

# IOWA

# SNOWMOBILE REFERENCE GUIDE



**IOWA** | **DNR**

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

image provided by Iowa Snowmobiler Magazine



# **SNOWMOBILE EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

Snowmobile riders in the state of Iowa who are ages 12 through 17 are required to have taken and passed a snowmobile education course and have an education certificate in their possession when riding on public land, public ice, and designated snowmobile trails, if these areas are signed open to snowmobile use. This regulation applies to both resident and nonresident riders.

**For a current listing of DNR  
snowmobile education course offerings:  
[www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-do/Snowmobiles](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-do/Snowmobiles)  
and select Snowmobile Education**

**To enroll in the  
DNR-approved online course:  
[www.SnowmobileCourse.com](http://www.SnowmobileCourse.com)**



# IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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## SNOWMOBILE REFERENCE GUIDE

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is required to collect social security numbers from all persons obtaining a hunting, fishing, or other recreational license under Iowa Code Section 252J.8 and 42 U.S. Code Section 666(a)(13). Your social security number will serve as your principal identification number to determine your eligibility for licenses. It will be provided to law enforcement agencies and the Iowa Child Support Collection Unit to establish, modify, and enforce child support obligations. It will NOT appear on any printed forms.

### **PUBLIC NONDISCRIMINATION**

Federal and State law prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, color, creed, mental and/or physical disability, gender identity, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission at 1-800-457-4416 or DNR's Civil Rights Coordinators at [civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov).

### **Free Language Assistance**

#### **Asistencia lingüística gratuita**

If you speak a non-English language, we offer you language assistance services free of charge. Call (515) 725-8200.

Si habla un idioma que no sea el inglés, los servicios de asistencia lingüística están disponibles de forma gratuita.

Llame al (515) 725-8200.



**This booklet contains rules and regulations most likely needed for motorized recreational use in Iowa. However, it is not a complete list of all regulations or laws, nor is it a legal document. For more information, please reference Iowa Code Chapters 321 and 321G and Iowa Administrative Code, Chapter 571.**

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# Definitions

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**All-terrain vehicle (ATV)** means a motorized vehicle with not less than three and not more than six nonhighway tires that is limited in engine displacement to less than 1,000 cubic centimeters and in total dry weight to less than 1,200 pounds and that has a seat or saddle designed to be straddled by the operator and handlebars for steering control.

**Commission** means the Natural Resource Commission established in Iowa Code Section 455A.5.

**Department** means the Department of Natural Resources established in Iowa Code Section 455A.2.

**Designated snowmobile trail** means a snowmobile riding trail on any public land, private land, or public ice that has been designated by the Department, a political subdivision, or a controlling authority for snowmobile use.

**Direct supervision** means to provide supervision of another person while maintaining visual and verbal contact at all times.

**Education certificate** means a snowmobile education certificate, approved by the Natural Resource Commission, which is issued to a qualified applicant who is twelve years of age or older.

**Measurable snow** means one-tenth of one inch of snow.

**Nonresident** means a person who is not a resident of this state.

**Off-road utility vehicle (ORV)** means a motorized vehicle with not less than four and not more than eight nonhighway tires or rubberized tracks that has a seat that is of bucket or bench design, not intended to be straddled by the operator, and a steering wheel or control levers for control. “Off-road utility vehicle” includes the following vehicles:

**“Off-road utility vehicle – type 1”** means an off-road utility vehicle with a total dry weight of one thousand two hundred pounds or less and a width of fifty inches or less. **“Off-road utility vehicle – type 2”** means an off-road utility vehicle, other than a type 1 off-road utility vehicle, with a total dry weight of two thousand pounds or less, and a width of sixty-five inches or less.

**“Off-road utility vehicle – type 3”** means an off-road utility vehicle with a total dry weight of more than two thousand pounds or a width of more than sixty-five inches, or both.

**Operate** means to ride in or on, other than as a passenger, use, or control the operation of a snowmobile in any manner, whether or not the snowmobile is moving.

