.

A law enforcement officer may operate a snowmobile on a highway in the performance of his or her official duties.



*Unless there is an exception, no snowmobile can be operated on the main-traveled portion of a highway or on any plowed portion of a highway.*

### Routes

You can ride on highways which have been designated as routes and which are identified by signs. See the definition of a route in the back of this booklet.

- ◆ Towns, cities or villages may designate state trunk bridges, a sidewalk or one lane of the bridge as a snowmobile route.
- ◆ When a town, city or village designates a highway as snowmobile route for snowmobile operation, you must observe the following rules:
  - ✓ Snowmobiles must be operated on the extreme right side of the roadway.
  - ✓ Left turns must be made as safely as possible from any position depending on snow cover and other prevailing conditions.
  - ✓ You must yield right-of-way to other vehicle traffic and pedestrians.

If a town, city or village allows the “Purpose of Residential Access” or the “Purpose of Access from Lodging” a snowmobile may be operated on a portion of the roadway or shoulder of a highway, but only after observing roadway speed limits. Check with your local officials to see if an ordinance exists before you ride.

❄️ *Riding on roads illegally is the most common violation. Stick to the trails and snowmobile routes.*

### Distance, Hours and Speed Restrictions

When you are riding a snowmobile within 100-feet of a person who is not on a snowmobile, or in or on a vehicle, or when you are riding within 100-feet of an ice fishing shanty, you must slow your snowmobile to 10-mph or less and yield the right-of-way, except when you are operating on a privately owned raceway facility.

When you are riding a snowmobile between the hours of 10:30 p.m. and 7:00 am and you are riding within 150 feet of a home or dwelling, you must slow your snowmobile to 10-mph or less. **No person shall operate a snowmobile in the following manner: During the hours of darkness at a rate of speed exceeding 55 miles per hour.**

❄️ *Be courteous. Your actions are judged by everyone and can lead to restrictions.*

### Other Prohibited Operation and Requirements

You can't operate a snowmobile at speeds that are unreasonable or improper.

❄️ *When riding at speeds above 40-mph at night, you begin to override your snowmobile's headlight. To be safe and make sure you get stopped in time when you encounter a hazard, do not override your snowmobile headlight.*

You can't operate a snowmobile in a careless manner so that it endangers a person or property.

You can't operate a snowmobile on a person's private property without their consent or the lessee's consent. Failure to post the property does not give you the authority to ride there.

❄️ *One of the most common trespass violations is cutting trail corners when the trail crosses private property. Stay on the trail and do not create shortcuts.*

You must obey all regulatory signs such as; stop signs, yield signs and speed limit signs.

❄️ *Law Change— Under rare circumstances when you are permitted on a roadway, you must comply with all posted roadway speed limits.*

You can't operate a snowmobile on forest nursery, planting area or on public lands, which are posted or reasonably identified as an area of forest plant reproduction.

You can't operate a snowmobile on a ski area, slide or skating area except at marked locations or after stopping and yielding the right of way.

You can't operate a snowmobile on or across a cemetery, burial ground, school or church without the consent of the owner.

You can't operate a snowmobile on an operating airport or landing facility without consent.

You can't operate a snowmobile on Native American lands without the consent of the tribal governing body.

You can't allow a person to operate a snowmobile if he or she has not obtained the required safety certificate, or if they are incapable of operating a snowmobile because of a physical or mental disability, or the person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

You can't transport a firearm or bow on a snowmobile unless the firearm is unloaded and encased or the bow is unstrung or in a carrying case.

You can't drive, push, pursue or chase any animal with a snowmobile except that you can use a snowmobile for normal farming/herding operations; however, no wildlife can be chased.

You can't refuse to stop your snowmobile after being requested or signaled to do so by a law enforcement officer.

You can't refuse to allow your snowmobile to be inspected for suspected sound violations or other suspected equipment violations.

You cannot operate, offer for sale or sell a snowmobile that is wider than 48 inches if it was manufactured after May 7, 1994.

You can't operate a snowmobile off of the designated trail; if you do you are trespassing.

