



# Snowmobile Safety

Snowmobiling is a popular family activity. Snowmobiles also are used for work and are a vital transportation link in remote areas. Snowmobiles can travel up to 110 mph and weigh up to 600 pounds. The size and speed of snowmobiles require certain precautions for youth operators and riders.



# Snowmobile Safety



## What are the injury facts for youth operating and riding on snowmobiles?

One in five snowmobile-related emergency department visits in the U.S involve youth under 18 years.

Injuries occur from being thrown from a snowmobile or hitting a stationary object.

The majority of fatal injuries involve injuries to the head and neck.

Non-fatal injuries include contusions and fractures.

## What factors are key to using a snowmobile safely?

- Wearing an approved snowmobile helmet and appropriate protective clothing
- Driving experience and judgment
- Maximum of one operator with one passenger
- No towed sleds or skiers.
- Operator age of at least 16 years

## What developmental factors must youth possess to participate in snowmobile-related activities?

- The physical size, strength, coordination, and motor skills to safely operate a snowmobile
- The cognitive capacity to anticipate, recognize and react to potential hazards
- Good judgment to not take excessive risks while riding or operating a snowmobile

## What strategies promote safe snowmobile operation among youth?

- Adult supervision based on skill level
- Minimum operator age of 16 years
- Safe operation on designated trails
- Awareness of other snowmobile traffic
- Proper maintenance of snowmobile
- Awareness of changing weather conditions
- Match youth's skills and abilities with the snowmobile size

## What role do child safety advocates have in addressing youth snowmobile safety?

- Be responsible and a good role model
- Promote safe use based on current practices and risk of injury
- Evaluate on-going prevention and practices
- Monitor childhood injury reports/data
- Inform parents about snowmobile safety
- Promote safety education for operating snowmobiles
- Advocate for safe snowmobile practice and policy

## Where can I go to learn more about snowmobile safety and youth?

Additional information and links on snowmobile safety for youth can be found on the National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety Web site <http://research.marshfieldclinic.org/children/Resources/Snowmobile/snowmobile.htm>. Information available includes a comprehensive listing of resources, a list of other organizations working on snowmobile safety, developmental guidelines for youth snowmobile activities, and fact sheet. For technical assistance on youth snowmobile-related injury prevention call 1-800-662-6900.

The National Children's Center strives to enhance the health and safety of all children involved in agricultural work and living in rural settings. The center is a program of the Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation.



National **Children's** Center  
for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety

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