

Snowmachine safety

It's been a terrific winter for snow sports. The cold temperatures have frozen area waterways earlier than usual, and the copious snowfall has snowmobilers happy. Here are a few tips to make your snowmachine experience a happy one.

First of all, be prepared for an emergency. Make sure your snowmobile is gassed and in good working order. Check the lights, belts and track to make sure that your machine is fully operational. Carry an emergency kit that contains a first aid kit, maps, emergency water and rations, and keep your cell phone charged. Have your trail permit attached to your sled.

If you plan on sledding on frozen waterways, make sure your suit is buoyant. Cold water can kill in minutes, and a buoyant snowmobile suit can keep you afloat long enough for help to reach you. Wear ice picks in case you fall through the ice. Sledding with others will give you instant help should the need arise.

Plan your route ahead of time, and tell someone you're going out, and when you expect to return.

Obey the rules of OFSC trails, especially speed limits. Today's sleds can be incredibly fast, and riders can easily outdrive their headlights at night. Obstacles can be hard to see, especially on lakes, where drifts and pressure ridges can cause a crash.

Exercise caution, and drive within your abilities. Never drink and drive.

Always carry your licence and other documents with you, and surrender them to police upon demand. It's the law.

Safe sledding!