# Safe Snowmobiling

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.).

go2HR developed these Safety Talks in conjunction with representatives from 11 ski hills in BC. The content is meant to be a base on which to work from, so please feel free to customize the subject matter to your own organization. If you would like to develop your own Safety Talk, please download the Safety Talk template from the go2HR website.

Topic Overview:

At ski areas in BC every year, a large number of workers are injured while using snowmobiles.

Demonstration and Discussion Topics

🞏 **Discuss** the hazards of using 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 and the “Safety Talk Record” to document the meeting.

🞏 **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.

Safe Snowmobiling



SAFETY TALK RECORD

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Discussion Leader: | | | Date: | | | | |
| Department: | | | Time: | | | | |
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| 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:* | | |

# Safe Snowmobiling

At ski areas in BC every year, a large number of workers are injured while using snowmobiles. Many of the injuries or deaths resulted from colliding with trees, fencing, bridges, and other vehicles. Some injuries occurred when the snowmobile rolled to the side in a ditch or stream and pinned the operator under the vehicle. The goal of this Safety Talk is to reduce the number of incidents with workers being injured or killed while using a snowmobile.



Tasks

Mounting/dismounting snowmobile, and driving.

Do’s:

* Assess whether traveling via snowmobile is necessary. Would it be possible to drive, walk, ski, etc. instead?
* Be aware of the time of day you will be snowmobiling. Is it the “Witching Hour?” i.e. When staff are commuting to/from their workplace? Often times, designated snowmobiling routes will intersect with routes for staff, so you are likely going to see more traffic during this time.
* Before going anywhere on the snowmobile, take a few minutes to do a pre-trip inspection. Ensure your siren, lights, horn, signals, and brakes are working. Check the condition of the track, skis, fuel and oil reservoirs, throttle cable, drive belt, and steering. Some cases report that the throttle sticks on snow snowmobiles and may not actually have a "throttle interruption device" designed to shut off the snowmobile in the event that the throttle sticks.
* Attach the safety stop cord to your jacket, if applicable.
* Bring an emergency radio and wear appropriate personal protective equipment, including high-visibility winter clothing, goggles or polarized sunglasses, DOT-approved helmet, and gloves.
* Expect the unexpected. Watch the path ahead to avoid rocks, trees, fences, snowmaking equipment, other vehicles, people, skiers, ditches, thin ice, wildlife, and other obstacles.
* Be aware of the snow conditions you are going to be driving through as the sled will respond differently if it is hard pack, icy, man-made snow, or powder.
* Pay attention to signage that indicates the snowmobile-designated path, and stick to that route.
* When ascending slopes, approach straight on and accelerate evenly.
* If going across the slope is required, ensure you have enough momentum to keep the snowmobile level, and shift your weight to the uphill side of the sled.
* Follow communication protocols while on the mountain. Always call for clearance to deviate from designated routes. Even while on a designated route, communicate your intentions by announcing your intended path on your radio.

Do’s (Cont’d):

* Learn the snowmobile traffic laws and regulations for the area. Many areas prohibit using snowmobiles on public roads. Some places have minimum age requirements for drivers.
* Follow all manufacturing requirements for maintenance of the snowmobile to ensure optimum results from the machine.
* Follow the speed limits as designated by the snowmobile manufacturer.
* Refer to your company’s policies prior to attempting to tow anyone or anything.
* Sit with your body midway back on the seat, and your feet firmly on the running boards. Keep your knees and hips released to absorb shock.
* When going downhill, maintain light throttle pressure, ensure a low centre of gravity, and apply brakes lightly but frequently.
* When dismounting: turn off engine, assess snow conditions prior to dismount, anticipate stepping into deep soft or rotten snow, flex knees and lower body accordingly. Prepare to walk or stand on steep slope.
* Be sure to instruct passengers about safe snowmobiling practices and orient them prior to riding.

Don’ts:

* Never drive a snowmobile if you are not trained to do so or in unfamiliar terrain.
* Do not allow public snowmobiling on the mountain.
* Do not stop while traversing a side hill as it will cause the vehicle to roll.
* Yield at merge points, be aware of potential skier traffic and control speed according to conditions. Be sensible about stopping at roads. Avoid tailgating. Control speed according to conditions.
* Never drive on un-established and unmarked trails or in banned areas.
* Use extra caution when driving in bad weather. Check warnings for snow, ice, and wind chill conditions before starting.
* Don’t speed up at the top of a hill. Slow down. A cliff, snow bank, or other unforeseen hazard could be on the other side.
* When driving at night, use extra caution because unseen obstacles could be fatal. Do not drive faster than your headlights will allow you to see.
* Wherever possible, avoid open water and known buried creeks, etc.

