

REDUCING the Risk

A Parent's Guide to Preventing Snowmobile Injuries in Teens Across Canada

Your influence can make a difference

There are over 600,000 registered snowmobiles in Canada, making it one of the most popular winter activities in the country. Snowmobiling is a great way to enjoy spending time outdoors during the coldest months of the year but it is important to help youth learn to "chill" and to understand that immense power is in their hands when they drive a snowmobile. More than a third of snowmobile injuries involve excessive speed.

The good news is that parental involvement is a key factor in making sure young people avoid being injured while snowmobiling. Research points to parents as their teenagers' leading source of information on their risk-taking knowledge, attitudes and behaviour – even greater than their peers. Knowing that you can influence your teens' risk-taking behaviour – where do you start?



Choices, not lectures

Many teenagers feel invincible and can't imagine becoming seriously injured or killed. Remember that for many teens, they don't aspire to be "safe" and they're not interested in hearing lectures. SMARTRISK uses and advises a positive approach to preventing injury: arm teens with the facts and offer concrete ways to take smart risks – Buckle Up, Look First, Wear the Gear, Get Trained and Drive Sober.

Talk to your teens about the risks and how they can be smart about them. Come up with a set of house rules you can both live with – and stick to them. Ensure your teen knows and follows the specialized legislation governing snowmobiles in his or her province.

The risks

- ◆ Snowmobile incidents are the top cause of winter sports and recreation-related severe injuries in the country.
- ◆ Young people are the most likely to sustain serious injuries in a snowmobile incident.
- ◆ In 2003-2004, there were a total of 101 severe injuries sustained in snowmobiling incidents across Canada.
- ◆ Alcohol was a factor in almost half (49%) of the admissions for severe trauma in 2003-2004.

Taking smart risks

Share these snowmobiling tips with your teens:

Buckle Up

- ◆ Always buckle up your helmet. Ensure your teen knows an unbuckled helmet that flies off their head won't do them any good in the event of a crash.

SMARTRISK™



SAUVE-QUI-PENSE™

preventing injury with smart thinking

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Look First

- ◆ Make sure your teen knows to check the weather conditions and plan a route before they head out.
- ◆ Have your teen bring their documents: driver's licence or snow vehicle operator's licence, proof of insurance, snowmobile registration/ownership, registration numbers and validation tag and snowmobile trail permit.
- ◆ Carrying a survival kit (fire starter, compass, whistle, food and water and a first aid kit), an emergency repair kit (flashlight, spare drive belt, spark plugs, tow-rope and tool kit), a transceiver, a probe and shovel (if in avalanche terrain) will help your teen in the event of an emergency.
- ◆ Conduct a pre-ride inspection before a ride with your teen. Check the lights, brakes and fuel levels.
- ◆ Exercise extreme caution when crossing roads, railway tracks, or trail intersections. When travelling on ice, tell your teen to check the conditions of the ice before they go over it and wear a personal flotation device in case they break through.

Wear the Gear

- ◆ Wearing a waterproof snowmobiling suit, a certified helmet, mittens or gloves and rubber-soled boots will protect your teen.

Get Trained

Read the owner's manual and instruct your teen about how to operate your snowmobile.

◆ Enroll your teen in a driver training program that teaches primarily young riders, between 12-16, the safest ways to operate a snowmobile. Contact a local snowmobile club for more information.

◆ Ensure your teen learns and adheres to the Safe Riders Pledge published by the International Snowmobile Manufacturers' Association.



Drive Sober

- ◆ Ride sober. This means no alcohol or drugs before or during a ride for you or your teen.

About the SMARTRISK –

SMARTRISK is a national, charitable organization dedicated to preventing injuries and saving lives by helping people to see the risks in their lives through programs it operates across Canada.

To find out more, contact the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations www.ccsso-ccom.ca

For more information
or to donate to SMARTRISK, visit

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