# Operating a Snowmobile

Instructor Guide

Safety Talk Overview

Safety Talks are a method to refresh an employee’s knowledge and skills, maintain their interest in safety and illustrate the organization’s commitment to creating a healthy & safe work environment. Safety Talks can be performed on a weekly basis or before the start of a new scope of work and should be about 15 minutes in duration. Generally, these Safety Talk meetings are led by a supervisor and should be mandatory for all crew members to attend. The content should be centred on a single topic (e.g. a safety rule, safe job procedures, recent incident, Joint Health & Safety Committee (JHSC) meeting minutes, inspection results, etc.).

Topic Overview:

It is a regulatory requirement of WorkSafeBC that all employers provide proper training and guidance to workers on the proper use of equipment in the workplace. This safety talk provides the standard operating guideline, and safe work practices for operating a snowmobile.

Demonstration and Discussion Topics

🞏 **Discuss** the safe work practices of operating a snowmobile.

🞏 **Tour** the work area with workers pointing out where the accidents can occur.

🞏 **Distribute** the “Do’s & Don’ts” section of this handout.

🞏 **Use** the “Instructor Guide” section of the handout as your discussion guide

🞏 **Discuss** how accidents can happen.

🞏 **Remind** employees that they are required to wear adequate personal protective equipment.

🞏 **Explain** what can be done to minimize the risk of accidents (Do’s & Don’ts in handout)

🞏 **Emphasize** that following safe work procedures is mandatory.

🞏 **Make it real** by telling at least two true stories of injuries from your experience.

🞏 **Discuss** the attitude of “it won’t happen to me”. Remind them that an injury can and will happen if they take shortcuts or are careless.

🞏 **Answer** any questions or concerns they might have.

🞏 **Set a good example** by working safely at all times.

🞏 **Document** the Safety Talk by completing the “Safety Talk Record” section and filing it.

Operating a Snowmobile



SAFETY TALK RECORD

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Discussion Leader: | | | Date: | | | |
| Department: | | | Time: | | | |
| Attendees (Please print your name and sign beside it. If you are a contractor, also include your company name): | | | | | | |
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| Near Miss/Incidents and Investigations Reviewed: (None this month 🞏) | | | | | | |
| (Industry alerts can be discussed here as well) | | | | | | |
| Safety Topic Discussed: | | | | | | |
| Title: | | | | Date: | | |
| Any questions or concerns from workers? | | | | | | |
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| Action Needed: | Person responsible: | | | | Due Date: | Completed Date: |
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| Reviewed By: |  | | | |  |  |
| *Supervisor/Manager Print Name & Sign:* | | | | | *Date:* | |

# Operating a Snowmobile

**Hazards:** Varied snow conditions, terrain, weather,

**Injury:** collisions, rollover, loss of control

**Equipment:** Full winter water resistant gear

**Personal protective equipment:** CSA approved helmet, gloves, goggles,

**Training required:** All workers should be trained on proper operation of equipment

**Legal requirements:** Recommended - Provincial Motor Vehicle Licence

**Pre-operational Check**

Prior to operating a snowmobile (or any piece of mobile equipment) each operator should complete a pre-operational equipment check. During the pre-operational check, operators should consider the following:

* Siren (if equipped) — working as required, free of snow with wiring and battery connections secure
* Flag — in place and highly visible
* Snowmobile — clear of snow build-up and easily recognizable from a distance
* Surfaces — inspected for
  + cracks
  + dents
  + holes
  + missing pieces
  + rips
  + other unusual conditions
* Fuel levels
* Oil levels
* Transmission oil and condition
* Pull cord condition
* Working head, tail, and brake lights

# Operating a Snowmobile

If a condition is present that does not allow for the safe operation of the equipment (according to the guidelines provided here), or in the (manufacturer’s instructions), the snowmobile should not be permitted to be operated. Prior to starting the snowmobile and in addition to the above routine checks, the following should be addressed:

* Ensure that the snowmobile is in the desired gear (if equipped).
* Ensure that the area in the intended direction of travel is clear.
* Ensure that the accelerator and brake functions move freely.