**Operator** means a person who operates or is in actual physical control of a snowmobile.

# Definitions

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**Owner** means a person, other than a lienholder, having the property right in or title to a snowmobile. Owner includes a person entitled to the use or possession of a snowmobile subject to an interest in another person, reserved or created by agreement and securing payment or performance of an obligation. Owner excludes a lessee under a lease not intended as security.

**Public ice** means any frozen, navigable waters within the territorial limits of this state and the frozen marginal river areas adjacent to this state, other than farm ponds, that are under the jurisdiction of the Natural Resource Commission.

**Public land** means land owned by the federal government, the state of Iowa, or a political subdivision of the state and land acquired or developed for public recreation pursuant to Iowa Code Section 321G.7. However, this shall not be construed to permit the operation of snowmobiles on a roadway or highway except as provided in Iowa Code Section 321G.9.

**Public water** means any navigable waters within the territorial limits of this state and the marginal river areas adjacent to this state, other than farm ponds, that are under the jurisdiction of the Natural Resource Commission.

**Railroad right-of-way** means the full width of property owned, leased, or subject to easement for railroad purposes and is not limited to those areas on which tracks are located.

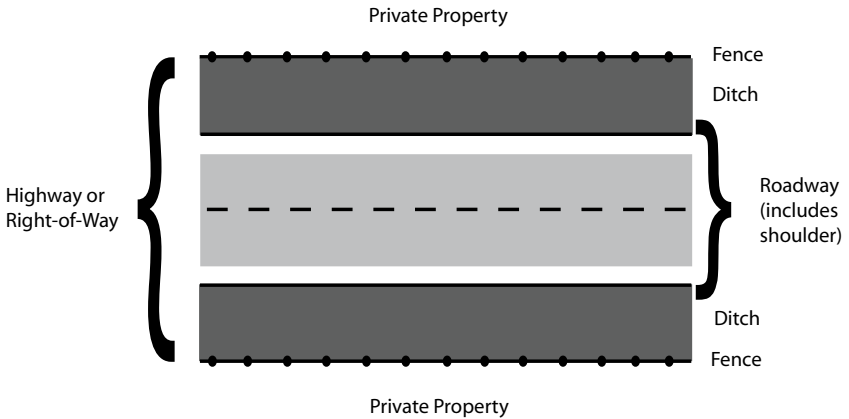
**Resident** means as defined in Iowa Code Section 483A.1A.

**Roadway** means that portion of a highway improved, designed, or ordinarily used for vehicular travel.

**Snowmobile** means a motorized vehicle weighing less than one thousand pounds which uses sled-type runners or skis, endless belt-type tread with a width of forty-eight inches or less, or any combination of runners, skis, or tread, and is designed for travel on snow or ice. "Snowmobile" does not include an all-terrain vehicle which has been altered or equipped with runners, skis, belt-type tracks, or treads.

**Special event** means an organized race, exhibition, or demonstration of limited duration which is conducted on public land, public ice, or a designated snowmobile trail under the jurisdiction of the Natural Resource Commission according to a prearranged schedule and in which general public interest is manifested.

# Definitions



**Street or highway** means the entire width between property lines of every way or place of whatever nature when any part thereof is open to the use of the public, as a matter of right, for purposes of vehicular travel, except in public areas in which the boundary shall be thirty-three feet each side of the center line of the roadway.

**Water skipping** means the operation of a snowmobile on the surface of water by utilizing the skis, track, and bottom surface area of the snowmobile for flotation while the snowmobile is in motion.



image provided by Iowa Snowmobiler Magazine



# Laws and Regulations

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## **REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS Machines Registered in Iowa**

