

Snowmobilers Urged To Be Safe On The Trails This Season

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) reminds snowmobile operators and riders to focus on safety this winter when snowfall allows for snowmobile riding. International Snowmobile Safety Week is Jan. 15-23 this year.

“It’s important that snowmobile operators carefully review their safety checklist before hitting the trails this winter,” said Jeff Hopkins, IDNR Safety Education Administrator. “Accidents are often preventable if snowmobile drivers and riders take reasonable and proper precautions.”

Basic safety tips for safe snowmobiling include:

- Never consume alcohol or drugs before or during a ride.

- Know your equipment, and make sure that equipment is in proper working order.
- Wear sensible, protective clothing designed for snowmobiling, including a full-size helmet, goggles, or face shield to prevent injuries from twigs, stones, ice chips, and flying debris.
- Avoid wearing long scarves, which may get caught in moving parts of the snowmobile.
- Know the terrain you are going to ride.
- Be aware of trails or portions of trails that may be closed.
- Drowning is one cause of snowmobile fatalities; when not familiar with the body of water or thickness of the ice, avoid these areas.
- Know the weather forecast, and especially the ice and snow conditions in the area.
- Always use the buddy system and never ride alone or unaccompanied.
- Be careful when crossing roads; come to a complete stop and make sure no traffic is approaching from any direction.
- Travel at a reasonable rate of speed for visibility and conditions.

“In most instances, knowing the trail and traveling at a reasonable rate of speed for trail conditions can prevent accidents,” Hopkins said. “Staying alert and sober is a must. Unfortunately, far too many accidents involve impaired operators, resulting in injuries and fatalities.”

Snowmobile safety information is available on the IDNR website at <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/safety/Pages/SnowmobileSafety.aspx>