

Welcome to Snowmobiling!

The sense of freedom you get while riding a snowmobile over Alaska's vast lands and lakes can be exhilarating, yet with that freedom comes responsibility. Recreational snowmobiling involves potential dangers and is an activity that is not liked by everyone. The future of the sport depends on your reasonable and courteous behavior.

Please read this brochure to learn your legal obligations as a snowmobiler. By driving **SAFE, SMART, and LEGAL**, you protect the future of your sport.

Before you ride:

- Know Alaska's snowmobile laws and regulations.
- Read your owner's manual.
- Check your snowmobile and equipment.
- Wear proper clothing.
- Find out about weather, snow, and ice conditions.
- Tell someone specifically where you are going and when you expect to return.

Be sure to:

- Let weather, lighting and trail conditions determine a safe speed.
- Ride sober - no alcohol or drugs.
- Be considerate of other trail users, private landowners, and fellow riders.
- Respect public and private property.
- Be safe in state highway rights-of-way: always yield to pedestrians, non-motorized users and other motor vehicles.
- Use your headlight and taillight.
- Maintain adequate spacing between machines to avoid collision.
- Reduce your speed when riding in the dark to less than 40 mph.

Obey all laws and regulations

This brochure highlights Alaska's state laws and regulations as they apply to snowmobiles operating on public lands, including state highway rights-of-way. Know how Alaska's laws and regulations listed below apply to you:

- ✳ **Driver's License *Not* Required**
- ✳ **Parental Liability**
- ✳ **Speed Limits**
- ✳ **Where you may and may not ride**
- ✳ **Night Operating Restrictions**
- ✳ **Snowmobile Registration**
- ✳ **Operating a Vehicle While Intoxicated**
- ✳ **Equipment Required on Snowmobiles**

Note: Special rules may apply in designated State and Federal Land management Areas.

ALASKA SNOWMOBILE

Safety Laws, Rules and Regulations

2002-2003



Produced by:
Alaska Department of Transportation
Alaska Department of Natural Resources,
Div. of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

NOTE: This is a summary of Alaska's 2002-2003 snowmobile regulations. For complete regulations, consult the state statutes and rules: <http://www.legis.state.ak.us/folhome.htm>

DNR and SnoTRAC

Working to improve the future of snowmobiling in Alaska

The Alaska Department of Natural Resource's (DNR) Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation is working with the **Snowmobile Trails Advisory Committee** (SnoTRAC), a statewide citizen advisory committee, to promote safe snowmobiling and development of better facilities for snowmobile use statewide.

Together, DNR and SnoTRAC administer Snowmobile Trails Grants made possible by snowmobile registration fees paid to the state for statewide trail acquisition, development, maintenance, and safety education. The grants depend upon an annual appropriation by the legislature of snowmobile fees collected the previous year.

More information can be obtained by contacting the DNR Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation, (907) 269-8700.

Snowmobile Registration Fees make a difference:



Your Snowmobile Registration fees (\$10.00 every two years) make possible Snowmobile Trails Grants for trail acquisition, development, maintenance, and safety education. These grants are generally awarded to local snowmobile clubs who use them to make specific trail improvements or provide safety education at the local level.

Snowmobile Trails Grants are valuable because most "traditional" snowmobile trails in Alaska are not legally protected as such. Protecting snowmobile access is an important concern that impacts the future of the sport.

To see where your registration dollars have been invested, or if your local organization would like to submit an application to SnoTRAC, visit the web at <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/grants/snowmotr.htm> or call the DNR Div. of Parks & Outdoor Recreation.

Safety Education: helping Alaskans to ride safe and legal

Currently Alaska's DNR is working with the snowmobile community leadership and the Department of Public Safety to develop a statewide Safety Education Program. They are exploring options to certify young people to ride legally before they are of age to obtain a driver's license.

Alaska is the only northern jurisdiction in North America that does not have a state snowmobile safety education program. Similar to Alaska's State Boating Safety Program, a snowmobile-specific program could teach basic safety, riding skills and the legal responsibilities that go along with snowmobiling on public land. The program is intended to build on important community resources such as existing snowmobile clubs, educators, and community organizations that can effectively deliver the state curriculum at the local level.

