

# REDUCING the Risk

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

### Your influence can make a difference

There are over 300,000 registered snowmobiles in Ontario, making it one of the most popular winter activities in the province. 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.

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 don't want to listen to 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

- ◆ In Ontario, there were a total of 34 snowmobile deaths in 2005/2006.
- ◆ Young men under 20 suffer 80% of the most severe snowmobile-related injuries.
- ◆ 37% of snowmobiling injuries involve excessive speed.

### Taking smart risks

Share these snowmobiling tips with your teens:

#### Buckle Up

- ◆ Always buckle up your helmet. Riding without a helmet is illegal in Ontario.

#### 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.



SMARTRISK



SAUVE-QUI-PENSE

preventing injury with smart thinking



ONTARIO FEDERATION OF  
SNOWMOBILE CLUBS  
www.ofsc.on.ca

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### **Wear the Gear**

- ◆ Wearing a waterproof snowmobiling suit, a D.O.T. 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 the Driver Training program that teaches primarily young riders, between 12-16, the safest ways to operate a snowmobile. Contact the OFSC for more information.
- ◆ Learn and adhere to the Safe Riders Pledge published by the International Snowmobile Manufacturers' Association with your teen.

### **Drive Sober**

- ◆ Ride sober. The OFSC enforces a Zero Tolerance policy on its trails, so this means no alcohol or drugs before or during a ride for you or your teen.
- ◆ Help your teen to consider their ability and obey the speed limits.



### **About the SMARTRISK – Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs partnership**

SMARTRISK and the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) partnered to help young Ontarians learn to take smart risks while snowmobiling.

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.

The OFSC has been supporting member clubs and volunteers for over 40 years to establish and maintain 40,000 km of snowmobile trails currently across Ontario.



For more information  
or to donate to SMARTRISK, visit

[smartrisknoregrets.ca](http://smartrisknoregrets.ca)

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