❄️ *Law Change— Snowmobilers must stay on the right side of the trail and proceed with caution when approaching oncoming snowmobiles.*

❄️ *Law Change—Tampering with an odometer or hour meter is prohibited. Contact DNR law enforcement at 608-266-2141 for directions on how to replace or service a meter legally.*

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## Equipment—Lights, Reflectors and Exhaust Requirements.

Your snowmobile must have a **white** headlamp and a tail lamp that is turned on during the hours of darkness or when you are riding on a highway right-of-way. It is recommended that your lights stay on whenever you ride.

Designer headlamp covers (red, yellow, blue, etc., lens covers) are not legal to use when you are riding within a highway right-of-way, or during the hours of darkness. Under most circumstances, you cannot use colored headlamp covers.

Your snowmobile must be equipped with at least one brake, operated either by hand or by foot.



*Track studs or cleats are legal to use in Wisconsin without paying additional fee-pass requirements. However, use common sense and recognize when studs are used improperly or aggressively they can damage property and can tarnish your image, which makes it difficult to maintain existing trails.*

Your snowmobile must be equipped with side marker reflectors if manufactured after July 1, 1972.

Your snowmobile must have a muffler in good working order, which blends the exhaust noise into the overall engine noise to prevent excessive or unusual noise. The only exception to the sound laws are when you operate your snowmobile during a Sanctioned Race or you are a dealer/manufacturer testing the snowmobile on your own land.

- ◆ **Noise limit**—82 dBA for every snowmobile manufactured and offered for sale or sold in this state after July 1, 1972 and up to July 1, 1975.
- ◆ **Noise limit**—78 dBA for every snowmobile manufactured and offered for sale or sold in this state after July 1, 1975.



*The department is adopting a new rule for testing snowmobile noise. To help stay compliant, do not alter your exhaust to be louder than the original exhaust system. If your snowmobile sounds louder than normal, you may be in violation. Maintain your snowmobile and seek the advice of a service technician if you are in doubt.*

You cannot modify your snowmobile's exhaust in any manner that will amplify or increase the total noise emission above that emitted by the snowmobile as originally manufactured, regardless of date of manufacture.



*Excessive or unusually loud snowmobiles are illegal and hurt Wisconsin's trail system. Do not increase your exhaust noise or operate with your exhaust system in excess of the sound limits. Wisconsin vigorously enforces the sound limits and penalties can be severe, however the worst thing about a loud snowmobile is that it causes properties to be permanently closed to snowmobile riding.*

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## Accidents and Crashes

If you are involved in a crash, the first thing to do is ensure you are okay and not going to be involved in another crash from a following snowmobile. You must provide help to anyone else who was involved unless you are physically incapable of doing so. Give your name and address to the other snowmobiler(s) or party whose property was damaged.

Any crash that results in an injury requiring treatment by a physician or a fatal incident must be reported as soon as possible to a Conservation Warden or other law enforcement officer. You must file a written report of the incident within 10 days to the DNR. Contact your nearest DNR Service Center or sheriff's office for the accident form.

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## Sanctioned Races

Snowmobiles are exempt from registration if the snowmobile is used *exclusively* for racing on a racing facility.

Any county, town, city or village may block off the highways under its jurisdiction for the purpose of allowing special snowmobile events. No state trunk highway or connecting highway, or part of a highway can be blocked off by any county, town, city or village for any snowmobile race or derby.


When you are operating on a privately owned raceway facility you do not have to slow to 10-mph when you are within 100-feet of a person who is not in or on a snowmobile or vehicle.

When you are operating a snowmobile in a sanctioned race or derby on public land you do not have to slow to 10-mph when you are within 100-feet of a person who is not in or on a snowmobile or vehicle if the race or derby sponsor marks the track to warn spectators from entering the track area.

When you are operating a snowmobile in a sanctioned race or derby on

frozen surface waters, you **must** slow to 10-mph when you are within 100-feet of a person who is not in or on a snowmobile or vehicle. The race or derby sponsor must mark the track to keep spectators 100 feet away from the race or derby. The sponsor conducting the race or derby must notify the local Conservation Warden or law enforcement agency within that jurisdiction prior to the race or derby.

