



offroad-ed™



THE HANDBOOK

of Indiana Off-Road
Vehicle Laws and
Riding Basics and Safe
Operating Procedures for
ORVs and Snowmobiles



DNR
Indiana Department
of Natural Resources
2020 Edition



snowmobile-ed.com™

ORVs and snowmobiles have been increasing in popularity over the past decade. As trails and recreation areas become more crowded, it's more important than ever for people to operate these vehicles safely and responsibly.

This handbook is designed to introduce you to Indiana laws governing ORVs and snowmobiles and to provide basic information about the safe operation of these vehicles. This handbook is not intended as a substitute for the owner's manual that came with your vehicle.

ABATE of Indiana

<http://registration.abateonline.org/>

American Motorcyclist Association (AMA)

www.americanmotorcyclist.com

Indiana Snowmobilers Association

www.indianasnowmobilers.com

International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association

www.snowmobile.org

American Council of Snowmobile Associations

www.snowmobilers.org

American Trails

www.americantrails.org

ATV Safety Institute

www.atvsafety.org

FHWA Recreational Trails Program

www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails

MSF Dirt Bike School

www.dirtbikeschool.com

Tread Lightly!

www.treadlightly.org

National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC)

www.nohvcc.org

- The snowmobile trails are open in December, January, February, and March when snow conditions are adequate and the trails are posted as “open.”
- Trail conditions are reported on the Indiana Snowmobilers Association website:
<http://www.indianasnowmobilers.com/?q=trail-reports>



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Indiana Laws

Except where noted, the laws below apply to all off-road vehicles (ORVs) and snowmobiles.

Registering Your ORV IC 9-18.1-14-1; IC 9-18.1-14-3; IC 9-18.1-14-4; IC 9-18.1-14-5; IC 14-16-1-32

- If you operate an ORV on public or private property, regardless of when the ORV was purchased, the ORV must be registered. An ORV is required to be registered in Indiana unless it is registered in another state and operated by a resident of that state for a period not to exceed 20 days in a calendar year, or a vehicle operated by a non-resident of Indiana that is not registered but displays an annual non-resident trail use tag and is being operated on designated trails and properties owned and managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR).
- Registration is \$30 for three years.
- Registration can be completed at all Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicle (BMV) license branches. Registration renewal is available online at MyBMV (www.bmv.IN.gov) for ORVs that are properly titled or are not required to be titled, and for most snowmobiles.
- Upon approval of the application, the BMV will issue two registration decals and a Certificate of Registration containing the vehicle number.
- The pocket-sized Certificate of Registration must be carried on the vehicle and made available for inspection by law enforcement officers.
- A bill of sale will serve in lieu of the Certificate of Registration for 45 days from the purchase date.
- Registration decals must be attached to both sides of the forward half of the vehicle.
- All decals must be maintained in a legible condition, and expired decals must be removed from the vehicle.

Other Facts About Registration IC 9-18.1-14-7

- If a Certificate of Registration is lost, mutilated, or illegible, the owner of the vehicle may purchase a duplicate from the BMV for a fee.

- A person may not operate a vehicle with an altered, defaced, or obliterated vehicle number.

Buying and Selling an ORV IC 9-17-1-1;

IC 9-18.1-14-1

- A person who buys an ORV must apply to the BMV within 45 days from the date of purchase to register the ORV.
- After 45 days from the date of purchase, the ORV may not be operated until registered.
- ORVs purchased or acquired on or after January 1, 2010 must be titled with the BMV.

Operating on Highways and Roads IC 14-16-1-20

- An ORV may be ridden on the public right-of-way adjacent to a public highway, except a limited-access highway, when there is sufficient width to do so without endangering life or property.
- You may cross a public highway, other than a limited access highway, at a 90-degree angle to get from one area to another. To do so, you must:
 - Bring your vehicle to a complete stop before crossing *and...*
 - Yield to all traffic.
 - Cities, towns, and counties have individual laws pertaining to ORVs. Check these before riding.
- An ORV may be operated on a road or highway for a special event after obtaining a permit.

