

Snowmobile REGULATIONS





Snowmobile in Minnesota?

JOIN TODAY!



Please
DO NOT TRESPASS

Know where you can ride.

Be a safe and responsible rider.

Join MnUSA or your LOCAL CLUB!

Help Us Support
SNOWMOBILING IN MN!

WWW.MNUSA.ORG

Paid Advertisement



TABLE OF CONTENTS

What's New: Legislative Changes	6
Snowmobile Instructor of the Year	7
Snowmobile Definitions	8
Frequently Asked Questions	8
Registration	9
How to Register Your Snowmobile	9
Snowmobile Safety Training	18
Requirements	18
Youth Operation Requirements	20
Safety on Ice	21
General Snowmobile Operations	22
Equipment Requirements	22
Trail Riding Rules	24
Trail Signs.	25
Where You May Ride a Snowmobile.	26
Where You May Not Ride	27
Speed Limits	28
Enforcement	29
Snowmobiling Under the Influence	30
Minnesota Trespass Laws	31
Game Laws Related to Snowmobiling	32
For more information	34
Grant-In-Aid Program	34
Contact information	34

DISCLAIMER: This handbook contains a summary of rules and laws for snowmobile operators and owners needed for snowmobile operation in the state of Minnesota. However, it is not a **legal document** representing all laws, statutes, and Minnesota rules. For more information, please see the Office of the Revisor of Statutes, www.revisor.mn.gov. Snowmobile laws are under Minnesota Statutes 84.82 to 84.915, Fish and Game 97a, Traffic law chapter 169, Minnesota rules Chapter 6100. Recommend using Keyword Search for list of applicable laws related to snowmobile.

Regulations in this booklet are effective from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

Cover photo: The International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA)

This publication is partially funded through advertising revenue. The State of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) can neither endorse the products or services advertised nor accept any liability arising from the use of these products or services.



GET OUTDOORS

INTO MINNESOTA'S NATURE

VISIT GRAND RAPIDS, MN



WINTER. TRAILS. FUN.



SCAN QR CODE
FOR SNOWMOBILE TRAIL INFORMATION.

www.visitgrandrapids.com

Paid Advertisement

PAID ADVERTISEMENT



Get peak protection for your snowmobile



+ Progressive is committed to protecting you on your sled. We offer basic liability protection, comprehensive and collision coverage, and more, so you can ride wherever with maximum peace of mind.

Quote now to take full advantage of snow season and get exploring!



Scan to get a snowmobile quote
online in as little as 3 minutes

PROGRESSIVE.COM or **1-800-PROGRESSIVE**

Progressive Casualty Ins. Co. & affiliates. Coverages subject to policy terms and conditions. Not available in all states. Prices vary based on how you buy.

PROGRESSIVE

AFFORDABLE PROTECTION FOR THE TRAIL.



Paid Advertisement



Z1R
SNOW HELMETS

arctiva
RIDING GEAR

WHAT'S NEW: LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

Snowmobile State Trail Pass

A person may not operate a snowmobile registered in another state or registered by a manufacturer or dealer on a state or grant-in-aid snowmobile trail unless a snowmobile state trail pass is available for inspection by a peace officer.

See page 16.

Muffler

A person may not operate a snowmobile unless it is equipped at all times with a muffler in good working order that blends the exhaust noise into the overall snowmobile noise and is in constant operation to prevent excessive or unusual noise. A snowmobile operated, offered for sale, or sold in this state must have an exhaust system that does not emit or produce a sharp popping or crackling sound. Beginning July 1, 2026, an aftermarket muffler will be required to have a stamped certification requirement.

See page 22.

Stay on the trail, slow down and don't TRESPASS!



One of the primary concerns surrounding grant-in-aid trails is snowmobile riders driving off marked trails and into areas where they're not allowed. This behavior is trespassing, and the penalties associated with it are heavy. While individual violators face a monetary cost, their actions affect the broader snowmobile community when landowners cut off access to their property because of problems associated with illegal off-trail use.

This message brought to you by the American Council of Snowmobile Associations. www.snowmobilers.org

Find more information on trespassing on page 31.

SNOWMOBILE INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has named Jerome Kahl, a longtime member of the Buckman Trailblazers Snowmobile Club and snowmobile safety instructor since 1993, its 2024 volunteer snowmobile safety instructor of the year.

Kahl holds his snowmobile safety class in the Pierz area, though it brings in students from communities such as Little Falls, Rice, Royalton, and other surrounding areas. He also recruits instructors from nearby snowmobile clubs to take part. Kahl has been the lead instructor for the Pierz-area class about 20 years and is known for making it fun and interesting for the students while conveying the seriousness of safe snowmobile riding.

A former sheriff's deputy and investigator, public service is the center of Kahl's life. He's served in a variety of leadership roles in his local snowmobile club and has been an active member of the Rice Area Sportsmen's Club for nearly 40 years. He's been a key player in the area in putting on events that provide outdoor experiences for people and worked to expand hunting opportunities and improve habitat. In addition to snowmobile safety, Kahl also is an active ATV and firearms safety instructor.

"Jerome sets the bar high for all our volunteer instructors and really shows what it means to serve the greater good," said Conservation Officer Andrew Struffert, who is stationed in Pierz. "His commitment has laid the foundation for many kids to safely enjoy a lifetime in the outdoors, and he's an extremely deserving recipient of this award."

Kahl is among the more than 1,000 volunteer instructors who teach DNR snowmobile safety classes across the state and are the backbone of the program.

Minnesota residents born after Dec. 31, 1976 are required to have a snowmobile safety certificate in order to ride, but DNR safety officials recommend all people who ride a snowmobile complete a safety training course.

Learn how you can become a DNR youth volunteer instructor at: mndnr.gov/safety/instructors



Jerome Kahl and Conservation Officer Andrew Struffert

*Explore Voyageurs National Park
by sled, with access to hundreds of
miles of groomed trails.*



WWW.RAINYLAKE.ORG
PAID ADVERTISEMENT

m
EXPLORE
MINNESOTA

SNOWMOBILE DEFINITIONS

Snowmobile (MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.81 SUBDIVISION 3)

Snowmobile means a self-propelled vehicle originally manufactured and designed for travel on snow or ice steered by skis or runners.