If you are competing in a sanctioned race or derby the snowmobile must be equipped with a device (lanyard) wired into the motor's electrical system that will shut off the motor in case you fall off of the snowmobile. The lanyard must be attached to you during all times and at all locations of operation at the race or derby area, including the pit or warm up area. Typically the lanyard it is attached to the wrist.

 **Law Change—** During sanctioned races, if you are involved in a crash and seek treatment by a physician, you do not need to file an accident report with the department.

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### Trail Signs and Standards


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Trail and Route signs are standardized across the nation. Rules have been created by the DNR and the DOT to make the signs uniform and consistent with national standards.

### Interference with Trail Signs and Standards

No person can intentionally remove, damage, deface, move or obstruct any official snowmobile trail sign or standard or intentionally interfere with the effective operation of any snowmobile trail sign or standard if the sign or standard is legally placed by the state, municipality or authorized individual.

Only authorized individuals can possess an official snowmobile trail sign or standard. Merely possessing an official snowmobile trail sign or standard infers you obtained it illegally if you are not an authorized individual.

 **Leave all signs in place. Someone's life will depend on it. If you notice a sign is missing or is down, notify your snowmobile club representative or county official immediately.**

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### Local Ordinances—Town, City or County Rules

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Counties, towns, cities and villages may regulate snowmobile operation on snowmobile trails or routes by creating local laws. Check locally for the specific laws.

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### Liability of Landowners

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Landowners, employees, or agents of an owner who allow snowmobile trails to cross their property are not required to keep the premises safe for recreational activities, to inspect the property, or to give warning of an unsafe condition, use, or activity on the property unless any of the following conditions exist:

- ◆ The private property owner collects money, goods, or services in payment for the use of the owner's property for the recreational activity during which the injury occurs, and the aggregate value of all payments received by the owner for the use of the owner's property for recreational activities during the year in which the injury occurs exceeds \$500.
- ◆ The injury is caused by the malicious failure of the private property owner or an employee or agent of the private property owner to warn against an unsafe condition on the property, of which the private property owner knew about.
- ◆ The injury is caused by a malicious act of the private property owner, an employee or agent of a private property owner.
- ◆ The injury occurs on property owned by a private property owner to a social guest who has been expressly and individually invited by the private property owner for the specific occasion during which the injury occurs, if the injury occurs on platted land, residential property or property within 300 feet of a building or structure on land that is classified as mercantile or manufacturing under s. 70.32(2)(b) 2 or 3.
- ◆ The injury is sustained by an employee of a private property owner acting within the scope of his or her duties. Except as expressly provided in this section, nothing in this section, or s. 101.11, nor the common law attractive nuisance doctrine creates any duty of care or ground of liability toward any person who uses another's property for a recreational activity.

 **Be mindful of your actions at all times while riding a snowmobile. Private property owners provide most of the**

trails you ride on free of charge. Their continued support keeps YOUR trails open.

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### Enforcement

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Any Conservation Warden, officer of the State Patrol or Inspector, county sheriff or municipal peace officer may enforce snowmobile laws.

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### Trailer information

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#### Title

If the combined weight of a Wisconsin snowmobile and trailer is over 3,000 pounds, you will need to title the trailer with the Wisconsin DOT. You will also need to equip the trailer with brakes and brake lights regardless of weight capacity.

#### Trailer lighting

You cannot operate a motor vehicle or trailer during the hours of darkness unless it displays the lighting equipment as prescribed in Section 347 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

#### Safety chains

Safety chains are required on all towed vehicles and trailers. For further information contact the Wisconsin DOT.



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### Snowmobile Code of Ethics

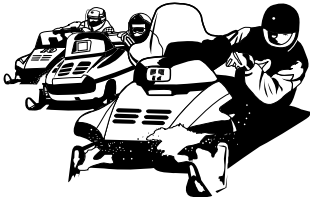
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1. I will be a good sportsman. I recognize that people judge all snowmobile owners by my actions. I will use my influence with other snowmobile owners to promote sportsmanlike conduct.
2. I will not litter trails or camping areas. I will not pollute streams or lakes.
3. I will not damage living trees, shrubs, or other natural features.
4. I will respect other people's property and rights.
5. I will lend a helping hand when I see someone in distress.
6. I will make myself and my snowmobile available to assist with search and rescue.
7. I will not interfere with or harass hikers, skiers, snow-shoers, ice fishermen or other winter sportsmen. I will respect their rights to enjoy our recreation facilities.
8. I will know and obey all federal, state and local rules regulating the operation of snowmobiles.
9. I will not harass wildlife. I will avoid areas posted for the protection or feeding of wildlife.
10. I will stay on marked trails or marked roads open to snowmobiles. I will avoid cross-country travel unless specifically authorized.

