

WEST CENTRAL MONTANA AVALANCHE CENTER

For General Information:
406-329-3750

For Weekend Snowpack and
Weather Information:
406 - 549 - 4488
1 - 800 - 281 - 1030 (MT only)

<http://missoulaavalanche.org>

Lolo, Bitterroot and Clearwater
National Forests

AVALANCHE AWARENESS GUIDE

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Call to obtain updated weather and avalanche information.

AWARENESS WHILE RIDING

Look for evidence of recent avalanches, shooting cracks in the snow or snow collapsing with a "whumpf" sound. These signs usually mean the snow is unstable. The avalanche danger is likely increasing if it is snowing, blowing or raining.

RECOGNIZING AVALANCHE TERRAIN

1) Avalanches start on slopes steeper than about 30 degrees, but can be triggered from below on flatter terrain in unstable conditions.

2) Slopes with wind-deposited snow are often unstable. Cornices indicate a wind loaded slope.

3) A slope that's recently avalanched indicates unstable conditions on other slopes of a similar angle, aspect and elevation.

SAFETY TIPS

1) If you ride on or beneath potential avalanche slopes, travel one at a time, even when highmarking.

2) Don't stop in areas exposed to avalanches.

3) If caught, try to ride out of the slide, but if this fails, make swimming motions while trying to stay on the surface.

4) Have all members of the group carry avalanche beacons, shovels and probes and be sure everyone knows how to use them.

MULTIPLE TRAIL FUNDING

There are several sources of funds utilized for the development, maintenance and upkeep of winter recreational trails. They include:

- Snowmobile registration - A state decal is purchased by all snowmobilers; 50% is used for development, maintenance and operations of snowmobile facilities and 50% is used for enforcement of snowmobile regulations and laws.
- Snowmobile fuel tax, a state gas tax - 15/28 of 1% of the state gasoline dealers' license tax is utilized for the development and maintenance of snowmobile facilities.
- Recreational trails program - A federally funded program that offers grants for trail development, renovation, maintenance, acquisition, safety and interpretation for both motorized and non-motorized trails.

Groomed snowmobile trails are managed by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in cooperation with the Lolo and Clearwater National Forests. Trails are groomed and maintained by the Missoula Snowgoers Snowmobile Club depending on logging activity, snow conditions and equipment operations.

Groomed cross-country ski trails are managed by the Clearwater National Forest. The Missoula Nordic Ski Club participates in planning and trails are maintained by a private contractor, with help from the Missoula Snowgoers during heavy snow.

GENERAL SAFETY TIPS

PHYSICALLY FIT?

Remember that human efficiency declines in cold weather. Top physical condition may be required to walk out if equipment fails.

GOING ALONE?

Travel in a group of at least three people and two snowmobiles.

GOOD EQUIPMENT?

Know how to make repairs; carry an emergency repair kit. Have enough gas, with some to spare. Carry snowshoes or skis.

TRIP PLANNED?

Know where you're going and stick to it. Inform a responsible person of your planned route and when you'll return. Use registration boards where provided.

CHECK WEATHER FORECAST?

Don't travel in a storm. Turn back if the weather turns bad. If visibility is reduced or area is unfamiliar, follow your tracks back out.

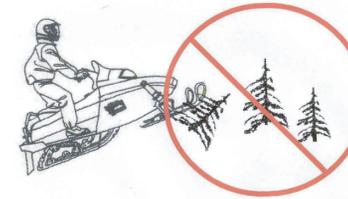
STAY ON SAFE ROUTES?

Avoid avalanche terrain. Avoid thin ice or unsafe river crossings.

CARRY A SURVIVAL KIT?

Equip snowmobile with survival material. Review publications on winter survival. Carry matches (waterproof), hatchet, plastic sheet (9' x 12'), first aid kit, spare food pack, snowshoes or skis.

DO NOT RUN OVER TREES



Tree Topping is a Serious Problem!