Collector snowmobile (MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.81 SUBDIVISION 12)

Collector snowmobile means a snowmobile that is 25 years old or older, was originally produced as a separate identifiable make by a manufacturer, and is owned and operated solely as a collector's item.

Metal traction device (MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.81 SUBDIVISION 13)

A metal traction device means any metal device or array of metal devices attached to a snowmobile track to enhance traction that is:

1. Made of metal, except that metal cleats affixed perpendicular to the direction of travel of a snowmobile track which was manufactured in 1981 or earlier shall not be considered a metal traction device; or
2. Affixed to a snowmobile track with metal components that extend more than one-fourth inch from the bottom of the track.

Approved helmet (MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.782 SUBDIVISION 1A)

An approved helmet is required to meet DOT specifications. DOT is the manufacturer's certification that the helmet conforms to the applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards. Bicycle and hockey helmets are not legal helmets.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: If I put tracks on my ATV can I register it as a snowmobile and ride on the Snowmobile trails? (MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.81 SUBD 3)

A: No, the definition of a snowmobile does not include the following vehicles equipped with aftermarket ski and track configurations: all-terrain vehicle, off-highway motorcycle, off-road vehicle, mini truck, utility task vehicle or any other vehicle being operated off road.

Q: If I install a snow bike conversion track kit on my Off-Highway Motorcycle will I be able to ride on the Snowmobile trails?

A: No, the definition of a snowmobile does not include an Off Highway motorcycle. Operation would be limited to private property with permission of the landowner and ice covered water surfaces.

Q: Can I carry a passenger on a snowmobile?

A: Minnesota Law does not address carrying passengers upon a snowmobile; No age requirement and no size restrictions for passengers on snowmobiles. Depending on the model, manufacturers have recommendations for allowing the carrying of passengers. Under Minnesota statute 84.872 Subd 1a. Anyone under age 18 is required to wear a DOT rated helmet.

Q: Do I need a straight arm bar to tow behind a snowmobile?

A: It is not required except by some local ordinances. Check local ordinances for requirements. Helmets are recommended for occupants in a device being towed.

Q: What if the after market muffler installed in my snowmobile has no certification stamp showing muffler noise limit compliance?

A: The muffler is not for legal use while operating in Minnesota. Under Minnesota Law, 84.871 Subd. 3. Certification, beginning July 1, 2026, all after-market mufflers installed on a snowmobile must have a permanent stamp, clearly visible on the muffler, certified by the muffler manufacturer and stating that the muffler conforms to the snowmobile muffler noise limits specified by the rules of the commissioner.

Q: I have a vintage snowmobile, well over 25 years old, I want to ride on a snowmobile trail occasionally during the winter, is a permit or registration available for limited use on trails?

A: Yes, A Permit to Operate a Collector Snowmobile is available from a local conservation officer or regional offices through out Minnesota. See the following webpage www.dnr.state.mn.us/permits/enforcement for more information.

REGISTRATION

A majority of the revenue generated from snowmobile registration will be used for snowmobile grant-in-aid trails, trail maintenance, grooming, and easement acquisition.

HOW TO REGISTER YOUR SNOWMOBILE

You must be at least 18 years old to register a snowmobile.

Register your snowmobile in person at any Deputy Registrar or at the DNR License Center in St. Paul. When you register, you will need the make, model, year, serial number, engine size, and sales receipt that shows the proof of sales tax payment on a new snowmobile. Sales between private parties do not require payment of sales tax.

Purchase from a Private Party:

A person may not sell a snowmobile without furnishing the buyer with a bill of sale that includes the signature of the current owner and the serial number of the snowmobile. Transfer and registration renewal fees are the responsibility of the new owner.

Purchase from a Dealership:

A person who purchases a snowmobile from a retail dealer shall make application for registration with the dealer at the point of sale. The dealer will issue a 21-day temporary registration.

Snowmobile Registration Fees:

Type of Registration	Fee
Trail Use Registration [3yrs]	\$105.00 plus \$8.50 filing fee
Nontrail Registration [3yrs]	\$45.00 plus \$8.50 filing fee
Duplicate Registration	\$16.00
Duplicate Registration Decal	\$6.00
Transfer – Trail use registration only	\$18.50
Dealer [annual]	\$ 58.50 every year
Manufacturer [annual]	\$158.50 every year
Collector Unlimited Use	\$14.50

Expiration, Renewal, and Duplicate

The expiration date appears on both the registration card and the registration validation decal. All snowmobile registrations expire on June 30 of the year the registration expires. Example: June 30, 2027.

Snowmobile Registration Renewal cards are mailed out in September. Please notify the DNR of any address change. Whether you are notified or not, you are responsible for renewing your snowmobile registration. You may renew your registration at: mndnr.gov/rfp.

To obtain a duplicate registration card or decal, contact your local deputy registrar or the DNR License Center 1-800-285-2000.

Minnesota Law on Registration (MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.82)

A person may not operate a snowmobile unless the snowmobile has been registered. Violation of this law is a misdemeanor.

Registration Card

When you register your snowmobile, you will be assigned a snowmobile registration number and receive a registration card, along with registration decals. When you receive your registration card, write your signature in the box provided on the registration card and secure it in a safe place. You do not have to carry it with you, but if an enforcement officer asks to see it, you must produce it within a reasonable amount of time.

Snowmobile Registration Decals

Snowmobile registration decals sold after July 1, 2023 are to be displayed on each side of a snowmobile. Placement of decal is to be affixed in an area provided by manufacturer, on the upper half of the cowling. Cowling is also referred to as the hood, which covers the engine, muffler and clutch assembly.