## Basic Snowmobile Safety Code

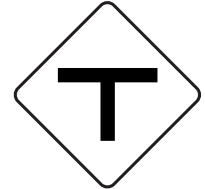
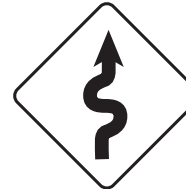
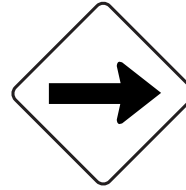
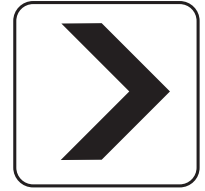
1. Do not consume alcohol or take drugs prior to or during your snowmobile trip. Doing so increases your chances of being injured or killed.
2. Slow down and don't cut to the inside of the trail corners, it's dangerous and illegal.
3. If you snowmobile at night, don't override your lights.
4. Always use the buddy system. Never ride off alone or unaccompanied.
5. Drowning is one of the causes of many snowmobile fatalities. Whenever possible, avoid the ice.
6. Wear sensible, protective clothing designed for snowmobiling.
7. Use a full size helmet, goggles, or visor to prevent injuries from twigs, stones, ice chips and flying debris.
8. Avoid wearing long scarves. They may get caught in moving parts of the snowmobile.
9. Know the terrain you are going to ride. If unfamiliar to you, ask someone who has traveled over it before.
10. Know the weather forecast, especially the ice and snow conditions in the area.
11. Be sure your snowmobile is in top-notch mechanical condition at the beginning of the winter season and throughout the months of use.
12. Familiarize yourself with the snowmobile you are driving by reading in detail the manual accompanying the snowmobile.
13. Do not pursue domestic or wild animals. No true sportsman would stoop to such conduct. If you see a violation of this rule, report it to the nearest law enforcement officer.

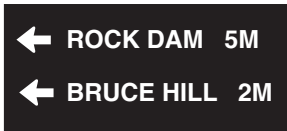
❄️ *Ice should never be considered safe.*



## Common Signs

Below are some of the common signs you might see while snowmobiling.





## How is the Wisconsin Snowmobile Program Paid For?

You pay for the Wisconsin snowmobile program. When you register your snowmobile the fees are credited into a special account with the majority of the funds dedicated to the trail system. Other portions of the collected fees help manage the registration system and incidentals related to running the snowmobile program.

In addition to the registration fees you pay, there are several other sources of revenue that are used by the snowmobile program.

One source of program income is derived from the state gasoline excise tax. Currently there is a formula transfer of gasoline excise tax on 50 gallons of gasoline for every snowmobile registered by the end of each February. These funds are dedicated to the trails program.

Another source of revenue comes from the General Purposes Revenue fund or more commonly known as tax dollars.

The last source of funds comes from gaming taxes collected by the state. This is the major fund that pays for conservation wardens to patrol trails and enforce the snowmobile laws. Currently there are seven positions that are paid for from this fund.

Each year the Department of Natural Resources distributes the majority of the snowmobile trail dollars to counties that participate in the snowmobile program through a grant process. These grants reimburse counties for the cost of trail maintenance including grooming. Grants are also awarded for infrastructure improvements such as trail or bridge rehabilitation and the development of new trails.

## Who is involved?

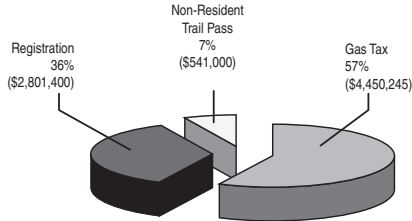
Wisconsin Conservation Wardens and sheriff patrols monitor snowmobile activities on trails, routes and corridors to ensure people are abiding by the rules. They offer snowmobilers assistance and are available to assist you with information about the trails. The Conservation Warden and deputy is your key to keeping a healthy trail system. You can help by respecting the rules and setting a good example for others to follow.