Youth Helmet Law IC 9-18.1-14-11

A person under the age of 18 years old who is riding or operating an ORV is required to wear a helmet that meets the standards established by the United States Department of Transportation under 49 CFR 571.218.

Operating on Public Property IC 14-16-1-27

- An ORV may not be ridden on public property without the consent of the state or an agency of the state.
- An ORV may not be ridden in a U.S. forest without the consent of the U.S. Forest Service.

Understanding Operator Requirements

IC 14-16-1-20

- Persons under 14 years of age may operate an ORV only if:
 - They are supervised by a person who is at least 18 years of age *or...*
 - They are operating on property owned or controlled by the person's parent or guardian.
- A person may not operate an ORV on a public highway without a valid motor vehicle driver's license.

Meeting ORV Safety Equipment Regulations

IC 14-16-1-21

- An ORV may not be operated between sunset and sunrise without at least one headlight and one taillight.
- An ORV may not be operated at any time unless it has brakes capable of slowing the ORV at a rate of 14 feet per second when operating on level ground at an initial speed of 20 miles per hour.

Operating Your ORV Legally IC 14-16-1-23

An individual may not operate an ORV under any of these conditions:

- While under the influence of alcohol, a narcotic, or other drug
- At a rate of speed greater than is reasonable or in a manner that endangers a person or property
- At a speed exceeding 5 miles per hour on ice covering public waters when within 100 feet of an individual on foot or within 100 feet of a fishing shanty
- Within 100 feet of a dwelling between midnight and 6:00 a.m., except on your own property or as a guest on another person's property
- Within 100 feet of a slide, ski, or skating area
- Without a lighted headlight and taillight when operating between one-half hour after sunset and one-half hour before sunrise
- Without a muffler in good working condition
- In a forest nursery, planting area, or public land where growing plants or animals may be damaged

- On any property without the consent of the landowner or tenant
- On a railroad track or its right-of-way
- In or on a flowing river, stream, or creek, except for the purpose of crossing by the shortest possible route
- On or across a cemetery or burial ground
- When carrying a bow with an arrow nocked
- While transporting a firearm on or in the ORV unless:
 - The firearm is unloaded *and* securely encased or equipped with and made inoperative by a manufactured keylocked trigger-housing mechanism *or...*
 - The firearm is a lawfully carried and possessed handgun in accordance with IC 35-47-2-1 *or...*
 - The person carrying the firearm is operating the ORV on property that the person owns, has contractual interest in, otherwise legally possesses, or has permission from the person who has any of the above.

Responding Appropriately After an Accident

IC 14-16-1-24

An operator of an ORV involved in an accident must notify the nearest law enforcement authorities as quickly as possible if the accident resulted in:

- Serious injury or death of person *or...*
- Estimated property damage of \$750 or more.

Obeying Law Enforcement Officers IC 14-16-1-25

All Indiana law enforcement officers will enforce the ORV regulations.

Off-Road Vehicle and Snowmobile Fund

IC 14-16-1-30

Registration and related fees for ORVs and snowmobiles are deposited in the Off-Road Vehicle and Snowmobile Fund, which is used for the enforcement, construction, and maintenance of off-road and snowmobile trails. The fund is administered by the DNR.

Before You Ride

Getting to Know Your Off-Road Vehicle (ORV)

An ORV is not a toy. It's a vehicle built primarily for off-road recreation. ORVs can provide hours of safe, enjoyable off-road riding. But ORVs also can be dangerous if you don't understand your vehicle or know proper riding procedures.