Broken tree tops cause major problems to the health and growth of trees and may render them useless for timber harvest. Please stay out of harvest areas where young trees are visible or just below the snow surface.

Mixed land ownership exists in this area (State and U. S. Forest Service). Forest lands are important to us all. Let's not jeopardize future snowmobiling opportunities.

This message is brought to you by the Missoula Snowgoers, Montana Snowmobile Association, U.S. Forest Service, and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.



TRAIL MARKERS
Orange Diamond - Snowmobile Trail
Blue Diamond - Ski Trail



HAZARD WARNING SIGNS
Yellow

23-2-654. Snowmobiler's assumption of responsibility - duties.

1) A snowmobiler assumes the risk and all legal responsibility for death or injury to himself or other persons or property that results from the risks inherent in the sport of snowmobiling. The assumption of risk includes but is not limited to death or injury caused by the following: variations in terrain, surface or subsurface snow or ice conditions, cornices, avalanches, poor visibility, bare spots, rocks, trees, other forms of forest growth or debris and plainly marked trail maintenance equipment.

2) A snowmobiler is responsible for:

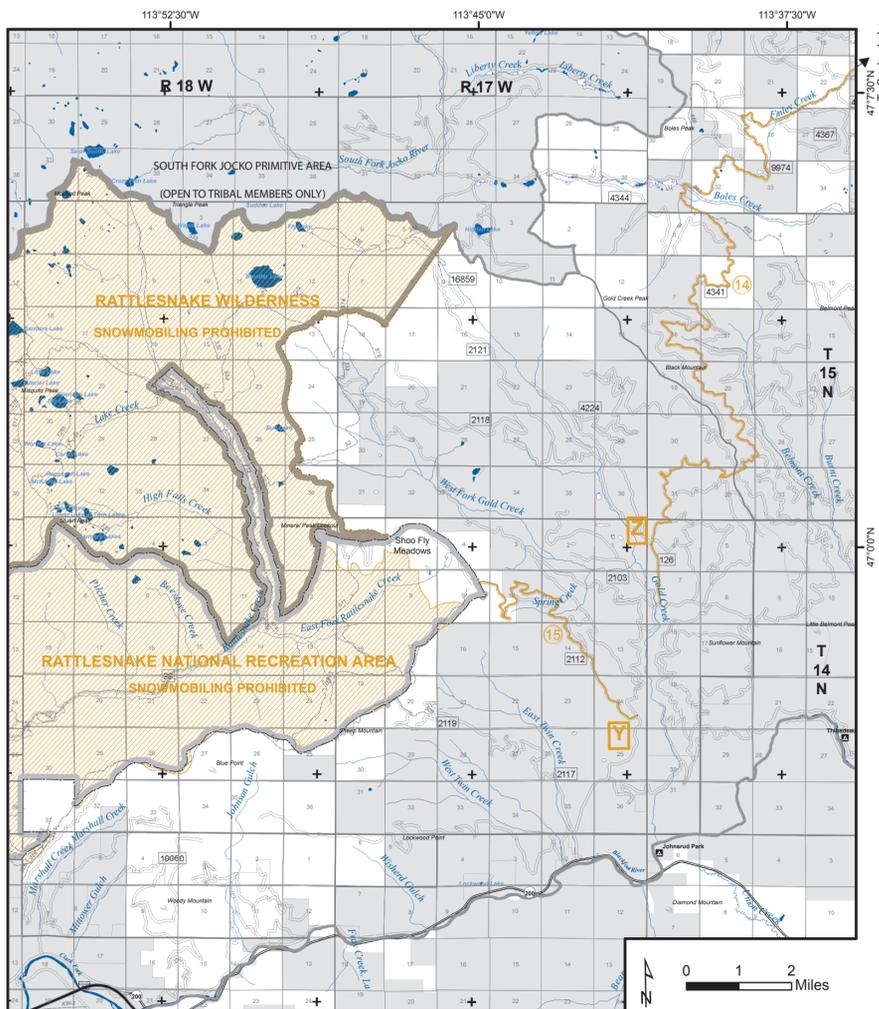
- Knowing the range of his own ability to snowmobile any slope, trail, or area and for snowmobiling within the limits of his ability considering the conditions;
- Maintaining control of his speed and course at all times while snowmobiling;
- Heeding all posted warnings; and
- Refraining from acting in a manner that may cause or contribute to the injury of anyone.