- Each snowmobile in Iowa used on public land, public ice, or a designated snowmobile trail of this state must be currently registered with the Department. A person shall not operate, maintain, or give permission for the operation or maintenance of a snowmobile on public land, public ice, or a designated snowmobile trail of this state unless the snowmobile is registered in accordance with the laws and administrative rules of Iowa or applicable federal laws.
- The owner of each snowmobile required to be registered shall file an application for registration with the Department through a County Recorder and pay all applicable fees. Vehicle dealers are required to make application and pay all applicable registration and title fees on behalf of a purchaser.
- An application for registration shall be made on the approved Department form. Applicants shall provide bill of sale, proof of prior registration of the snowmobile, and other proof of ownership of the snowmobile as the County Recorder may require. In the event the applicant does not have documentation required by the Department, the applicant may be required to secure a bond consistent with the requirements of Iowa Administrative Code, Chapter 571.
- Registration certificate.
  - An operator of a snowmobile shall carry the registration certificate either in the snowmobile or on the person of the operator when the snowmobile is in use.
  - An operator must provide the registration certificate to all of the following:
    - To a peace officer or Department personnel upon request.
    - To a person injured in an accident involving the snowmobile, or that person's agent.
    - To the owner or operator of another snowmobile when the snowmobile is involved in a collision or accident of any nature with the other snowmobile, or that person's agent.
    - To the owner of personal or real property when the snowmobile is involved in a collision or accident of any nature with the property of the other person, or that person's agent.

# Laws and Regulations

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- To the property owner or tenant when the snowmobile is being operated on private property without permission from the property owner or tenant, or that person's agent.
- Registration decal display.
  - The owner of a snowmobile shall display the registration decal on the windshield of the snowmobile so that the decal is clearly visible.
  - If the snowmobile does not have a windshield, then the decal shall be affixed to the area of the hood near the headlight so that the decal is clearly visible.
- Operation pending registration.
  - Purchase from dealer. An unregistered snowmobile sold by a dealer shall bear a "registration applied for" card with the purchase date printed on it. This entitles the purchaser to operate the snowmobile for 45 days immediately following the purchase while the application is being processed. The purchaser shall place this card on the windshield area of the snowmobile in a position so as to be clearly visible at all times and maintained in a legible manner. The operator of any snowmobile displaying a "registration applied for" card shall carry and provide upon request to any peace officer a valid bill of sale for the snowmobile.
  - Private purchase – registered in Iowa. The purchaser of snowmobile that is currently registered in Iowa may operate it for 30 days immediately following the purchase without having completed a transfer of registration.
  - Private purchase – not registered in Iowa. A snowmobile not currently registered in the state of Iowa shall not be operated until it is titled and registered in the purchaser's name. Valid registration in another state does not authorize preregistration operation.
- Registration renewals. Every snowmobile registration certificate and registration decal expires at midnight December 31 of the year displayed on the registration.

# Laws and Regulations

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## **Machines Registered in Another State**

Any snowmobile registered in another state and used on public land, public ice, or a designated snowmobile trail of this state must display registration in accordance with an approved numbering system of that state and the evidence of registration must be in full force and effect. This requirement is waived for an operator if their home state does not have a registration or numbering system.

## **Nonresident User Permits — Required in Addition to a Valid Registration**

- Nonresidents operating snowmobiles on public land, public ice, or a designated snowmobile trails in Iowa are required to display a Nonresident User Permit.
- A Nonresident User Permit will be issued to the purchaser for use (display) on only one snowmobile and is not transferable.
- Nonresident User Permit Decal Display.
  - The Nonresident User Permit decal shall be displayed on the windshield of the snowmobile so that the decal is clearly visible.
  - If the snowmobile does not have a windshield, then the decal shall be affixed to the area of the hood near the headlight so that the decal is clearly visible.
- A Nonresident User Permit expires December 31 of the year printed on the permit.

## **EXEMPT VEHICLES**

### **Registration is not required for the following snowmobiles:**

- Vehicles owned by the United States, this state, or another state, or by a governmental subdivision of a state and is used for:
  - Enforcement
  - Search and rescue
  - Official research and studies
- Snowmobiles used exclusively as farm implements. However, titling may be required. See following page.

# Laws and Regulations

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## **Antique Snowmobiles**

A snowmobile that is manufactured prior to 1984 may be registered for a one-time fee. Registration as an antique snowmobile exempts the owner from annual registration requirements for this machine. However, if ownership of the machine is transferred, the new owner shall register the snowmobile and pay the one-time antique registration fee in their name. If the antique snowmobile is operated on public land, public ice, or a designated snowmobile trail, the requirement to display an DNR User Permit applies.

