



Safe Snowmobiling: What You Can Do

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Child safety advocates and parents who snowmobile should promote the following:

- ✱ Consistently demonstrate safe snowmobile behaviors
- ✱ Set age and developmentally appropriate expectations for youth
- ✱ Give positive feedback to youth demonstrating safe snowmobile practices
- ✱ Provide adequate supervision and guidance to youth drivers
- ✱ Make certain youth drivers take a certified training class and periodically review safety guidelines with them
- ✱ Join a snowmobile club that provides family-oriented activities in a safe, alcohol-free environment
- ✱ Always use the buddy system
- ✱ Maintain a zero tolerance for combining alcohol consumption and snowmobile operation
- ✱ Wear an approved helmet, gloves, boots and layered clothing including a wind resistant, water-repellant outer layer

State Maternal and Child Health staff should meet with staff of state agencies responsible for youth snowmobile training and enforcement to discuss methods to:

- ✱ Encourage cooperation between local public health agencies, state and local snowmobile clubs, and agencies responsible for enforcement of snowmobile laws
- ✱ Evaluate the effectiveness of laws, safety training, and snowmobile design changes to reduce snowmobile-related injury among youth
- ✱ Increase access to and availability of operator safety education classes and groomed trails
- ✱ Sponsor or conduct research to identify effective injury prevention strategies for youth

- ✱ Establish and maintain an emergency medical system responsive to the off-road nature of snowmobiling
- ✱ Work with bars/taverns, law enforcement, and snowmobile clubs to ensure responsible adult use of alcohol when snowmobiling
- ✱ Promote safe snowmobiling as an enjoyable family activity

All groups should work together to assure adequate surveillance and appropriate media coverage of youth participation in snowmobile recreation.

Surveillance activities could include:

- ✱ Encouraging hospitals to specifically code snowmobile-related injuries. (The ICD-10-CM injury code (V86) does not specifically code snowmobile-related hospitalizations.)
- ✱ Ensuring snowmobile incident reports collect data about operator status, helmet use, time, weather and terrain conditions, snowmobile make/model, and alcohol involvement
- ✱ Linking snowmobile incident report data to emergency room and hospital data to uncover injury severity, treatment, and cost
- ✱ Encouraging state and local child death review teams to review deaths associated with off-road motor vehicle use

Assuring safe media coverage could include:

- ✱ Writing letters to the media in response to pictures or stories that depict unsafe snowmobile practices
- ✱ Working with advertising media to portray safe and age-appropriate snowmobile products and activities
- ✱ Providing facts on childhood snowmobile-related injury with the media

Local and state organizations should lobby national-level snowmobile manufacturers, associations, government agencies, and advocacy groups to develop guidelines for youth snowmobile operation that are sensitive to the

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physical, cognitive, and emotional development of youth; and legal, medical, and cultural factors.

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