The Governor's Snowmobile Recreation Council was created in 1971 to help guide the Department with all matters related to snowmobiling including the distribution of snowmobile trail funds to counties. The Council is made up of 15 volunteers from various parts of the state and the Governor approves their appointment. Council members offer recommendations to the Department on legislative issues, safety concerns and county funding requests. Additionally, the members perform surveys to help analyze trends and provide program direction.

## The Snowmobile Program— Annual Funding at a Glance

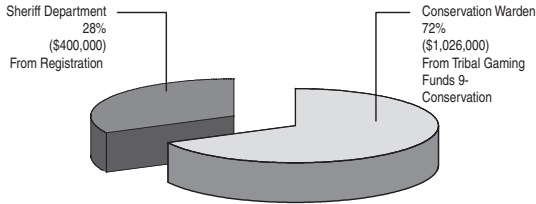
### Based on Fee Increases Which Occurred 2004

#### Total Sources of Snowmobile Trail Funds to be Expended

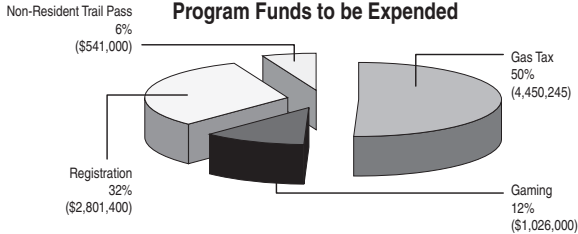


\* Sources of registration revenue—New public registrations, Private registrations, Registration renewals, Registration transfers, Registration decalor certificate replacements, Municipal registrations, Antiques registrations, Sales tax collection charge, Interest.

#### Sources of State Conservation Warden and County Sheriff Funds to be Expender



#### Total Sources of Snowmobile Program Funds to be Expended



\* Sources of registration revenue—New public registrations, Private registrations, Registration renewals, Registration transfers, Registration decalor certificate replacements, Municipal registrations, Antiques registrations, Sales tax collection charge, Interest.

## Definitions

**78 decibels**—Every snowmobile manufactured after July 1, 1975, and offered for sale or sold in this state shall be so constructed as to limit total vehicle noise to not more than 78 decibels of A sound pressure, as measured by Society of Automotive Engineers standards.

**82 decibels**—Every snowmobile manufactured after July 1, 1972, and offered for sale or sold in this state shall be so constructed as to limit total vehicle noise to not more than 82 decibels of A sound pressure at 50 feet, as measured by Society of Automotive Engineers standards.

**Cowling**—The hood portion of the snowmobile, which covers the engine and the drive-belt components. Usually, a windshield is attached to the cowling.

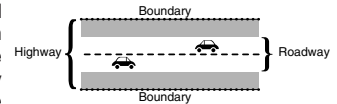
**Dealer**—See snowmobile dealer.

**DNR**—Department of Natural Resources.

**DOT**—Department of Transportation.

**Headlamp**—A major lighting device used to provide general illumination ahead of a vehicle, which must display a white light of sufficient illuminating power to reveal any person, vehicle or substantial object at a distance of 200 feet ahead.

**Highway**—All public ways and thoroughfares and bridges on the same. It includes the entire width between the boundary lines of every way open to the use of the public as a matter of right for the purpose of vehicle traffic. Generally—Federal and State Highways are designated by a number. County highways are designated by a letter or letters. Town roads are generally designated by a name.



**Hours of Darkness**—The period of time from 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise and all other times when there is not sufficient natural light to render clearly visible any person or vehicle on a highway at a distance of 500 feet.

**Immediate Family**—Persons who are related as spouses, as siblings or as parent and child.

**Land Under The Management And Control Of The Person's Immediate Family**—Land owned or leased by the person or a member of the person's immediate family and over which the owner or lessee has management and control. This term excludes land owned or leased by an organization of which the person or a member of the person's immediate family is a member.