## **Titling Requirements**

- The owner of a snowmobile acquired on or after January 1, 1998, other than an exempt vehicle or a previously registered snowmobile that is more than 30 years old, must apply to the County Recorder of the county in which the owner resides, or the snowmobile is registered, for a certificate of title for the snowmobile, if not already issued for the machine.
- Snowmobiles that are titled are required to be registered.
- Snowmobiles that are titled must remain titled, regardless of intended use.
- The owner of a snowmobile used exclusively for agricultural purposes may obtain a certificate of title. A person who owns a snowmobile that is not required to have a certificate of title may apply for and receive a certificate of title for the snowmobile which makes the snowmobile subject to the registration requirements of Iowa Code Chapter 321G.
- The owner of a snowmobile is required to apply to the County Recorder in their county of residence for issuance of a certificate of title within 30 days after acquisition.
- The applicant must provide the date of sale, the gross price of the snowmobile or the fair-market value of the snowmobile if no sale immediately preceded the transfer, and any additional information the County Recorder or Department requires.
- If the snowmobile was last previously registered or titled in another state or foreign country, the applicant must provide this information and any other information the County Recorder or Department requires.

# Laws and Regulations

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- If a dealer is transferring ownership of a snowmobile, the dealer will assign the title to the new owner. In the case of a new snowmobile, the dealer will assign the certificate of origin. Within 15 days of purchase, the dealer must forward all moneys and applications to the County Recorder.
- Once titled, a person must not sell or transfer ownership of a snowmobile without delivering to the purchaser or transferee a certificate of title with an assignment on it showing the title in the purchaser's or transferee's name. A person shall not purchase or otherwise acquire a snowmobile without obtaining a certificate of title for the snowmobile in the purchaser's name.

## **RVVRS**

The Recreational Vehicle and Vessel Registration System (RVVRS) has been implemented by the Department. This web-based system provides added customer convenience by combining registration, title, and lien information for all 99 counties into one system. Additionally, it creates a streamlined renewal process for customers.

All newly owned machines or machines which have not been renewed in RVVRS must be registered through the County Recorder's Office in the owner's county of residence. Renewals can be done at any County Recorder's Office; you only need to provide the IA number assigned to your snowmobile through RVVRS.

If your vehicle record has not been entered into RVVRS, please bring the following information with you when you go to renew your registration:

- The most current registration form for your snowmobile.
- Make, model, and model year of your snowmobile.
- VIN.
- Color of snowmobile.
- Weight and engine displacement (CCs).

# Laws and Regulations

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## Nonresident User Permits

Nonresident user permits will be sold at any general agent ELSI vendor (hunt and fish licenses) and County Recorder Offices. The Nonresident User Permit will be printed on license/tag paper. It will not be issued to a machine, but rather to the user. The Nonresident User Permit must be displayed on the snowmobile as noted under Laws and Regulations and is not transferable. Printing the Nonresident User Permits on the license/tag paper will make them distinct from the registration decals.

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<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Nonresident User Permits</b>
Renewal Requirement	Must be renewed each year	Must be renewed each year
Renewal Period	Starting September 1 each year	Starting September 1 each year
Expiration	December 31 of the year printed on the registration	December 31 of the year printed on the permit
Late Fee	\$5.00, no grace period	Not applicable
Display	Carried either in the machine or on the operator; decal must be affixed to the snowmobile	Permit must be affixed to the snowmobile