Signage:

The State SnoTRAC Board and Div. of Parks and Outdoor Recreation have adopted "Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Signing and Placement" based on national standards.

Representative snowmobile trails signs include:



Rules of the Road

In Alaska, many laws that apply to snowmobiles are found in motor vehicle sections of the Alaska Statutes (AS) and Alaska Administrative Code (AAC). This brochure lists portions of basic "rules of the road". For complete regulations consult the state statutes and rules or your local Alaska State Trooper Office.

Speed Limits:

AAC 13.02.275 - (a) No person may drive a vehicle at a speed greater than is **reasonable and prudent** considering the traffic, roadway, and weather conditions.

(b) Except when a special hazard exists that requires a lower speed for compliance with (a) of this section, the limits specified in this subsection are the maximum lawful speeds throughout the state, and no person may drive a vehicle at a speed in excess of these maximum limits, unless otherwise posted:

- (1) 15 miles per hour in an alley;**
 - (2) 20 miles per hour in a business district;**
 - (3) 25 miles per hour in a residential district; or**
 - (4) 55 miles per hour on any other roadway.**
- (a)** The maximum speed limits set forth in **(b)** of this section may be altered as authorized in 13 AAC 02.280.

Equipment Required:

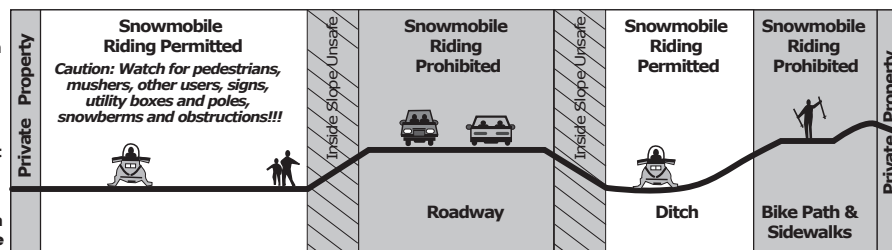
Alaska Administrative Code 13.04.001(c) & 13.04.400 - 420. All snowmobiles operated on public lands or rights-of-way must be equipped as follows:

- **Lights and Reflectors** - One red reflector is required and one headlight and a taillight must be working and on from a 1/2 hour after sunrise to 1/2 hour before sunset. {Comment: **Be smart. Use headlights both day and night**}.
- **Brakes** - Brakes are required that will work under normal driving conditions and when loading.
- **Throttle** - A snowmobile must be equipped with a throttle in which, when released by hand, will return engine speed to idle, close the carburetor, and disengage the clutch.
- **Mufflers and Emission Control Systems** - A snowmobile must be equipped with a carburetor intake, exhaust muffler, and an emission-control system in good working condition.
- **Other Equipment is also required by law:**
 - **A rear snowflap to deflect material or objects thrown by the track**
 - **A protective shield over all moving parts**
 - **Reflectors on the sides or side cowling (to meet the Society of Automotive Engineers Standards)**
 - **When towing, use of a rigid drawbar that is no longer than 10 feet**
 - **A spark arrester**

Snowmobiles in State Highway Rights-of-Way

Where you MAY ride . . .

- In the bottom or outside slope of a ditch
- Beyond 3 feet from roadway edge (this is the legal limit; beyond 10 feet is safer)
- At night, in the same direction as traffic in the closest lane



Above: Follow the recommended and legal guidelines shown above. Before riding in state rights-of-way know applicable laws, and always drive with extreme care and courtesy - keep our highways safe!!!!
NOTE: Speed limits apply to entire right of way.

Where you may NOT ride . . .

- On a roadway or shoulder
- On sidewalks or bikepaths
- In a median of a divided highway
- Anywhere in a "Controlled Access Facility"

Registration is Required!

AS 28.39.010 (a) a person may not operate a snowmobile within the state unless the snowmobile has been registered and numbered as required by this chapter.

AS 28.39.010 (b) A person who violates (a) of this section is guilty of an infraction and is subject to a \$300 fine under AS 28.40.050 (c).

Cost: The cost of registration is \$10 for 2 years, and most of this money goes back to DNR to fund snowmobile education and trail grants. For information about the snowmobile trail grant program, call (907) 269-8700.