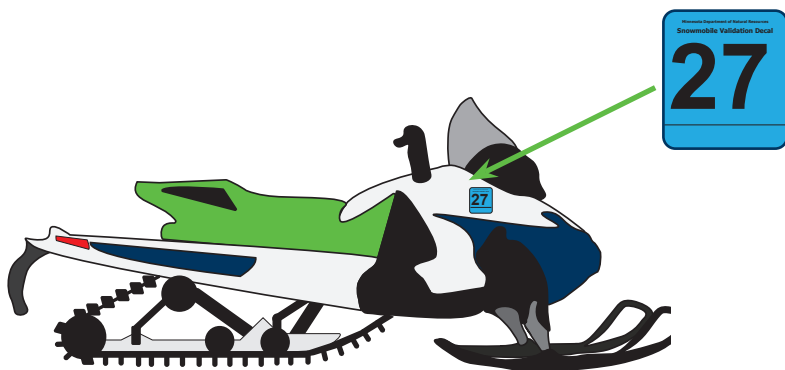
Display of Registration Validation Decals

(MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.82 SUBDIVISION 3)

A person must not operate a snowmobile in the state or allow another to operate the person's snowmobile in the state unless the snowmobile has its unexpired registration decal affixed to each side of the snowmobile and the decals are legible.

The registration decal must be affixed:

- for snowmobiles made after June 30, 1972, in the areas provided by the manufacturer
- for all other snowmobiles, on each side of the cowling on the upper half of the snowmobile
- When any previously affixed registration decal is destroyed or lost, a duplicate must be affixed in the same manner



Registration format transition

(MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.82 SUBDIVISION 2 AND 3B)

Displaying registration numbers are not required when a larger-format registration decal as provided under Minnesota Statutes, section 84.82, subdivision 2, is displayed according to Minnesota Statutes, section 84.82, subdivision 3b.

Snowmobiles displaying valid but older, smaller-format registration decals must display the separate registration numbers. Owners are not required to get the new registration stickers until their current registration is up for renewal. Persons may obtain duplicate registration decals in the new, larger format, when available, without being required to display the separate registration numbers.

Nontrail Snowmobile Registration

Nontrail snowmobile registration is available for snowmobilers who do not operate on state or grant-in-aid state trails. A nontrail registration decal is required to be displayed on the snowmobile.



- Nontrail registration does not allow for operation on state or grant-in-aid state trails even if you have a one-year snowmobile state trail pass on the snowmobile.
- You cannot operate a NonTrail registered snowmobile on a state or grant in aid trail located within a road right of way.
- Nontrail snowmobile registrations are non-transferable.

Registration Exemptions

- being used to groom a state or grant-in-aid trail
- owned and used by the federal government, an Indian tribal government, another state or a political subdivision
- if the snowmobile is registered by tribal members through the tribal government
- registered in a country other than the U.S. and being used temporarily in Minnesota
- currently registered in another state and not kept in Minnesota for more than 30 consecutive days
- used exclusively in organized track-racing events
- in transit by a manufacturer, distributor, or dealer
- at least 15 years old in transit by an individual for use on land owned or leased by the individual
- used exclusively for agricultural purposes
- a snowmobile with an engine displacement that is 125 cubic centimeters or less and the snowmobile is not operated on a state or grant-in-aid trail

Transfer or Termination of Snowmobile Ownership

(MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.84)

Within 15 days after the transfer of ownership, or any part thereof, other than a security interest, or the destruction or abandonment of any snowmobile, written notice of the transfer or destruction or abandonment shall be given to the commissioner in such form as the commissioner shall prescribe.

An application for transfer must be executed by the current owner and the purchaser using a bill of sale that includes the vehicle serial number.

The purchaser is subject to the penalties imposed by section 84.88 if the purchaser fails to apply for transfer of ownership as provided under this subdivision. Every owner or part owner of a snowmobile shall, upon failure to give notice of destruction or abandonment, be subject to the penalties imposed by section 84.88.

(UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.88 - PENALTY)

Any person who shall violate any provision of sections 84.88 or any rule of the commissioner of natural resources or of the commissioner of public safety promulgated pursuant to law shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

How to Transfer Ownership

Simply obtain a bill of sale that includes the serial number of the snowmobile from the current owner and along with the universal registration form and a check/money order for the appropriate registration/transfer fees, to the DNR License Center or stop in at a deputy registrar.

Collector Snowmobile

Unlimited Collector Snowmobile Use

(MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.82 SUBDIVISION 6A)

Snowmobiles may be issued an exempt registration if the machine is at least 25 years old. Exempt registration is valid from the date of issuance until ownership of the snowmobile is transferred. Exempt registrations are not transferable.

Note: A one-year snowmobile state trail pass is required if you operate on a state or grant-in-aid trail.

Limited Collector Snowmobile Use

(MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.82 SUBDIVISION 7A)

A special permit may be issued to a person or organization to operate or transport a collector snowmobile without registration for parades or organized group outings, such as races, rallies, and other promotional events, and for up to ten days each year for personal transportation. The commissioner may impose a reasonable restriction on a permittee and may revoke, amend, suspend, or modify a permit for cause.


Destroyed, Abandoned, or Stolen Snowmobile

If your snowmobile is destroyed, abandoned, or stolen, notify the DNR License Center at 500 Lafayette Rd, St. Paul, MN 55155-4026, (651) 296-2316 or 1-800-285-2000 within 15 days.

mi EXPLORE MINNESOTA


visit **Fairmont**
City of 5 Lakes

A Snowmobiler's Paradise with 140 Miles of Groomed Trails!



Paid Advertisement

507-235-8585 f i o v
VisitFairmontMN.com



TAKE CONTROL

Manufacturer of Snowmobile Traction Products for the demanding snowmobile rider and racer.

TRACTION BY **STUD BOY**



Paid Advertisement

231-853-2323

WWW.STUDBOYTRACTION.COM

Snowmobile clubs make the difference

What does your local snowmobile club do?