**Operate**—Physical control over the speed or direction of a snowmobile or the physical manipulation or activation of any of the controls of a snowmobile necessary to put it in motion. “Operate” includes the operation of a snowmobile.

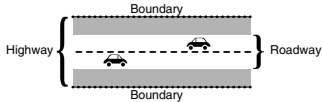
**Operator**—A person who operates a snowmobile, who is responsible for the operation of a snowmobile or who is supervising the operation of a snowmobile.

**Private Property**—Land owned or leased by the owner or member of his or her own family (spouses, siblings, or parent and child).

**Purpose of Access from Lodging**—The purpose of traveling the shortest distance that is necessary for a person operating the snowmobile to go between a lodging establishment and the snowmobile route or snowmobile trail that is closest to the lodging establishment.

**Purpose of Residential Access**—The purpose of traveling for the shortest distance that is necessary for a person operating the snowmobile to go between a residence and the snowmobile route or snowmobile trail that is closest to that residence.

**Roadway**—That portion of a highway between the regularly established curb line or that portion, which is improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicle travel excluding the berm or shoulder.



**Sanctioned Race or Derby**—A competitive snowmobile event sponsored by a county, town, city or village, by a promoter, chamber of commerce, snowmobile club or other similar organization.

**Side Marker Reflectors**—Means reflectors meeting the visibility requirements of Society of Automotive Engineers standards or reflex material standards in compliance with federal specifications.

**Snowmobile**—An engine-driven vehicle that is manufactured solely for snowmobiling that has an endless belt tread and sled-type runners or skis, to be used in contact with snow. A snowmobile does **not** include a vehicle that is any of the following: A vehicle that has inflatable tires or a vehicle that is driven by a motor of 4 horsepower or less and that is operated in sanctioned races, derbies, competitions or exhibitions or only on private property. A snowmobile cannot be over 48 inches wide if it was manufactured after May 7, 1994.

**Snowmobile Accident**—A collision accident or other casualty involving a snowmobile.

**Snowmobile Dealer**—Any person engaged in the sale of snowmo-

biles for a profit at wholesale or retail, or person who manufactures, distributes or rents snowmobiles. Snowmobile dealers conducting business in Wisconsin are required to be licensed by DNR and must have a commercial snowmobile certificate.

**Snowmobile Manufacturer**—Any person engaged in the manufacture of snowmobiles for sale to the public. Snowmobile manufacturers conducting business in Wisconsin are required to be licensed by DNR and must have a commercial snowmobile certificate.

**Snowmobile Route**—A highway or sidewalk designated for use by snowmobile operators by the governmental agency having jurisdiction as authorized under this chapter. Generally a route is a roadway that allows you to get from the trail through town to the next trail.



**Snowmobile Renter**—Any person engaged in the business of renting or leasing of snowmobiles to the public.

**Snowmobile Trail**—A marked corridor on public property or on private lands subject to public easement or lease, designated for use by snowmobile operators by the governmental agency having jurisdiction, but excluding highways except those highways on which the roadway is not normally maintained for other vehicle traffic by the removal of snow. Trails are marked with Orange blazers.



**Street**—Every highway within the corporate limits of a city or village except alleys.

**Tail Lamp**—A device to designate the rear of a vehicle by a warning light which must display a red light plainly visible during darkness from a distance of 500 feet to the rear.

**Town Road/Highway**—Roads constructed and maintained by the towns.

**Validation**—A process during registration that allows you to keep a copy of the snowmobile registration application on the snowmobile showing proof that you paid the required fees. Once your application is validated by DNR or a snowmobile dealer, you may legally operate your snowmobile. The validated registration copy will act as a “temporary registration” until your decals and certificate of registration arrives in the mail.