Questions About Snowmobile Registration? Visit the www.state.ak.us/dmv/reg/snow web site or call the Alaska Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Your local snowmobile dealer or snowmobile club will also have information about registration requirements.

Driver's License Not Required!

AS 28.15.011 (b) Every person exercising the person's privilege to drive, or exercising any degree of physical control of a motor vehicle upon a highway, vehicular way or area, or **other public property in this state**, is required to have in the possession of the person a valid Alaska driver's license issued under the provisions of this chapter for the type or class of vehicle driven, unless expressly exempted by law from this requirement. {Note: Alaska does not have any special snowmobile operator licenses or permits.

AS 28.15.021 - The following persons are exempt from driver licensing under this chapter:
(5) A person when driving or operating an off-highway

vehicle, watercraft, aircraft or other vehicle not designated for highway use as specified by the department by regulation.

Warning: Unsupervised kids on snowmobiles can present serious problems and generate many public complaints. Parents, guardians and snowmobile owners may be liable for the actions of minors that operate a snowmobile on public or private land.

Comments: Are you interested in supporting statewide snowmobile education programs in Alaska? Talk to your local snowmobile club or the DNR, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, (907) 269-8700.

Operating While Intoxicated:

Alaska Statute 28.35.030 A person commits the crime of driving while intoxicated if the person operates or drives a motor vehicle or operates an aircraft or a watercraft while under the influence of intoxicating liquor, or any controlled substance. {Note: The legal blood alcohol limit is less than 0.08% by weight.}

Alaska Statute 28.40.100(13) A "motor vehicle" means a vehicle which is self-propelled except a vehicle moved by human or animal power. {Note: This definition applies to all of Alaska Statute Title 28, and the definition of "motor vehicle" includes all snowmobiles and ATVs.}

Comments: You know what happens when someone is arrested and convicted of driving while intoxicated with an automobile. The same laws and penalties apply to snowmobiling. {Note: For the details see Alaska Statutes 28.35.029 - 28.035.039.}

High speeds and alcohol are major contributing factors to snowmobile accidents. Be smart, be safe, ride sober!

Sidewalks and Bike-Pedestrian Trail Use Prohibited!

AAC 13.02.455 - (g) No snowmobile or other off-highway vehicle may cross or travel on a sidewalk, a location intended for pedestrian or other non-motorized traffic, an alley, or a vehicular way or area which is not open to snowmobile or off-highway vehicle operation, except as provided in (f) of this section.

AAC 13.02.487 - No person may drive a vehicle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area other than upon a permanent or temporary driveway, except as a municipality allows the riding of bicycles on sidewalks outside of a business district.

Note: The definitions provided in **AAC 13.40.010** are key to interpretation of the above regulations: (48) "sidewalk" means that portion of a street between the curb-lines or the lateral lines of a roadway and the adjacent property lines, and intended for use by pedestrians.

Operation on Highways:

AAC 13.02.455 - (a) A snowmobile or an off-highway vehicle may be driven on a roadway or shoulder of a highway only under the following circumstances:

(1) when crossing a highway as provided in (f) of this section, or when traversing a bridge or culvert on a highway, but then only by driving at the extreme right-hand edge of the bridge or culvert and only when the traverse can be completed with safety and without interfering with other traffic on the highway;

(2) when use of the highway by other motor vehicles is impossible because of snow or ice accumulation or other natural conditions or when the highway is posted or otherwise designated as being open to travel by off-highway vehicles;

(3) when highway driving is authorized

(4) when driven on the right-of-way of a highway which is not a controlled-access highway, outside the roadway or shoulder, and no closer than **three feet from the nearest edge of the roadway**; night driving may be only on the right-hand side of the highway and in the same direction as the highway motor vehicle traffic in the nearest lane of the roadway; no person may drive an off-highway vehicle within the area dividing the roadways of a divided highway, except to cross the highway as provided in (f) of this section.

(f) A snowmobile or an off-highway vehicle may make a direct crossing of a highway if:

(1) the crossing is made approximately at a right angle to the highway and at a location where visibility along the highway in both directions is clear for a sufficient distance to assure safety, and the crossing can be completed safely and without interfering with other traffic on the highway; and

(2) the vehicle is brought to a complete stop before crossing the shoulder or roadway, and the driver yields the right-of-way to all traffic on the highway.