- Snowmobile users rely on properly maintained and signed routes for snowmobiling
- Snowmobile clubs develop partnerships with private landowners to create snowmobile trails throughout Minnesota
- Dedicated volunteer members of snowmobile clubs help build and maintain those trail systems
- Reach out to your local snowmobile club to find out more information at mnusa.org

Make New Friends, Join a Snowmobile Club



You'll Never Ride Alone

International Snowmobile Manufacturers Assn.
1640 Haslett Road • Suite 170 • Haslett MI 48840
(517) 339-7788 • www.snowmobile.org

Dealer and Manufacturer Registration

(MINNESOTA RULE 6100.5001 SUBPART 1-2)

Demonstration or testing purposes

Application for registration of all snowmobiles owned by a dealer and operated for demonstration or testing purposes shall be made to the commissioner.

Research, experimentation, or demonstration purposes

Application for registration of all snowmobiles owned by a manufacturer and operated for research testing, experimentation, or demonstration purposes shall be made to the commissioner.

Special Operating Permits

Upon written application by the responsible event sponsor to the commissioner, special operating permits for limited periods of time not to exceed 30 days may be issued to operators of snowmobiles from states which do not require registration when such snowmobiles are to be used in connection with a responsibly organized group outing, trail ride, race, rally, or other promotional events. Such permit shall be conspicuously displayed on the snowmobile and is valid only when the snowmobile is used in connection with the event for which the permit was issued and for the period of time shown on the permit.

Snowmobile State Trail Pass

A snowmobile that is not registered in the state or that is registered by a manufacturer or dealer, may not be operated on a state or grant-in-aid snowmobile trail unless the snowmobile pass is available for inspection by a peace officer, a conservation officer, or an employee designated under Minnesota Statute 84.0835.

A Snowmobile State Trail Pass is valid November 1 – June 30. Anyone operating a snowmobile in violation of this law will be required to purchase an annual state trail pass for \$71.00 in addition to any ticket or fine.

(MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.8205 SUBDIVISION 1C)

A snowmobile state trail pass is available at the Deputy Registrar, Game and Fish Licensing agents, DNR License Center, online www.mndnr.gov or by phone 1-888-MNLICENSE

Snowmobile Pass Fees:

Type of Pass	Fee
One Year Trail Pass	\$51.00
Penalty Annual Trail Pass	\$71.00
(Required to buy if found operating on state or grant-in-aid trail without a pass)	
Dealer/Manufacturer Trail Pass	\$16.00
Duplicates	\$2.50

Note: For Online purchases, add 3% plus a \$1.65 service fee. For phone purchases, add \$3.50

State Trail Pass Exemptions

A snowmobile state trail pass is not required for:

- a snowmobile while being used to groom a state or grant-in-aid trail
- a snowmobile owned by the federal government, Indian tribal government, state, and political subdivisions
- operating a collector snowmobile with a permit
- operating a snowmobile on portions of a trail owned by the person or the person's spouse, child, or parent

Did you know?

No less than 60 percent of revenue collected from snowmobile registration and snowmobile state trail sticker fees must be expended for grants-in-aid to develop, maintain, and groom trails and acquire easements.”

MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.83

Volunteer Instructors Wanted

As a volunteer Snowmobile Safety Instructor, you can use your knowledge and experience to teach youth to ride snowmobiles safely. Training sessions are administered by Regional Training Officers (RTOs) with the division of enforcement and are no cost to participants. During the training session, you will learn about the policy and procedures, teaching concepts, use of training aids, classroom curriculum and hands-on training techniques.

Learn how you can become a volunteer snowmobile safety instructor at:

mndnr.gov/safety/instructors/snowmobile



SNOWMOBILE SAFETY TRAINING

REQUIREMENTS

Residents born after December 31, 1976, must complete a snowmobile safety training course to operate a snowmobile in Minnesota.

While operating a snowmobile, you must have either:

- a snowmobile safety certificate in your possession or
- a snowmobile safety certificate indicator on your driver's license or on your Minnesota ID card

*Minnesota Enhanced driver's license does not allow the certification indicator to be printed on license, but will be on driver's record



Ages 11 to 15

Youth can complete safety training by selecting one of the choices below. Either choice will have a required "hands-on" snowmobile riding course.

Choice 1: Attend a Classroom snowmobile course

- Course fee \$5.00
- 8 hour course provided by DNR Volunteer Instructors
- Meets two or more times in a classroom setting
- Required "hands-on" snowmobile riding course included**

Choice 2: Complete the Minnesota Hybrid snowmobile course (2 parts)

- Complete the online course: snowmobilecourse.com [course fee \$34.95]
- Attend a hybrid snowmobile class which includes the "hands-on" snowmobile riding course**

**Additional fees may apply to attend the hands-on course. Contact the instructor.

Where do I find a training course?

On the DNR website www.mndnr.gov, click on Education & Safety and then under Recreational Vehicle Safety Classes to find snowmobile safety training. You may also contact the DNR Information Center by email (info.dnr@state.mn.us) or by phone 1-888-646-6367.

Ages 16 and older

Anyone who is 16 years or older may complete the snowmobile safety online course at snowmobilecourse.com and click on the Minnesota course link. Participants will pay with a credit card to obtain the safety certificate via online portal. Anyone 16 or older is not required to attend the "hands on" snowmobile riding course.

Offender Snowmobile Safety Training

A person who is convicted of careless or reckless operation, or two or more speeding violations in a snowmobile season, must successfully complete a snowmobile safety training course before operating a snowmobile.

Certificates Issued In Other States

If a person completes a safety course in another state that is recognized by the commissioner under a reciprocity agreement or certified by the commissioner as substantially similar to requirements in this state, evidence that the person has completed that course is acceptable in lieu of a certificate under this section. (MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.862 SUBDIVISION 2A)

YOUTH OPERATION REQUIREMENTS

The owner or person in lawful control of a snowmobile is jointly responsible for laws violated by a minor on that snowmobile.

Helmet

Anyone under 18 years old must wear an approved helmet.
(MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.872 SUBD 1A)

- Operators or riders under 18 years of age must wear an approved helmet, except when participating in a parade or operating on land belonging to a parent, grandparent, sibling, uncle, or aunt.
- An approved helmet must meet federal law, which requires the helmet to display the DOT symbol.