**Start the Engine:**

To start most snowmobiles, check that the key is in the “on” position (all snowmobiles used in ski areas should require a key in order to start), pull the “kill” switch out, and pull the start cord as required until the engine engages.

Some snowmobiles are equipped with an electric start, meaning that the key can be turned past the “on” position (like a car) to engage an electric starter.

In this case, be sure not to over-crank the starter. If the snowmobile does not start immediately, pull the choke lever to half or full choke (as required) and try again. Once the machine has started, allow it to warm up for about a minute. ***Never leave an idling snowmobile*** ***unattended*.**

Once the snowmobile has started, the operator should inspect the following:

* Head, tail and brake lights — ensure they are functioning normally
* Suspension — ensure it compresses and releases properly
* Transmission — ensure it engages properly by shifting the snowmobile into reverse (if equipped)
* Route of travel — confirm that the desired route of travel is clear
* Helmet — put it on

# Operating a Snowmobile

**Safe driving practices**

* **Speed.** The ability to safely control and stop the snowmobile varies with the speed at which it is driven*.* Snowmobiles should only be operated within the speed parameters defined by the company, and at slower speeds when travelling with passengers.
* **Siren.** Consideration should be given to equipping snowmobiles with a working siren. (Note that some older snowmobiles cannot be properly equipped with sirens.) If equipped, sirens should be activated whenever travelling uphill or against skier/rider traffic and prior to approaching “blind” areas. Sirens should be used at all times when a snowmobile is operated during poor visibility conditions.
* **Flags**. All snowmobiles should be equipped with a flag when in use during normal area operating hours. Flags should be at least 6 ft. high, of bright (fluorescent) colour, and have a surface area of no less than 35 sq. inches.
* **Lights**. Snowmobiles should not be operated at any time (including outside of normal area operating times) unless head, tail, and brake lights are all functioning normally.
* **Helmets**. An approved (ASTM, DOT, CSA, Snell Memorial, or equivalent) helmet must be worn at all times by both operator and passenger while the snowmobile is in operation. Ski/snowboard helmets, unless approved by one of these organizations, are not acceptable for use on snowmobiles.
* **Communications**. Snowmobile operators should always be in possession of a working two-way radio.
* **Provincial Driver’s License**. It’s recommended that all snowmobile operators be in possession of a valid, unrestricted provincial driver’s license. This demonstrates that the operator has some experience with and has been tested to operate mobile equipment in some form.
* **Keys.** In the interest of equipment security, in addition to safety, all snowmobiles should be equipped with a key that must be present in order to start the machine.

# Operating a Snowmobile

**Transport of Materials/Toboggan Use**

Any materials being transported should fit within the confines of thesnowmobile’s cargo area, with nothing hanging outside. Materials should not weigh more than the manufacturer’s specifications for the machine andpersons should not be permitted to sit in the cargo area.

Most toboggans aredesigned for carrying freight and materials only. Under no circumstances shouldpeople be transported in this way unless the toboggan has been specificallydesigned for use with passengers.

* Toboggans are useful for carrying items too big or too heavy for the rack.
* Toboggans should be secured to the snowmobile as designed, and backed up with a safety chain.
* All loads should be secured.
* When using a toboggan with a snowmobile, the ability to maneuver will be significantly altered and stopping distances will be increased.
* Operators should avoid using reverse gear when towing a toboggan.

do’s:

* Keep to the right side of the trail.
* Operate in a safe and courteous manner.
* Give trail groomers the right of way.
* Reduce your speed when there is oncoming traffic.
* Give uphill riders right of way when you are traveling downhill.
* Slow down and give the right of way to any skiers.
* Slow down when passing a parked snowmobile on the trail.

# Operating a Snowmobile

don’ts:

* Don’t ignore trail signs
* Don’t pull over on a turn or curve. If you need to stop along a trail, pull over to the right side of the trail and only on straight stretches.
* Don’t leave your engine running if you need to stop for any length of time.