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**Wisconsin DNR Offices and Validation Stations**

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**DNR Central Office**

Information Center, 101 S. Webster St., Madison.....608-266-2621

**Southeast Region**Region Headquarters—2300 N. Martin Luther King Dr., Milwaukee.....414-263-8500  
Plymouth Office—W5750 Woodchuck Ln.....920-892-8756  
Sturtevant Office—9531 Rayne Rd., Suite 4.....262-884-2300  
Kettle Moraine State Forest, North unit, Campbellsport.....920-626-2116  
Kettle Moraine State Forest, South unit, Eagle.....414-594-6200**South Central Region**Region Headquarters—3911 Fish Hatchery Rd., Fitchburg.....608-275-3266  
Dodgeville Office—1500 North Johns Street, Dodgeville.....608-935-3368  
Horicon Office—N7725 Hwy. 28, Horicon.....920-387-7860  
Janesville Office—2514 Morse St., Janesville.....608-743-4800  
Poynette Office—W7303 Co. Hwy. CS, Poynette.....608-635-8110**West Central Region**Region Headquarters—1300 W. Clairemont, Eau Claire.....715-839-3700  
Area Office—Eau Claire.....715-839-3777  
Black River Falls Office—910 Hwy. 54E, Black River Falls.....715-284-1400  
LaCrosse Office—3550 Mormon Coulee Rd., LaCrosse.....608-785-9000  
Wis. Rapids Office—473 Griffith Ave., Wisconsin Rapids.....715-421-7800  
Baldwin Office—890 Spruce Street, Baldwin.....715-684-2914  
Wausau Office—5301 Rib Mountain Rd., Wausau.....715-359-4522**Northern Region**Region Headquarters—810 W Maple St., Spooner.....715-635-2101  
or—107 Suttiff Ave., Rhinelander.....715-365-8900  
Woodruff Office—8770 Hwy. J, Woodruff.....715-356-5211  
Antigo Office—1635 Neva Rd., Antigo.....715-627-4317  
Park Falls Office—875 S. 4th Ave., Park Falls.....715-762-3204  
Hayward Office—10220 N. Hwy. 27, Hayward.....715-634-2688  
Ladysmith Office—N4103 Hwy. 27, Ladysmith.....715-532-3911  
Superior Office—1705 Tower Ave., Superior.....715-392-7988**Northeast Region**Region Headquarters—1125 N. Military Ave., Green Bay.....920-492-5800  
Peshigo Office—101 N. Ogden Rd., Peshigo.....715-582-5000  
Oshkosh Office—625 E. County Rd. Y, Suite 700, Oshkosh.....920-424-3050  
Sturgeon Bay Office—110 S. Neenah Ave. Sturgeon Bay.....920-746-2860

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**How do I report a violation?**

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First, ensure you are stopped in a location that will not expose you to a danger. Note the make and model of the snowmobile or other vehicle. Also, note the rider's apparel including: the helmet color, snowmobile suit color(s), boot type, gloves color, any wording that might be written on the rider's back, etc. Note the time and date and record the rider's direction of travel as well as the trail number, trail name or roadway name. Next, contact the local law enforcement authority without delay. To help you remember what could be important, use the information collection sheet below.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Snowmobile Make \_\_\_\_\_ Model \_\_\_\_\_ CC Size \_\_\_\_\_

Ski color \_\_\_\_\_ Two-up/Single \_\_\_\_\_ Cargo rack \_\_\_\_\_

Rider Helmet color \_\_\_\_\_ Open/Closed face \_\_\_\_\_

Rider apparel color \_\_\_\_\_

Unique wording design \_\_\_\_\_

Passenger Helmet color \_\_\_\_\_ Open/Closed face \_\_\_\_\_

Passenger apparel color \_\_\_\_\_

Unique wording design \_\_\_\_\_

Trail/Road number name \_\_\_\_\_ Direction of travel \_\_\_\_\_

Nearest Town, City, Village \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

Type of problem encountered \_\_\_\_\_

Other notes \_\_\_\_\_

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## Penalties

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The fines for violating the snowmobile laws range from \$125.90—\$2,000. You could also face up to one year in jail. In addition, the courts may revoke your privilege to operate a snowmobile. The ultimate price for violating the rules is the negative effect on the image of all snowmobilers. Do the right thing...

## Slow Down ... Ride Sober ... and Ride for Life



Need trail information? You can obtain trail maps by contacting your local county official, chamber of commerce, Department of Tourism or you can locate maps through the following web site link [www.travelwisconsin.com](http://www.travelwisconsin.com)

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services, and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Equal Opportunity Office, Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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