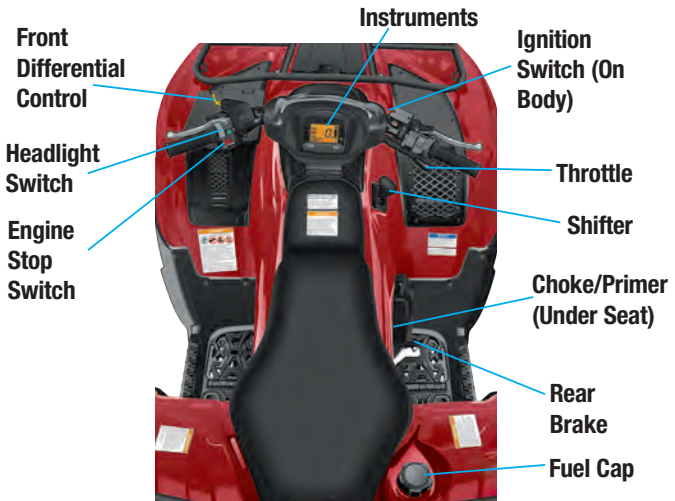
- Because there are different types of ORVs and each has its own handling characteristics, it's important for you to study your owner's manual and understand how to operate your particular vehicle. For example, most ORVs have front and rear brakes, but some have linked brakes. You need to know the correct braking techniques for your vehicle.
- ORVs also use different transmissions, shifting mechanisms, throttle mechanisms, starting mechanisms, cooling systems, and axle designs.
- Controls and their locations also differ from one model to another. Learn to find each control without looking at it.

Above all, remember these facts:

- ORVs are designed primarily for off-road use.
- Operating an ORV on paved surfaces can be hazardous because of handling issues.
- Riding on paved roads is a leading cause of ORV-related fatalities.
- Only carry a passenger if your machine is designed by the manufacturer to carry another person; most are not.



Learning the Common ORV Parts



Using Protective Clothing and Gear

By definition, off-road riding means “rugged,” so you should always wear clothing that combines protection and comfort.

Never operate an ORV without these essential items:

■ ORV helmet

- Helps prevent serious head injury.
- Should fit snugly and fasten securely.
- May be a full-face helmet or an open-face helmet plus eye protection.
- Add a stripe of reflective tape to make you more visible at night.
- Must be a U.S. Department of Transportation–approved crash helmet.

■ Goggles or other eye protection

- Be aware that branches, road debris, and insects can hit your eyes and distract or even blind you.
- Do not use sunglasses, which do not provide adequate protection. Use goggles or a face shield.
- Choose shatter-resistant eye protection that bears the marking VESC8 (or V-8) or Z87.1 or is made of hard-coated polycarbonate.
- Carry gray-tinted eye protection for bright days, yellow-tinted for overcast days, and clear for night rides.
- Make sure your eye protection is scratch-free, securely fastened, and well-ventilated to avoid fogging.

■ Gloves

- Keep your hands warm in cold weather.
- Prevent soreness and fatigue.
- Offer protection during a spill or collision with branches.
- Should be padded over the knuckles for the best protection.

■ Boots

- Heels prevent your feet from slipping off footrests.
- Off-road boots are best, protecting lower legs, ankles, and feet.

■ Long pants and long-sleeved shirt or jacket

- Protect your skin from scratches.
- Provide the best protection with off-road riding gear that includes:
 - Pants with kneepads
 - Chest and shoulder protectors



Cold Weather Riding

In cold weather, clothing that works well for snowmobile riders is also ideal for most ORV enthusiasts.

- Clothing should fit snugly and still be comfortable.
- Clothing that's too loose can snag on your vehicle, twigs, and branches.

Inspecting Your ORV Before You Ride

Nothing spoils an outing faster than mechanical problems. In some cases, malfunctioning equipment also can cause injuries.

- Set the parking brake.
- Consult your owner's manual for items that may need to be lubricated, tightened, adjusted, aligned, or checked for wear.

Always Make a Pre-Ride Inspection



Tires

ORV tires take a lot of punishment, so maintaining the correct tire pressure is critical.

- Consult your owner's manual for the recommended pressure.
- Check the tire pressure before each trip. Over- or under-inflated tires:
 - Can result in tire or wheel damage.
 - May change the handling characteristics of your ORV.
- Use a low-pressure gauge because ORV tire pressure is too low for standard auto tire gauges to read accurately.
- Be sure all tires have the same pressure. Otherwise, vehicles may pull left or right.
- Check for damage that could cause an air leak.

Key items include:

- Air filter
- Brakes
- Drive chain or drive shaft
- Engine stop switch
- Foot shifter
- Lights
- Spark arrestor/muffler
- Spark plugs
- Steering system
- Throttle
- Wheels and lugnuts

Routine Maintenance

Off-road riding puts a strain on your ORV, so it's important to perform the scheduled maintenance recommended in your owner's manual. You can avoid a breakdown and possible injury.

