

Snowmobiling-Do's & Don'ts      By: Sheila Meyer

Winter has arrived in the Creston Valley. Many people will be enjoying the great outdoors on a snowmobile. Whether you are using your snowmobile for recreation or working there is a need for some safety precautions.

In most cases it has been found that, at the time of the accident, the operator was either inattentive, careless, or uninformed about safe operating procedures.

When using snowmobiles anytime on Forest Service roads the operator and the vehicle must be covered by liability insurance.

Always tell someone where you are going and your expected time of return.

Always use the buddy system on any trip and never travel alone.

Watch your Back! Always keep the sled behind you in sight. If you lose sight, stop and wait, or go back and locate the missing rider.

Always check avalanche conditions first, and carry a beacon, probe and shovel.

Be aware of unseen obstructions hidden beneath the snow. Driving into the woods requires reduced speed and increased vigilance.

Only carry passengers if your snowmobile is designed to do so.

Small children should be carried in front of the operator.

Check the depth of ice before crossing unfamiliar lakes or rivers

Wear protective equipment. A helmet is a must! The chance of head injuries are twice as likely if you do not wear a helmet. Wear warm clothing appropriate for weather conditions. Clothing which allows ventilation is best.

If night riding, always make sure your machine has proper lighting and reflectors. Always carry a flashlight.

Respect the property and rights of others. Obtain permission to travel across private land.

Obey gate closures and regulatory signs. Don't litter the trail.

Respect wildlife and be particularly sensitive of animals that may be struggling to survive the winter conditions.

Stay Sober! It is a criminal offence to operate a snowmobile while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Be responsible.

By being alert and maintaining a safe speed you will have a better opportunity to respond to any trail hazards which may arise.

Have fun and enjoy the great outdoors.