Residents and Non-Residents

Under age 12

- Without safety certificate, may drive a snowmobile on public lands, public waters, or grant-in-aid trails if accompanied by an adult*
- May not drive a snowmobile across state or county roads
- May not drive snowmobiles on streets or highways in a municipality

Ages 12 and 13

- May drive a snowmobile on public lands, public waters, or grant-in-aid trails **IF** accompanied by an adult **OR** in possession of a valid snowmobile safety certificate
- May not drive a snowmobile across state or county roads

Continued...

- May not drive snowmobiles on streets or highways in a municipality

Ages 14 to 17

- May drive a snowmobile across state or county roads IF in possession of a snowmobile safety certificate or driver's license or ID card with valid snowmobile indicator
- May drive a snowmobile on public lands, public waters, or grant-in-aid trails WITH a snowmobile safety certificate
- May drive a snowmobile on streets or highways in municipalities, if not prohibited by local ordinance

Over Age 18

- Residents born after December 31, 1976, who operate a snowmobile in Minnesota must possess a valid snowmobile safety certificate or a driver's license or ID card with a valid snowmobile indicator.

** Accompanied by an adult means a parent, legal guardian, or other person 18 years of age or older designated by the parent or guardian who needs to be close enough to be able to direct the youth's operation of their snowmobile.*

(MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.872 SUBDIVISION 3 (B))

Exception for Residents and Non-Residents

Without a snowmobile safety certificate, a person under the age of 14 years may operate a snowmobile only if they are supervised or accompanied by one of the following: parent, legal guardian, or other person 18 years of age or older designated by the parent or guardian. The supervising or accompanying adult needs to be close enough to be able to direct the youth's operation of their snowmobile. This exception does not allow an operator under the age of 14 to cross a public road. Non-residents who are 18 years old and older do not need a snowmobile safety certificate.

SAFETY ON ICE

You can't judge ice strength by its appearance alone or by following previous tracks. Before traveling on ice, consider age, thickness, air temperature, and snow cover. Remember that factors like water depth, body size, water chemistry, currents, weight distribution, and local weather affect ice strength as well.

Always consult local experts about conditions, as ice can change rapidly. Carry essential safety gear, including buoyant clothing, ice picks, a cellphone, and a throw rope.

Regularly check ice thickness as you go – your safety is your responsibility!

ICE IS NEVER 100% SAFE! Recommended Minimum Ice Thickness *(Guidelines for New, Clear Ice Only)*



GENERAL SNOWMOBILE OPERATIONS

EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

All snowmobiles operated on public lands, waters, or roadways must be equipped as follows:

Lights (MINNESOTA RULE 6100.5700 SUBPART 1)

- Headlights and taillights must be on during hours of darkness.
- Headlights must be able to reveal people and vehicles 100 feet ahead and aimed so they will not blind an oncoming snowmobiler.
- Colored lenses on headlights are NOT lawful when the snowmobile is operated on roads or road rights-of-way, including crossing roads and operating in ditches or outside slopes.
- Red taillights must be visible for 500 feet to the rear of the snowmobile.

Don't "overdrive" your snowmobile's headlight. Even at 30 miles per hour, it can take a much longer distance to stop on ice than your headlight shines.

Brakes (MINNESOTA RULE 6100.5700 SUBPART 1)

- Brakes must be able to control movement and to stop and hold the snowmobile track.

Reflector Material (MINNESOTA RULE 6100.5700 SUBPART 1 & 2)

- Snowmobiles must have at least 16 square inches of reflector material on each side forward of the handlebars.
- Any sled, trailer, or other device that is towed by a snowmobile during hours of darkness must display visible reflector material on each side and at the rear of the snowmobile.

Muffler Requirements (MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.871 SUBD 1)

- Snowmobiles must be equipped at all times with a muffler in good working order that blends the exhaust noise into the overall snowmobile noise and is in constant operation to prevent excessive or unusual noise.
- A snowmobile operated, offered for sale, or sold in this state must have an exhaust system that does not emit or produce a sharp popping or crackling sound.
- Any new snowmobile offered for sale must comply with the muffler requirement.
- No person shall have for sale, sell, or offer for sale on any new snowmobile any muffler that fails to comply with the specifications required by the rules of the commissioner after the effective date of the rules.

***New - Certification**

- Beginning July 1, 2026, all after-market mufflers installed on a snowmobile must have a permanent stamp, clearly visible on the muffler, certified by the muffler manufacturer and stating that the muffler conforms to the snowmobile muffler noise limits specified by the rules of the commissioner.

Continued...

Exceptions

- This section does not apply to organized races or similar competitive events held on: private lands, with the permission of the owner, lessee, or custodian of the land; public lands and water under the jurisdiction of the commissioner of natural resources, with the commissioner's permission; or other public lands, with the consent of the public agency owning the land.

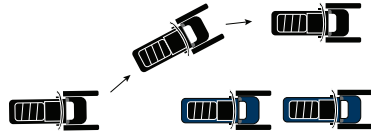
Driver to stop for collision and damage

- Under Minnesota law 169.09, snowmobiles involved with collisions shall immediately stop the vehicle at the scene of the collision, or as close to the scene as possible, and reasonably investigate what was struck. If the driver knows or has reason to know the collision resulted in injury to or death of another, the driver in every event shall remain at the scene of the collision until the driver has fulfilled the requirements of this section as to the giving of information. This same is true, If the driver knows or has reason to know the collision involves damage to a vehicle driven or attended by another.
- Accidents occurring on public lands or trail systems that result in damage to property or fixtures, injury, death, or other motor vehicles.

TRAIL RIDING RULES

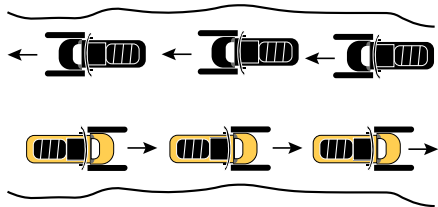
Passing

When overtaking another snowmobile going in the same direction, always pass on the left.