Registering Your ORV IC 9-18.1-14-5

- Your vehicle isn't ready to ride unless it has an up-to-date registration decal attached to both sides of the forward half of the machine.
- You also must carry a pocket-sized registration certificate with you whenever you ride.

Registration Decal



Additional Gear

- Mechanical problems can occur at any time, so it's wise to carry the tool kit and owner's manual that came with your ORV.
- In addition, you should carry some spare parts and emergency items:
 - Cell phone
 - Electrical and duct tape
 - Extra spark plugs—worn plugs are the number one cause of engine stalling
 - First-aid kit
 - Flashlight
 - Headlight and taillight bulbs
 - Knife
 - Sturdy tow rope or chain
- For longer trips, see “What to Bring Along.”

Riding Your ORV

Basic Operation

Before you do any serious off-road riding, you need to find a safe, unchallenging location where you can practice riding your new ORV and get comfortable operating it. The location should be large, open, flat, and free of hazards.

Starting the Engine

First, consult your owner's manual. Typically, you will:

- Point the ORV in a safe direction.
- Put the transmission in neutral or park.
- Set the parking brake.
- Turn on the fuel valve.
- Make sure that the engine stop switch is in the “run” or “on” position.
- Put the choke in the “on” position if the engine is cold.
- Start the engine.

Adjusting Your Posture

- To make sure you can shift your weight quickly when necessary and reach the controls easily, always maintain proper posture:
 - Head up and eyes looking far ahead
 - Hands on the handlebars
 - Feet on the footrests, toes pointing straight ahead
- Removing one hand or foot can reduce your ability to control the ORV or could cause you to lose your balance and fall off.
- Removing your feet from the footrests or dragging your feet on the ground can result in serious injury if your feet get under the rear wheels.



Proper Level Riding Position

Starting Off

After the engine is warmed up:

- Apply the hand brake.
- Release the parking brake.
- Shift into gear.
- Release the hand brake and apply the throttle slowly.

Shifting Gears

- The three general types of transmissions are manual, automatic, and semi-automatic.
- Consult your owner's manual for correct shifting procedures.

Braking

- The proper braking method depends on whether your ORV has brakes in the front, rear, or both.
- Consult your owner's manual for correct braking procedures.

Using Correct Riding Techniques

Turning

Consult your owner's manual for information on turning your ORV. In general, you should:

- Turn at low to medium speeds.
- Move forward on the seat and lean in the direction of the turn.
- Turn the handlebars while looking where you are turning.
- Speed up slightly as you come out of the turn.
- If an off-road vehicle (ORV) starts to tip, lean your body farther into the turn and gradually reduce your speed.

**LEAN INTO
the TURN
to counteract
wheel-lift.**

**LEANING OUT
encourages
tipping.**



Riding Uphill

- Climbing hills can be dangerous if you don't follow the proper procedures as described in your owner's manual. You could lose control of your ORV, or it could overturn.
- In general, you should:
 - Use good judgment. If the hill looks too steep for your ORV or your abilities, it probably is.
 - Start the climb by shifting into a lower gear.
 - Speed up to maintain momentum.

**Proper Uphill
Riding Position**



- Move up on the seat and lean forward, or stand and position your torso over the front wheels.
 - Keep your weight uphill and your feet on the footrests.
- If you can't see what is on or over the crest of a hill, slow down until you have a clear view.

Riding Downhill

- Always carefully check the terrain before you start down any hill. Choose a downhill path that is as straight as possible with a minimum of obstacles.
- When going downhill, remember to:
- Shift your weight to the rear.
 - Maintain a low speed.
 - Use a lower gear.
 - Brake gradually.
 - Look ahead.

Proper Downhill Riding Position



Traversing a Slope

- You may encounter hills that are too steep to ascend or descend in a straight line. In that case, you may be able to drive across, or traverse, the slope at an angle. However, don't attempt to traverse a slope with surfaces that are extremely slippery, rough, or loose.
- When traversing, be sure to:
- Keep both feet firmly on the footrests.
 - Lean your upper body uphill.
 - Keep your speed steady.