# Laws and Regulations

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## Unlawful Operation

### **A person shall not drive or operate a snowmobile:**

- At a rate of speed greater than reasonable or proper under all existing circumstances.
- In a careless, reckless, or negligent manner so as to endanger the person or property of another or to cause injury or damage thereto.
- While under the influence of intoxicating liquor or narcotics or habit-forming drugs.
- Without a lighted headlight and taillight from sunset to sunrise and at such other times when conditions provide insufficient lighting to render clearly discernible persons and vehicles at a distance of five hundred feet ahead.
- In any tree nursery or planting in a manner which damages or destroys growing stock.
- On any public land, public ice, or designated snowmobile trail in violation of official signs of the Natural Resource Commission prohibiting such operation in the interest of safety for persons, property, or the environment. Any officer appointed by the Natural Resource Commission may post an official sign in an emergency for the protection of persons, property, or the environment.
- In any park, wildlife area, preserve, refuge, game management area, or any portion of a meandered stream, or any portion of the bed of a nonmeandered stream which has been identified as a navigable stream or river by rule adopted by the Department and which is covered by water, except on designated snowmobile trails. This requirement does not prohibit the use of ford crossings of public roads or any other ford crossing when used for agricultural purposes; the operation of construction vehicles engaged in lawful construction, repair, or maintenance in a streambed; or the operation of a snowmobile on ice.
- Upon an operating railroad right-of-way. A snowmobile may be driven directly across a railroad right-of-way only at an established crossing and, notwithstanding any other provisions of law, may, if necessary, use the improved portion of the established crossing after yielding to all oncoming traffic. This requirement does not apply to a law enforcement officer or railroad employee in the lawful discharge of the officer's or employee's duties or to an employee of a utility with authority to enter upon the railroad right-of-way in the lawful performance of the employee's duties.

# Laws and Regulations

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- Upon public land without a measurable snow cover.
- Upon the surface of any public water in a maneuver known as water skipping.

## **Negligence**

The owner and operator of a snowmobile are liable for any injury or damage occasioned by the negligent operation of the snowmobile. The owner of a snowmobile shall be liable for any such injury or damage only if the owner was the operator of the snowmobile at the time the injury or damage occurred or if the operator had the owner's consent to operate the snowmobile at the time the injury or damage occurred.

## **Officer's Signal to Stop**

A person who has received a visual or audible signal from a peace officer to come to a stop shall not operate a snowmobile in willful or wanton disregard of the signal, interfere with or endanger the officer or any other person or vehicle, increase speed, or attempt to flee or elude the officer.

## **Inspections – Warnings – Termination of Use**

A peace officer may stop and inspect a snowmobile operated, parked, or stored on public streets, highways, public lands, public ice, or designated snowmobile trails of the state to determine if the snowmobile is registered, numbered, or equipped as required by the Code of Iowa and the Iowa Administrative Code. The officer shall not inspect an area that is not essential to determine compliance with the requirements. If the officer determines that the snowmobile is not in compliance, the officer may issue a warning memorandum to the operator and forward a copy to the Department. The warning memorandum shall indicate the items found which are not in compliance and shall direct the owner or operator of the snowmobile to correct these items and return a copy of the warning memorandum with the proof of compliance to the Department within 14 days. If the proof of compliance is not provided within 14 days, the owner or operator is in violation of Iowa Code Chapter 321G.

A person who receives a warning memorandum for a snowmobile shall stop using the snowmobile as soon as possible and shall not operate it on public streets, highways, public lands, public ice, or



# Laws and Regulations

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designated snowmobile trails of the state until the snowmobile is in compliance.

## **Operation on Roadways and Highways**

A person shall not operate a snowmobile upon roadways or highways except as provided in Iowa Code Chapter 321G.

- A snowmobile shall not be operated at any time within the right-of-way of any interstate highway or freeway within the state except when using an underpass or crossing a bridge located on the interstate highway or freeway if:
  - The snowmobile is brought to a complete stop before entering onto the right-of-way.
  - The driver yields the right-of-way to any approaching vehicle on the roadway.
- A snowmobile may make a direct crossing of a street or highway provided all of the following occur:
  - The crossing is made at an angle of approximately 90 degrees to the direction of the highway and at a place where no obstruction prevents a quick and safe crossing.
  - The snowmobile is brought to a complete stop before crossing the shoulder or main traveled way of the highway.
  - The driver yields the right-of-way to all oncoming traffic which constitutes an immediate hazard.
  - In crossing a divided highway, the crossing is made only at an intersection of such highway with another public street or highway.
- A snowmobile shall not be operated on public highways under any of the following conditions:
  - On the roadway portion of a highway and adjacent shoulder, or at least five feet on either side of the roadway.
  - On limited access highways and approaches.
  - For racing any moving object.
  - Abreast with one or more other snowmobiles on a city highway.
- A registered snowmobile may be operated under the following conditions:
  - Upon city highways which have not been plowed during the snow season or on such highways as designated by the governing body of a municipality.
  - On that portion of county roadways that have not been plowed during the snow season or not maintained or utilized for the operation of conventional two-wheel drive motor vehicles.