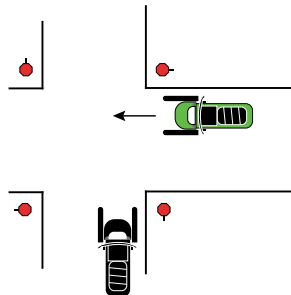
Meeting

When meeting another snowmobile, always slow down and stay to the right.



Meeting at an intersection

When meeting at an intersection, the operator to the right has the right of way.



TRAIL SIGNS

Informational sign:

Indicates intersections or major changes in trail direction.



Directional blazer:

Indicates changes in trail direction.



Reassuring blazer:

Placed at intervals along the trail reassures users that they are still on the trail.



Stop sign:

Placed at a road crossing or trail intersections will indicate a snowmobile must come to a complete stop.



No snowmobiling sign:

Indicates an area where snowmobiling is prohibited.



No studded tracks sign:

Indicates no metal traction devices allowed on trail.



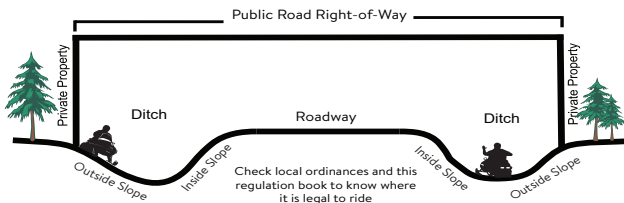
Two-way trail sign:

Indicates trails with permitted two-way travel during nighttime hours within the public road right-of-way.



WHERE YOU MAY RIDE A SNOWMOBILE

- on state and local grant-in-aid snowmobile trails.
Visit: mndr.gov/snowmobiling
- in the bottom or outside slope of a ditch of a county or state road



NOTICE: Snowmobile operation is restricted to the bottom and outer slope of a road ditch of a state highway or county road. Road authorities may allow two-way operation on either side of the road.

Check with local government officials on operating snowmobiles within township or city limits as private property boundaries vary.

You may operate:

- on iced-over waters that have legal access (unless restricted by local ordinance)
- on township roads when not restricted by local ordinance
- on public lands that are open to motorized vehicles. Land uses vary. Be sure to check all federal, state, and local ordinances
- on your own land

Operation after sunset

- in the same direction as road traffic in the ditch from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise (other than this time, you can ride in either direction)
- one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise on two-way snowmobile trails that are located within the ditches or adjacent to streets or highways when specifically permitted by the road authority (look for posted two-way signs, see page 24)

Continued...

A snowmobile may make a direct crossing of a street or highway at any hour of the day provided:

1. the crossing is made at an angle of approximately 90 degrees to the direction of the highway and at a place where no obstruction prevents a quick and safe crossing; and
2. the snowmobile is brought to a complete stop before crossing the shoulder or main traveled way of the highway; and
3. the driver yields the right-of-way to all oncoming traffic which constitutes an immediate hazard; and
4. in crossing a divided highway, the crossing is made only at an intersection of such highway with another public street or highway or at a safe location approved by the road authority
5. if the crossing is made between the hours of one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise or in conditions of reduced visibility, only if both front and rear lights are on; and
6. a snowmobile may be operated upon a bridge, other than a bridge that is part of the main traveled lanes of an interstate highway, when required for the purpose of avoiding obstructions to travel when no other method of avoidance is possible; provided the snowmobile is operated in the extreme right-hand lane, the entrance to the roadway is made within 100 feet of the bridge and the crossing is made without undue delay

In the seven-county metro area (MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.90)

In the following counties—Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott or Washington—you may ride snowmobiles on:

- the groomed area of a snowmobile trail
- your own land
- land posted with signs specifically permitting the use of snowmobiles

You may not ride snowmobiles on land you do not own unless given written or verbal permission by the owner, occupant or lessee.

Outside the seven-county metro area

- the groomed area of a snowmobile trail
- Outside the seven-county metropolitan area, no person shall enter on any land not owned by the person for the purpose of operating a recreational motor vehicle (including snowmobile) after being notified, either orally or by written or posted notice, by the owner, occupant, or lessee not to do so

**Riding off a groomed trail has a potential to shutdown trails.
Stay on the trail!**

WHERE YOU MAY NOT RIDE

- on the roadway, shoulder, or inner slope of the ditch of a state or county road
- on the median of a four-lane roadway
- within the right-of-way of any interstate
- on the right-of-way between opposing lanes of traffic
- against traffic at night within the road right-of-way *Except when two-way trail travel signs permit use
- at airports
- in any state park, state recreation area, state historic site, wildlife management area, or state scientific and natural area with the exception of posted snowmobile trails and areas
- in any wildlife management area south of U.S. Highway 2 from Grand Forks east to Bemidji, then south along U.S. Highway 71 to Wadena, then east along U.S. Highway 10 to Staples and U.S. Highway 210 to the eastern boundary of the state, without written permission from the DNR
- on any iced-over waters located in a restricted area or where you don't have legal access
- in any areas restricted by local ordinances or municipalities
- in a tree nursery or planting area
- on state forest lands that are posted or designated closed to snowmobiling
- on state forest lands located in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, including all of Lake Isabella and Insula; and portions of Lake Jeanette and Burntside State Forests
- in National Wildlife Refuges, Waterfowl Production Areas, or the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

Other Prohibitions

It is unlawful to:

- operate your snowmobile in a careless, reckless, or heedless manner that endangers the operator, or property of another, or causes injury or damage (intentionally driving over open water, or water skipping, may be considered careless or reckless unless done as an event under special permit issued by the local sheriff's office)
- litter
- enter or leave lands by cutting wire or tearing down a fence
- mutilate, destroy, damage, or remove any shelter, comfort station, or facility on any state or grant-in-aid trail
- post, damage, or remove any signs on any lands or waters unless you are the landowner, occupant, or lessee of the property
- operate on state forest lands in a manner that causes erosion or rutting, damages or destroys trees or growing crops
- operate on a state forest trail that is posted for non-motorized use
- operate a snowmobile with metal traction devices on paved public trails when posted closed by state or local government

Special Provision - Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood Forest:

Motor vehicles and snowmobiles may operate only on forest roads that are not posted closed and on forest trails that are designated for motorized use. No motorized travel is allowed off designated trails under any circumstances.