Reading and Traversing Terrain

To ride safely, you need to be able to assess the terrain ahead of you and understand the capabilities of your machine.

- Stay on existing trails. Avoid dangerous terrain such as steep slopes, marshes, and swamps. Also, keep an eye out for large holes, ruts, bumps, debris, and other obstacles.
- Travel at speeds appropriate for the terrain, visibility, operating conditions, and your ability.
- Constantly scan the path ahead of you to pick the safest route around obstacles or hazards.
- Carefully approach hills, turns, and other obstacles.
- Be especially alert when traveling over unfamiliar terrain.



Riding on Different Types of Terrain

Mud and Water IC 14-16-1-23(a)(13)

- ORVs are designed to ride through shallow water and mud, but they also can damage the environment.
- It is illegal to ride an ORV in a creek or stream unless you are crossing by the shortest possible route.

Snow 312 IAC 7-1-3

ORVs and all other wheeled vehicles are prohibited from using state snowmobile trails.

- Ride only on firm snow or groomed trails where permitted by law. Riding on soft snow can damage the terrain.
- Watch for snowdrifts. They may cause an accident or cause you to get stuck.

Trails 312 IAC 8-2-8

- An ORV may not be operated on DNR property except on a trail or property designated for the purpose.
- Avoid riding on vegetation or wet sand.

Crossing Roads and Highways IC 14-16-1-20;

IC 14-16-1-23

- Because ORVs are designed for off-road use, they can be difficult to handle on paved surfaces. Riding on or crossing a road illegally or improperly is a leading cause of ORV rider fatalities.
- If you must cross a road, follow this safe procedure.
 - Stop at a right angle to the road.
 - Pick a crossing point where you have good visibility in both directions.
 - Bring your vehicle to a complete stop on the shoulder of the road.
 - Look both ways, and yield to oncoming traffic.
 - Proceed forward slowly because your ORV may be difficult to maneuver on pavement.
- Drive straight across the road.

Safety Tips

- Don't ride alone.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Don't drive tired.

If You Have an Accident IC 14-16-1-24

You are required by law to report immediately any accident you are involved in that results in serious injury or death, or more than \$750 in damages. Use the quickest means of communication, and notify at least one of the following: conservation officer, sheriff's office, police department of the municipality where the accident occurred, or the state police.

Kids on Wheels

Note to Parents: Is Your Child Ready to Ride?

IC 14-16-1-20

By Indiana law, a person must be at least 14 years old to ride an ORV unsupervised. If your child meets the age requirement, it's your job to assess whether he or she is truly ready to ride. To make an informed decision, you must consider several factors.

- **Physical Development:** Can your youngster sit comfortably on the ORV and reach the controls easily?
- **Motor Skills:** Is your child's coordination adequate for the challenge of riding an ORV?
- **Visual Perception:** Does your child have good depth perception, peripheral vision, and the ability to judge distances?
- **Social/Emotional Maturity:** Will your youngster understand the risks involved in riding an ORV, make good decisions to avoid accidents, and drive responsibly?

Youth Helmet Law IC 9-18.1-14-11

A person under the age of 18 years old who is riding or operating an ORV is required to wear a helmet that meets the standards established by the United States Department of Transportation under 49 CFR 571.218.

Age and Engine Size

For your child's safety and comfort, you must match your child with an ORV engine size that is appropriate for his or her age group:

- Ages 6–11: Under 70cc
- Ages 12–15: 70 to 90cc
- Ages 16 and older: Over 90cc



Adult Responsibility IC 14-16-1-33

The owner or person in possession of an ORV may not permit a person under the age of 18 years old to operate or ride an ORV without wearing a helmet.

Your Role As a Parent

- You will be your child's teacher and safety advisor, so you must be familiar with your youngster's ORV. You will need to know the controls, handling characteristics, maintenance requirements, and proper riding techniques.
- Supervise your child during riding practice, and encourage good riding habits and appropriate behavior.