# Laws and Regulations

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- On highways in an emergency during the period of time when and at locations where snow upon the roadway renders travel by conventional motor vehicles impractical.
- On the roadways of that portion of county highways designated by the county board of supervisors for such use during a specified period.
- On the roadway or shoulder when necessary to cross a bridge or culvert, or avoid an obstruction which makes it impossible to travel on the portion of the highway not intended for motor vehicles, if the snowmobile is brought to a complete stop before entering onto the roadway or shoulder and the driver yields the right-of-way to any approaching vehicle on the roadway.

## **Use on Off-highway Vehicle Trails**

Snowmobiles are not allowed to be operated on off-highway vehicle trails except where designated by the controlling authority and the primary off-highway vehicle trail sponsor.

## **Equipment Requirements**

- **Mufflers.** The exhaust of every internal combustion engine used in any snowmobile shall be muffled by equipment constructed and used to muffle all snowmobile noise in a reasonable manner. A snowmobile manufactured after July 1, 1975, shall have a muffler system that limits engine noise to not more than 78 decibels as measured on the “A” scale at a distance of 50 feet. This noise restriction does not apply to a snowmobile participating in an authorized special event.
- **Headlight and taillight.** Every snowmobile must be equipped with at least one headlight and one taillight. Use is required from sunset to sunrise and at such other times when conditions provide insufficient lighting to render clearly discernible persons and vehicles at a distance of 500 feet ahead. The headlight and taillight must be lighted during operation on a public highway at any time from sunset to sunrise, and at such other times when conditions such as fog, snow, sleet, or rain provide insufficient lighting to render clearly discernible persons and vehicles at a distance of 500 feet ahead.
- **Brakes.** Every machine shall be equipped with working brakes.

# Laws and Regulations

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## Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)

- Every snowmobile shall have a vehicle identification number assigned and affixed as required by the Department.
- The Department may assign a VIN to a snowmobile when the serial number on the machine is destroyed or obliterated or the snowmobile is homebuilt or rebuilt. If a snowmobile has a VIN which is not legible, the owner must submit to the Department an affidavit which describes the machine. In cooperation with the County Recorder, the Department shall assign a VIN to the snowmobile.
- The Department will issue the owner a decal bearing the new VIN which shall be affixed to the frame under the seat of the snowmobile by a Conservation Officer.
- The snowmobile shall be registered and titled using the new VIN and not the former serial number.

## Age-related Operation Guidelines

When operating on designated snowmobile trails, public land, and public ice, the following guidelines apply:

- Minors under 16 years of age may operate their own snowmobile under the direct supervision of an adult.
- Operators under 12 years of age are not required to have an education certificate.
- Operators 12 through 17 years of age must have completed an education course and possess a valid snowmobile education certificate.
- Juveniles who have had their privileges to operate a motor vehicle suspended or revoked under the motor vehicle laws of Iowa can also be prohibited from operating snowmobiles. See Iowa Code Sections 321.213 and 321.213A.
- Eighteen and older—if a person's privilege to operate a motor vehicle has been revoked or barred, then it is illegal for this person to operate a snowmobile. If a person's privilege to operate a motor vehicle is suspended, then it is illegal for this person to operate on a highway. This person may operate a snowmobile on a designated snowmobile trail which is not on a highway and also on public ice.

