

DNR: Three People Die In Snowmobiling Accidents Over The Weekend

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MADISON, Wis. - Three people died while snowmobiling in Wisconsin this weekend, bringing the total to 17 deaths for the season. With snow in the forecast and more still on the ground, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is again reminding snowmobilers to sled safely.

February is often the deadliest month for snowmobilers. There are now nine snowmobile fatalities so far this February. Alcohol, excess speed, driver inexperience or operator error are [the leading causes](#) of snowmobile fatalities.

There were 16 snowmobile fatalities in 2019. Eleven of those involved operation on public trails and roadways while four incidents occurred on frozen waterways.

Winter's fluctuating temperatures, snowfalls and snowmelts have made for often-changing terrain and mixed conditions on snowmobile trails as well as rivers and lakes. The DNR cautions that no ice is 100% safe. The DNR does not monitor conditions and suggests snowmobilers contact local fishing clubs, snowmobile clubs or outfitters to inquire about the ice conditions.

With more than 200,000 registered snowmobiles hitting Wisconsin's 25,000 miles of groomed trails each winter across the state, safety is an important part of the ride.

"Safe snowmobiling means you must operate within your specific capabilities, operating at safe following distances when riding with others and use the right speeds for the terrain, daylight or night riding," said DNR Conservation Warden Lt.

Martin Stone, administrator for the DNR's Off-Highway Vehicle program. "Wardens and partner law enforcement recreational patrols are on those trails, working to keep the trails safe and fun for all to enjoy. We always ask that people ride responsibly."

If you were born on or after Jan. 1, 1985, and are at least age 12 years old, you must complete a snowmobile safety certification course to operate a snowmobile on Wisconsin public snowmobile trails and areas. The DNR recommends all snowmobilers complete a safety course. Visit the DNR [Safety Education](#) webpage for details and to locate a class or take an online course.

Follow these tips to ride responsibly:

- Don't drink and ride
- Slow down
- Carry a first-aid kit and dress appropriately
- Avoid frozen rivers and lakes
- Stay on marked trails
- Never travel alone
- Take a snowmobile safety course