Before You Ride

Know Your Snowmobile

A snowmobile is a recreational vehicle designed to travel over ice or snow. It has sled-type runners or skis on the front end and a tractor-like belt tread in the rear.

- Snowmobiling can be a fun and safe sport. However, it can be hazardous if you're reckless, inattentive, or uneducated about the snowmobile you're driving.
- A safe snowmobiler:
 - Understands the mechanics of the machine.
 - Has respect for its capabilities and its limitations.
 - Knows how to maneuver through a variety of operating conditions.
 - Knows the laws governing snowmobiles.
 - Uses good judgment.
 - Respects others and the environment.
- A safe snowmobiler also seeks out equipment with the Label of Certification from the Snowmobile Safety and Certification Committee.

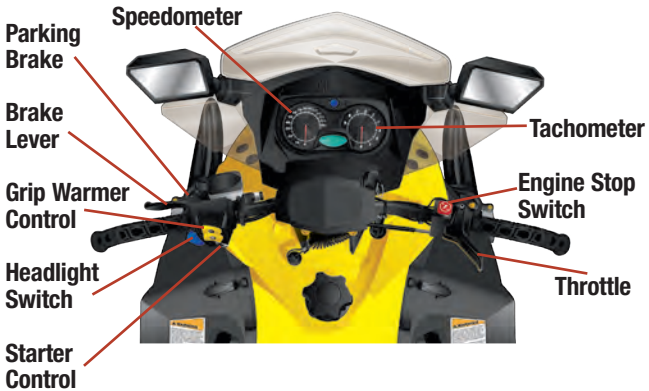
Pre-Season Check-Up and Maintenance

- It's a good idea to give your snowmobile a check-up before the season starts so that problems can be fixed before they interfere with your enjoyment. Consult your owner's manual for items that may need to be lubricated, tightened, adjusted, aligned, or checked for wear.
- In addition to the check-up, be sure to perform all recommended maintenance.

Key items include:

- Brakes
- Clutch
- Drive belt
- Fuel filter
- Lights
- Skis
- Spark plugs
- Steering system
- Track

Common Snowmobile Parts



Proof of Registration IC 9-18.1-14-5

- Your snowmobile isn't ready to ride unless it has an up-to-date registration decal attached to both sides of the forward half of the machine.
- You also must carry a pocket-size registration card with you whenever you ride.

Essential Gear

- Mechanical problems can occur at any time, so it's wise to carry the tool kit and owner's manual that came with your vehicle. In addition, you should carry some spare parts and emergency items.
- For longer trips, see "What to Bring Along."

Emergency Items

- Drive belt
- Duct tape
- First-aid kit
- Flashlight
- Knife
- Spark plugs
- Tow rope

Dressing for Cold Weather

As with any outdoor winter recreation, you need clothing that will keep you warm and dry.

- Remember that the "wind chill factor" can lower your temperature considerably. If the thermometer reads 30°F and you ride at 25 miles an hour, your exposed skin feels a wind chill temperature of 0°F.
- Dress in layers, and wear gloves and a warm head covering under your helmet. Gloves with gauntlets will keep cold air from blowing up your sleeves.

U.S. Customary Wind Chill Chart												
Estimated Wind Speed in MPH	Actual Thermometer Reading (°F)											
	50	40	30	20	10	0	-10	-20	-30	-40	-50	-60
	Equivalent Temperature (°F)											
Calm	50	40	30	20	10	0	-10	-20	-30	-40	-50	-60
5	48	37	27	16	6	-5	-15	-26	-36	-47	-57	-68
10	40	28	16	4	-9	-21	-33	-46	-58	-70	-83	-95
15	36	22	9	-5	-18	-36	-45	-58	-72	-85	-99	-112
20	32	18	4	-10	-25	-39	-53	-67	-82	-96	-110	-124
25	30	16	0	-15	-29	-44	-59	-74	-88	-104	-118	-133
30	28	13	-2	-18	-33	-48	-63	-79	-94	-109	-125	-140
35	27	11	-4	-20	-35	-49	-67	-82	-98	-113	-129	-145
40	26	10	-6	-21	-37	-53	-69	-85	-100	-116	-132	-148
(Wind speeds greater than 40 mph have little additional effect)	LITTLE DANGER* (for properly clothed person)			INCREASED DANGER* (for properly clothed person)				GREAT DANGER*				
*DANGER FROM FREEZING OF EXPOSED FLESH												