The big game hunter/trapper motor vehicle use exception does not apply within Richard J. Dorer state forest.

SPEED LIMITS

It is unlawful to operate a snowmobile in excess of:

(MINNESOTA RULE 6100.5200 SUBPART 4)

- 50 MPH on any public lands or waters (see speed on frozen lake surfaces below)
- the posted speed limits on a trail
- a speed greater than various conditions dictate for the trail, terrain and visibility
- the posted road speed limit or 50 MPH, whichever is LOWER, while operating in the ditch
- any governmental unit snowmobile speed limit. Governmental units include any city, county, municipality, township, or conservation district

Speed on frozen lake surfaces greater than 10,000 acres:

(MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.87 SUBDIVISION 4)

Notwithstanding any law or rule to the contrary, a county may enact an ordinance to raise the speed limit up to 65 miles per hour for snowmobiles traveling on marked trails during daylight hours on lakes greater than 10,000 acres, subject to the approval of the commissioner or natural resources.

Within any posted speed limit, it remains unlawful for any person to drive or operate any snowmobile at a rate of speed greater than is reasonable or proper under all of the surrounding conditions or circumstances.

A Message from MN DNR Conservation Officers:

Going too fast for conditions? Not paying attention?
Drinking and driving?

We need you to RIDE SAFE! Know your abilities and ride within those limits. Group riding should be done with the most inexperienced rider in mind. Safe speeds, sober riding, staying on the right side of the trail and helmets will help ensure your ride is enjoyable. Otherwise, driving beyond your abilities and speeding can lead to injury or death to you and others.

Contact your local Conservation Officer with any questions.



ENFORCEMENT

Conservation officers, state troopers, deputy sheriffs, police officers and other peace officers are responsible for the enforcement of Minnesota's snowmobile laws. Whenever an enforcement officer signals you, you must stop. Fleeing an enforcement officer is a felony and the snowmobile used may be forfeited.



Your local conservation officer can be found at:

www.dnr.state.mn.us/officerpatrolareas/index.html

Penalties

Violation of most snowmobile statutes and rules are misdemeanors. Youth violations may result in snowmobile safety certificate suspension. Also, snowmobiles used in burglaries, fleeing a peace officer, or a DWI, may be subject to seizure and confiscation or forfeiture.

The owner or person in lawful control of a snowmobile is subject to penalties if he or she knowingly allows the snowmobile to be operated by someone physically or mentally unable to drive the vehicle safely, or is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

A person operating a snowmobile with metal traction devices on a paved trail is guilty of a petty misdemeanor punishable by a civil penalty or criminal fine of \$50 for the first offense, \$200 for the second offense, and \$300 for the third or subsequent offense. Criminal fines will be subject to court surcharges and fees in addition to this penalty amount.

Sunken Vehicles (MINNESOTA STATUTE 86B.107)

Minnesota law requires motor vehicles (including cars, trucks, watercrafts, snowmobiles and ATVs) that sink in a lake or river, be removed by the owner within 30 days. Owners must also notify the county sheriff within 48 hours. If the snowmobile or vehicle is not removed, the local unit of government can remove it and charge the owner two to five times the cost of removal.

Accidents

Minnesota has worked hard to reduce snowmobiling accidents, injuries, and fatalities through education and safety training programs. The largest contributing factor to crashes is excessive speed, followed by alcohol usage.

Reporting Requirements (MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.86 SUBDIVISION 6 C)

If you are involved in a snowmobile accident that results in injury requiring medical attention, death, or damage of more than \$500, you must file an official accident report with the Department of Natural Resources within 48 hours of the accident.

All snowmobile accidents need to be reported to the Sheriff's Office in the county the accident occurred.

SNOWMOBILING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

If you are convicted or refuse chemical testing – regardless of what vehicle type you are driving:

- Your driver's license is revoked, and your ATV, snowmobile, and motorboat privileges are all suspended for one year

If it's your first driving while intoxicated (DWI) offense and you are operating a snowmobile or other off-road recreational vehicle:

- You are also subject to chemical use assessments, conditional release, and plate impoundment of your highway licensed vehicles – the same as a DWI on a highway licensed vehicle

The underage not-a-drop provisions in the DWI laws now apply to snowmobiles and other off-road recreational vehicles:

- Your driver's license and operating privileges for highway vehicles will be revoked

Operating a snowmobile while under the influence of alcohol, a controlled substance or its metabolite, or other hazardous substance is unlawful. Operators who are impaired may be required to submit to tests by an enforcement officer to determine the presence of these substances. There is a separate additional criminal penalty for refusal to submit to the tests, and the person's snowmobiling privileges will be suspended for one year upon refusal. DWI convictions and refusals are recorded on the violator's driver's license record and affect their driver's license privileges.

An operator who is found to be impaired or has an alcohol concentration of .08 or more, can be charged with a misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor, or felony level Driving While Intoxicated (DWI). Persons convicted of a misdemeanor will be subject to: up to \$1,000 fine (plus surcharges); possible jail sentence; and loss of snowmobile operating privileges for one year.

In addition to the above misdemeanor penalties, the following gross misdemeanor penalty provisions may apply if the person has any prior DWI violations, has an alcohol concentration of twice the legal limit, or has a child under 16 years of age with them on the snowmobile:

- Up to \$3,000 fine with longer mandatory jail time
- Forfeiture of the snowmobile *If a person has three or more DWI convictions or revocations in the last 10 years, or has a prior felony conviction, he or she can be sentenced to 3-7 years in jail, up to \$14,000 fine, or both. Longer license revocations also would be imposed

Open Bottle Law (MINNESOTA STATUTE 169A.35 SUBDIVISION 1 (3))

It is unlawful for a person to drink or consume alcoholic beverages when operating a snowmobile on a roadway or shoulder of a roadway that is not a part of a designated snowmobile trail.