# Laws and Regulations

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## Carrying a Firearm on a Snowmobile

- A person shall not operate or ride a snowmobile with a firearm in the person's possession unless it is unloaded and enclosed in a carrying case, except as otherwise provided by law. However, a nonambulatory person may carry an uncased and unloaded firearm while operating or riding a snowmobile.
- A person may operate or ride a snowmobile with a loaded firearm, whether concealed or not, without a permit to carry weapons, if the person operates or rides on land owned or possessed by the person, and the person's conduct is otherwise lawful.
- If a person is operating or riding on a snowmobile on land that is not owned or possessed by the person, the person may operate or ride the snowmobile with a loaded pistol or revolver, whether concealed or not, and the person's conduct is otherwise lawful.
- A person shall not discharge a firearm while on a snowmobile, except that a nonambulatory person may discharge a firearm from a snowmobile while lawfully hunting if the person is not operating or riding a moving snowmobile.

## Hunting and Snowmobiles

The following regulations apply when using a snowmobile for hunting purposes:

- It is illegal to chase or use a snowmobile to assist in the taking of any game animal.
- It is illegal to operate a snowmobile on Department wildlife management areas.
- Physically handicapped persons may apply for a permit to operate a motorized vehicle on Department lands. Issuance of the permit is required prior to accessing the land by a motorized device.
- You must obtain permission from a landowner to operate a snowmobile on private land.
- For hunting rules related to a nonambulatory person, see [571 IAC 98.2(2)] Turkey and [571 IAC 106.7(6)] Deer.

# Laws and Regulations

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## Accidents

Whenever a snowmobile is involved in an accident resulting in injury or death to any person or property damage amounting to \$1,500 or more, the operator of the snowmobile or a person acting for the operator shall immediately notify the county sheriff or another law enforcement agency in the state.

If the accident occurred on public land, public ice, or a designated snowmobile trail under the jurisdiction of the Natural Resource Commission, the operator shall file a report of the accident with the Department within 72 hours. A copy of the Operator Incident Report.

Form can be obtained from a Conservation Officer, calling DNR at 515-725-8200, or going to [www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-do/Snowmobiles](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-do/Snowmobiles).

## Proof of Insurance

Iowa Code Section 321.20B provides that a person shall not drive a motor vehicle on the highways of this state unless financial liability coverage, as defined in Iowa Code Section 321.1(24B), is in effect for the motor vehicle and unless the driver has in the motor vehicle the proof of financial liability coverage card issued for the motor vehicle. The exception for snowmobiles was rescinded effective July 1, 2012. Please see Iowa Code Section 321.20B for more details.

## Special Events

The Department may authorize the holding of organized special events as defined in Iowa Code Chapter 321G within this state. The Department shall issue permits which address the conduct of special events and designating the equipment and facilities necessary for safe operation of snowmobiles and for the safety of operators, participants, and observers in the special events. At least 30 days before the scheduled date of a special event in this state, an application shall be filed with the Department for authorization to conduct the special event. The application shall set forth the date, time, and location of the proposed special event and any other information the Department requires. The special event shall not be conducted without written authorization of the Department. For more information about special events, go to [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov).

# Education/Safety/Stewardship

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## Education

Snowmobile riders in the state of Iowa who are ages 12 through 17 are required to have taken and passed a snowmobile education course and have an education certificate in their possession when operating a snowmobile. Additional restrictions apply. See *Age-related Operation Guidelines under Laws and Regulations*.

## SnowmobileCourse.com

The DNR has collaborated with Fresh Air Educators to make an online certification offering available for the DNR Snowmobile Education Program. State-specific information regarding riding opportunities, laws, and regulations is a component of the course.

This is a managed course which features interactive exercises for students as well as narrated content to assist with different learning styles. The course fee is \$34.95, which includes the \$5 DNR education certificate fee. Students must pass a final exam with 80% accuracy to earn their certificate. There is no riding component for this course.

Students must be 12 or older to earn their snowmobile education certificate through [www.SnowmobileCourse.com](http://www.SnowmobileCourse.com).