- Do not wear:
 - A scarf or loose clothing, which can get caught in the moving parts of your snowmobile or in branches and bushes
 - A bubble-type face guard, which may frost up

Snowmobile (and ORV) Suit

The ideal winter outfit for both snowmobilers and ORV riders is a snowmobile suit. In addition to keeping you warm, a snowmobile suit will keep you afloat if you fall into freezing water. Because it traps air, it acts like a flotation device. Some suits also have flotation material sewn into the lining, and others have special air pockets that you can inflate by blowing into a tube.

- Clothing should fit snugly and still be comfortable.
- Clothing that's too loose can snag on your vehicle, twigs, and branches.



Riding Your Snowmobile

Starting Safely

- Before you start, check the fuel and oil levels, brakes and lights, emergency stop switch, and track.
- When you start your snowmobile:
 - Point the machine in a safe direction.
 - Position yourself to control the machine when it starts.
 - Set the parking brake.
 - Check the throttle to make sure it's not frozen—it should snap back to the idle position when released.
 - Set the key and the engine stop switch to the “on” position.
 - If your machine is cold, choke or prime it.
 - If you have an electric starter, turn the key and release the choke as soon as the engine starts.
 - If your machine has a reverse gear, be sure the snowmobile is in a forward gear when you start off.

Basic Riding Positions

- **Sitting:** The most common and safest position.



- **Kneeling:** A good position for resting your body at low speeds. It provides some mobility to adjust your weight.



- **Standing:** Only to be used when you need to see above obstructions ahead, such as when traveling through trees.



- **Posting:** Crouching position that allows you to absorb shocks when traveling over uneven terrain.



Basic Riding Techniques

- **Riding Uphill:** Lean forward on the machine, preferably in a kneeling position. Apply enough speed to reach the top and don't stop until you arrive at the crest; otherwise, you might get stuck.
- **Riding Downhill:** The greatest hazard is loss of control. Stay in the sitting position and pump the brake to stop the machine. Keep the clutch engaged.
- **Traversing a Hill:** This can be difficult on hard-packed snow. Use the kneeling position. Put pressure on the uphill side of the track by leaning into the hill.
- **Turning:** Lean into turns to gain more control while turning. Placing more body weight forward and into the turn puts more load on the inside ski and keeps it down on the snow, giving it a better bite.
- **Stopping:** Pull over to the extreme right. Get off on the right side. Don't stop on a curve or hill.

- **Crossing a Road:** Select a crossing point that offers good visibility in both directions. Before crossing, come to a complete stop on the shoulder of the road. Look both ways and yield to any traffic on the road. Drive forward slowly because your snowmobile may be difficult to maneuver on pavement. Drive straight across, not at an angle, to minimize the distance you need to travel.

Handling Special Situations

Deep Snow

You need more power to operate in deep, fluffy snow than on hard-packed snow because your vehicle sinks deeper. Turn in a wide arc, and look for a firmer base.

Hard-Packed Snowdrifts

Hard-packed snow presents problems in drifted areas where the packed snow isn't uniform. Unexpected bumps and dips can cause back injuries, especially at higher speeds. Travel cautiously in these areas, reducing speed.

Ice

- Ice is as hard as pavement and requires extreme caution. Spins are common, and fast stops are impossible.
- Use a slow, steady speed. To stop, let up on the throttle and allow the machine to coast to a stop.

If You Get Stuck in the Snow

Don't attempt to lift your machine out by yourself. In some cases, people have had heart attacks from the strain. Instead, try one of these three methods.

- Use a rope to pull out the machine.
- Tramp down the snow in front of the machine, "rock" it free, and drive forward.
- If the two methods above fail, ask someone to help you lift your machine out of its hole.

Safety Tips

- Don't ride alone.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs, which impair key functions.
- Don't drive tired.

