

Snowmachining Safety - Know your Capabilities and Limitations

Tips

Use common sense and good judgment. This sport is so exhilarating that the loss of these capabilities can be dangerous. Use the "buddy system". Don't go alone and always carry a fully charged cell phone.

Come Prepared

- Know the area, the weather, your route and the condition of your own body and equipment.
- Start with a sensible check list of proper clothing, equipment and safety gear. Bring disposable warming packet pads that when activated provide heat for 4 to 6 hours for your gloves, boots, and inside clothing.
- Know how to repair your machine and carry a repair kit along with extra spark plugs, drive belt, a roll of twine and a knife. The last two items can be life savers if you need to improvise snowshoes or a shelter with branches.
- Take light, high calorie foods and layers of high quality, insulated clothing that can be adapted to all weather changes. Remember your boots and helmet.
- Know the basic principles of map and compass reading and use them. Drive only until you have a half a tank of gas left, then GO BACK. Gas stations don't come by very often.
- Join BigLakeTrails.Org and get free access to all area trail maps, their history, and downloadable trail data files for your GPS units. Electronically store trails for navigating and for viewing and for planning your trip in advance within GoogleEarth. Bring spare batteries to backup your GPS unit on all trips.
- Let a friend or relative know you are taking a snowmachine trip, then inform them of your planned route as well as departure and return times. Stick with the plan. If it changes, let them know and always check in upon return.
- Snowshoes might be added to your equipment list for each individual in case your snowmachine happens to break down and you have to walk out.
- Stay on the right side of the trail as snowmachine trail rules are similar to highway rules. If you encounter a dog mushing team, pull over to the right and shutdown your machine until the musher and dogs can safely pass.
- Do not drink alcohol and ride.
- Do not speed on the trail and slow down and stop at each trail intersection to avoid collisions. Drive responsibly. Let's all do everything we can to keep snowmachining safe for everyone. Allow at least 30 feet between you and the machine ahead of you to provide you time to react, brake, and stop safely.
- Watch out for trees that may have recently fallen across the trail, and if possible move the tree off to the side of the trail for the safety of other riders.
- Don't be afraid to stop and ask a snowmachine rider for directions or whether they may need your assistance.
- Last but not least, pack out any trash that you bring into the trail system.
- Have fun, and enjoy the trails.