ZERO Alcohol

DNR conservation officers strongly encourage every snowmobiler to practice 'Zero Alcohol' use as part of their own safe riding habits. Many snowmobilers already choose to ride alcohol free. Practicing 'Zero Alcohol' before and during your next ride will save lives and reduce injuries.

MINNESOTA TRESPASS LAWS

Trespass is the most frequent complaint landowners have against snowmobilers. While individual violators face a monetary cost, their actions affect the broader snowmobile community when landowners deny access to their property because of problems associated with illegal off-trail use.

Trespass fines associated with recreational motor vehicles such as a snowmobile are subject to civil and criminal penalties, such as misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor. Criminal fine cost start at \$250 which may include additional court surcharges.

(MINNESOTA STATUTE 84.90)

A person is guilty of a gross misdemeanor

if the person: (MINNESOTA STATUTE 97A.315)

- Knowingly disregard signs prohibiting trespass
- Trespass after the landowner tells you not to
- Violate the trespass law twice in three years. If you are convicted of a gross misdemeanor, you will be subject to fines up to \$3,000 and up to one year in jail, your snowmobile registration will be null and void, and you will lose all hunting privileges for two years

Civil trespass (MINNESOTA STATUTE 97B.002 SUBDIVISION 1 AND 2)

- Range from \$50 for a first time violation to \$500 and loss of registration for a third violation.

You must have permission to:

- Enter posted land.
- Enter agricultural land — land that is plowed or tilled; has standing crops or crop residue; is within a maintained fence for enclosing domestic livestock; is planted native or introduced hay land or grassland; or is planted to short rotation woody crops (harvested within 15 years of planting).
- All planted grassland, hay land, and short rotation woody crop land meet the definition of agricultural land, grass land enrolled in the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), or the state Reinvest in Minnesota Reserve Program (RIM), Walk In Access areas. These lands do not need to be posted to prevent trespass.

It's unlawful to:

- Wound or kill another person's domestic animal or destroy private property
- Pass through a closed gate without returning it to the original position
- Stray off the groomed portions of marked state trails and grant in aid trails



LANDOWNERS DESERVE YOUR RESPECT



Protect Land Use Privileges

•*Stay on the Trail!* •*If you Don't know - Don't Go.*



Canadian Council of
Snowmobile Organizations
Conseil canadien des
organismes de motoneige
www.ccsso-ccom.ca



www.snowmobilers.org

Printed in the United States of America

GAME LAWS RELATED TO SNOWMOBILING

General Restrictions

A person licensed to take deer must not operate a snowmobile or an off-highway vehicle on public or private property in an area open for the taking of deer by firearms on a day that they are licensed to take deer in that area except:

- Before legal shooting hours (1/2 hour before sunrise).
- From 11am until 2pm.
- After legal shooting hours (1/2 hour after sunset).
- On property that they own.
- On private property with the landowner's permission.
- Under a permit issued by a conservation officer to operate these vehicles in an emergency, medical, or other unusual situation during the restricted hours.

Recreational Snowmobile and OHV Riders

During the firearms deer season, option A season, snowmobile trails and OHV trails and routes on state forest lands are closed to ALL recreational snowmobile and off-highway vehicle riding (ATV, OHM, and ORV) where deer may be taken by rifle only (see MN Hunting and Trapping Regulations booklet):

- Series 100 permit areas
- Portions of series 200 permit areas
- Forest roads remain open to snowmobile and OHV use

Firearms Transportation in Motor Vehicles

A person may transport unloaded, uncased firearms (excluding pistols) in a motor vehicle, including snowmobiles:

- While at a shooting range with permission
- While lawfully hunting on private or public land or while traveling to or from a site the person intends to hunt or trap or has lawfully hunted that day

Firearms must be transported unloaded and cased:

- Within Anoka, Hennepin, and Ramsey counties
- Within boundaries of a home rule charter, or statutory city with population of 2,500 or more
- On school grounds
- As otherwise restricted in game refuges, shining, thermal imaging or night vision laws
- A handgun/pistol cannot be transported uncased without a valid permit to carry

It is unlawful to:

- use a snowmobile to chase, run over, or kill a wild animal
- shoot or attempt to shoot a wild animal from a snowmobile

FOR MORE INFORMATION

GRANT-IN-AID PROGRAM

The Grant-in-Aid Program is a cooperative effort between the Minnesota DNR, local governments, local snowmobile organizations, and private landowners who provide the majority of Minnesota's 22,000 miles of snowmobile trails. Funded through snowmobile registration and Snowmobile state trail sticker fees and gas taxes, the grant-in-aid program helps local groups and clubs develop and maintain trails.

- Grant-in-aid trails are open each year from December 1 to April 1
(*Minnesota Statute 85.018 Subdivision 5*)
- Many grant-in-aid trails throughout the state run through private property. Stay on good terms with these landowners by staying on marked trails. Don't jeopardize your ability to use private lands

CONTACT INFORMATION

Where to ride your snowmobile

mndnr.gov/snowmobiling

State trails

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Information Center
500 Lafayette Rd.
St. Paul, MN 55155-4040
651-296-6157 or 888-MINNDNR

CALL US

Interpreters are available to answer all of your questions

DNR license, titling and registration: M-F 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

info.dnr@state.mn.us

888-MINNDNR or 651-296-6157

For more information on snowmobile trails, maps, trip planning, safety training, rules and regulations, trail closures and more, visit **mndnr.gov/snowmobiling**

To contact a conservation officer call 888-MINNDNR or 651-296-6157.



MinnesotaDNR



mndnr_ENF



minnesotadnr



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road

St. Paul, MN 55155-4040

888-MINNDNR or 651-296-6157

mndnr.gov

The Minnesota DNR prohibits discrimination in its programs and services based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, public assistance status, age, sexual orientation or disability. Persons with disabilities may request reasonable modifications to access or participate in DNR programs and services by contacting the DNR ADA Title II Coordinator at info.dnr@state.mn.us or 651-296-6157, or through MN Relay Service 711. Discrimination inquiries should be sent to Minnesota DNR, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4049.

©2025, State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources



Publication printed using vegetable-based ink. Please recycle.