

Dept. of Natural Resources: Three snowmobile related fatalities over weekend

Posted on Monday, Feb 14, 2022

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MADISON, Wis. – Following a deadly weekend of snowmobiling, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) urges the public to be safe while out on the trails.

Since the start of the new year, there have been [10 snowmobile fatalities](#) with one additional pending investigation. There were [13 fatalities in 2021](#).

While this weekend's crashes are still under investigation, the overall leading causes of snowmobile fatalities are alcohol, excess speed, driver inexperience and operator error.

“Conditions can change, and what was at first a smooth trail could be hazardous by the end of the day. Take your time and slow down, especially at night,” said Lt. Martin Stone, DNR Off-Highway Vehicle Administrator. “Safety is an important part of the ride. We want everyone who goes out to enjoy this long-standing tradition in Wisconsin to make it back home safely.”

If your adventure includes riding over frozen lakes or ponds, be aware that ice is never 100% safe. Snowmobilers cannot judge ice strength by factors like appearance, age, thickness or temperature, especially when the ice is snow-covered.

Before heading out with friends or family, please review Wisconsin's [snowmobile safety rules and regulations](#).

Any person who is at least 12-years-old, born on or after Jan. 1, 1985, must have a

valid [Snowmobile Safety Certificate](#) in order to operate a snowmobile in most areas. Operators must carry the certificate while riding and display it to a law enforcement officer when requested. Visit the [DNR Safety Education webpage](#) for details and to locate a class or take an online course.

Think smart before you start this season by following these tips for a safe ride:

SNOWMOBILE SAFETY TIPS

- Don't drink and ride.
- Stay on marked trails—riding off-trail or cutting corners is trespassing.
- Always wear your helmet and safety gear.
- Slow down and use extra caution at night.
- Travel with a friend, carry a cell phone and let people know where you are going and when you'll return home.
- Dress appropriately, carry a first aid kit and navigation tools.
- Take a [snowmobile safety course](#).
- Check trail conditions using the [Travel Wisconsin Snowmobile Snow Report](#).

ICE SAFETY

- Remember that ice is never completely safe under any conditions.
- Contact local sport shops to ask about ice conditions locally on the lake or river you want to traverse.
- Wear proper clothing and equipment, including a life jacket or float coat should you fall through the ice and to help retain body heat.
- Do not travel in unfamiliar areas.
- Slow down when traveling at night.
- Know if the lake has inlets, outlets or narrows that have currents that can thin the ice.
- Watch for pressure ridges or ice buckling. These can be dangerous due to thin ice and open water.
- For additional information on snowmobile safety classes, regulations, safety tips or to register your snowmobile, click [here](#).

DNR VIOLATION HOTLINE

Anyone with information regarding natural resource violations, including unsafe snowmobile operation, may confidentially report by calling or texting: VIOLATION HOTLINE: 1-800-TIP-WDNR or 1-800-847-9367. The hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Trained staff relay the information to conservation wardens. File an anonymous online report [here](#).