Carrying a Passenger or Towing

- Only carry a passenger if your machine is designed to carry another person; most are not.
- When towing, use a rigid tow bar, which will prevent the sled from crashing into you if you stop suddenly.

If You Have an Accident IC 14-16-1-24

You are required by law to report immediately any accident you are involved in that results in serious injury or death, or more than \$750 in damages.

Hand Signals

Traveling in a group requires communication. Make sure you and everyone in your group understand basic hand signals.



Left Turn



Right Turn



Stop



Slowing



**Oncoming
Sleds**



**Sleds
Following**



**Two Sleds
Following**



**Last Sled
in Line**

Riding Safely

Be Prepared

- Anytime you venture into off-road terrain, some risk is involved. You could become stranded because of mechanical problems; caught in unexpected, severe weather; or injured or lost.
- Environment characteristics, such as rough terrain, climate extremes, and remoteness, also increase the chance of accidents.

Before You Leave...

Tell someone where and with whom you are riding and when you will be back.

What to Bring Along

- **Map and Compass:** Topographic maps provide the most useful information for navigating terrain because they show the area in three dimensions. Purchase a good orienteering compass, and learn how to use it with a topographic map.
- **First-Aid Kit:** Carry a well-stocked first-aid kit, and take a first-aid course so that you'll know how to respond in an emergency.
- **Survival Kit:** In addition to the items listed above, you should carry:
 - Candy bars (or other high-energy food)
 - Emergency food and water (enough for one or two extra days)
 - Flashlight
 - Hand axe or saw
 - Signal flares
 - Tarp
 - Waterproof matches
- **Other useful items:**
 - Radio to listen for storm warnings
 - Mobile phone and a GPS unit



Observing the Code of Safety

- Be sure your vehicle is in good mechanical condition.
- Familiarize yourself with your vehicle by reading your owner's manual.
- Wear protective clothing suitable for the environment.
- Use a helmet, goggles, or face shield to prevent injuries from twigs and road debris.
- Make sure the light system works properly.
- Don't remove the factory-installed air box or muffler.
- Know the terrain where you plan to ride.
- Be aware of the weather forecast, especially ice and snow conditions.
- Respect people and animals you encounter.
- Never venture out alone.

Using Courteous Trail Etiquette

- Ride only where permitted.
- Be considerate of others on the trail, and keep to the right.
- Always yield to uphill traffic.
- Announce your intention before passing.
- Slow down when someone is passing you.
- Yield the right-of-way to bikes, horses, and hikers.
- Leave gates as you find them.
- Report downed trees and trail maintenance needs to land managers.
- Report illegal riding.
- Carry out what you carry in.

ORV and Snowmobile Trails Map

Legend



ORV property



Snowmobile Trail



Snowmobile Trails are only open from December 1 through March 30 with sufficient snow.

DNR
Indiana Department
of Natural Resources



For detailed information on trails:

- Contact the DNR Customer Service Center at **317-232-4200**.
- Access the DNR's off-road vehicle and snowmobile trails webpage at **on.IN.gov/outdoorrec**.

ORV Trail Signs



**Trail Marker
Warning**



Restricted



Trail Sign



**Warning
Sign**



**Warning
Sign**



**Warning
Sign**



Trail Blazer



**Directional
Blazer**



**ORV Route
Sign**



ORV Route Arrows



Chevron



**Trail
Intersection**



**Warning
Sign**



Stop Ahead



**Right or Left
Turn**



**No
Snowmobiling**



Indiana Department
of Natural Resources

Law Enforcement Offices

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812-837-9536
icodispatch@dnr.IN.gov

Go online for information about:

- ◆ State parks
- ◆ Boater and off-road vehicle education courses
- ◆ Hunter education courses
- ◆ ICOO Youth Camp
- ◆ Boating laws
- ◆ Recreation guide
- ◆ Indiana trails
- ◆ TIP (Turn in a Poacher/Polluter)
- ◆ Division of Law Enforcement
- ◆ DNR telephone numbers
- ◆ Division of Fish & Wildlife
- ◆ Division of Outdoor Recreation



Visit on.IN.gov/outdoorrec

Everything you need to know about off-road vehicles in Indiana is just a click away!