**An education certificate issued by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources is recognized by most states. Please call ahead to your destination state to check their requirements.**

## Snowmobile Safety Code

- NEVER use drugs or alcohol prior to or during your snowmobile trip.
- Use extreme caution when riding on ice. Machines are hard to control on ice. It is difficult to judge ice thickness.
- Never ride alone. Use the buddy system. Tell someone where you are going and when you will return.
- Adult supervision is needed for young or inexperienced riders.
- Know how to dress safely to snowmobile. Always wear a DOT-approved helmet, layer clothing, and wear durable and waterproof outer shell, gloves, and footwear. Goggles or a visor will prevent injuries from twigs, stones, ice chips, and flying debris. Never wear any loose clothing which could get caught in moving parts of the snowmobile.

# Education/Safety/Stewardship

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- Know your riding skills and capabilities. Do not try to ride beyond your skill level. Do not ride machines that are too large or too powerful for you or that you cannot control.
- Know how to operate your snowmobile in a variety of weather, trail, and operating conditions. Familiarize yourself with the snowmobile you are driving by reading the manual for the machine.
- Be sure your snowmobile is in top-notch mechanical condition at the beginning of the winter season and throughout the months of use.
- Check the weather forecast, especially the ice and snow conditions in the area.
- If you snowmobile at night, do not override your headlights.
- Always stay on marked and defined trails. Do not ride in areas without landowner permission.
- Know the laws and regulations governing snowmobiling where you ride and where you travel to ride.



image provided by Iowa Snowmobiler Magazine

# Education/Safety/Stewardship

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## Tread Lightly!

By practicing the Tread Lightly! principles you not only protect the outdoors, you also protect access to recreation opportunities for years to come.

**T** **Travel Responsibly** on trails or in permitted areas. Avoid trails with inadequate snow cover. Be aware of unmarked hazards or obstacles hidden beneath the snow. Respect closed gates and regulatory signs. Stay out of designated wilderness areas. Avoid potential avalanche areas.

**R** **espect** the rights of others, including private property owners, to allow them to enjoy their recreational activities undisturbed.

**E** **ducate** yourself by obtaining maps and regulations from public agencies, planning for your trip, taking recreational skills classes, and knowing how to use and operate your equipment safely. Wear proper safety gear, layer clothing, and wear a durable and waterproof outer shell and footwear.

**A** **void** sensitive areas such as meadows, wetlands, and streams, unless on designated routes. This protects wildlife habitat and sensitive soils from damage. Be respectful of wildlife's wintering habitats.

**D** **o** your part by leaving the area better than you found it. Dispose of waste properly — pack out what you pack in. Stay off soft, wet trails that are easily damaged by vehicles. Minimize harmful emissions by keeping your engine tuned up. Don't mix riding with alcohol and drugs.

Tread Lightly! is a nonprofit organization with a mission to promote responsible outdoor recreation through ethics education and stewardship.

For more information, please visit [www.treadlightly.org](http://www.treadlightly.org).





# Education/Safety/Stewardship

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## Trail Etiquette

- Respect all trail restrictions and use only trails open to snowmobile use.
- Be considerate of other riders on the trail.
- Ride on the right side of the trail.
- Slow down when passing.
- Slow down when sight lines are poor.
- Keep speeds low around other riders.
- Keep noise down.
- Keep your ears open—no ear buds or headphones. Listening to headphones or ear buds can make it difficult to hear and communicate with other riders and recreationists.
- Yield the right-of-way to those passing you from behind or traveling uphill.
- Report all illegal riding.
- Carry out what you carry in.
- Never harass or chase wildlife with your snowmobile.



# Trail Signs



Stop  
Ahead



Yield  
Ahead



Intersection  
Ahead



Trail  
Marker



## Bridge Markers







## Websites

### **Iowa Department of Natural Resources**

[www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov)

515-725-8200

### **Education Course Listings**

[www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-do/Snowmobiles](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-do/Snowmobiles)

and select Snowmobile Education

### **Online Education Course Offering**

[www.snowmobilecourse.com](http://www.snowmobilecourse.com)

### **General Snowmobile Information**

[www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-do/Snowmobiles](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-do/Snowmobiles)