3) The provisions of this section do not affect a products liability cause of action based upon the design or manufacture of snowmobile equipment or products or safety equipment used incidental to the operation of a snowmobile.

MISSOULA AREA SNOWMOBILE TRAILS 2010



LOLO AND CLEARWATER NATIONAL FORESTS
AND THE MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH,
WILDLIFE AND PARKS



Legend

- ① Route Number
- A Intersection Marker
- Groomed Snowmobile Trail
- ⚡ Snowmobiling Prohibited
- ▭ Lolo NF Boundary
- ▭ Non Forest Service Lands
- ▭ National Forest Lands

ROUTE NUMBER, NAME

14 GOLD CREEK Jct Z to Seeley Lake
Route Description: Take Rd. #126 to Jct Z, then Rd #4241 to junction with Rd #9974. Continue on Rd #9974 to Seeley Lake.
Reoute Remarks: Scenic ride connecting with the Seeley Lake trail system (refer to Seeley Lake Area Snowmobile Map). May encounter drifted areas on open hillsides. Plowed parking may vary depending on snow conditions and road plowing due to winter logging. Parking will be located to avoid snowmobiling on plowed roads.

15 MINERAL PEAK 10 miles - Jct Y to Mineral Peak
Route Description: Take Rd #2112 from Jct Y. Follow to junction with Rd 2120. Trail continues to Mineral Peak. Trail from Shoo Fly Meadows to Mineral Peak is not groomed.
Route Remarks: Scenic ride with excellent views of the Rattlesnake Wilderness from Mineral Peak Lookout. Many play areas in the Shoo Fly Meadows area. **NOTE:** This area is adjacent to the Rattlesnake Wilderness and National Recreation Area where snowmobiling is prohibited. Please respect the wilderness boundary.

THREE MAJOR CAUSES OF ACCIDENTS

1. Excessive Speed-slow down for the conditions, use the play areas.
2. Alcohol Impairment-wait until the end ride or when you get home.
3. Lack of familiarity with machine-participate in a snowmobile safety course.

All snowmobile accidents can be prevented. Please drive safely.

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To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

IF LOST OR EQUIPMENT FAILS

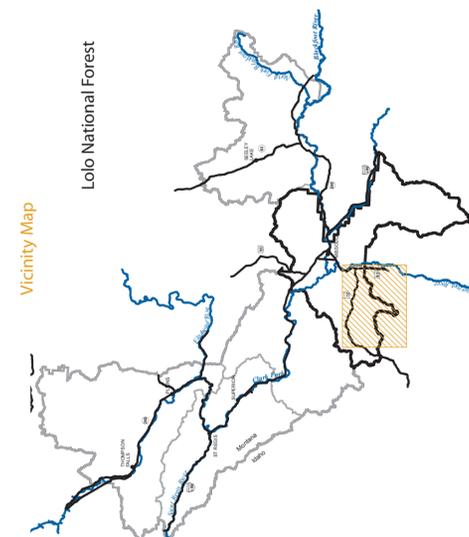
- Keep calm - think, decide on a plan.
- Trust your compass.
- Backtrack if possible.
- If not possible, remain in place.
- Don't separate if with a party.
- Don't abandon your snowshoes or skis.
- Build a fire and shelter - Stay warm.
- Mark your base camp.

DISTRESS SIGNALS:

Three smokes, blasts or whistles, three shouts, three flashes of light, three of anything that will attract attention.

WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE IS OVERDUE:

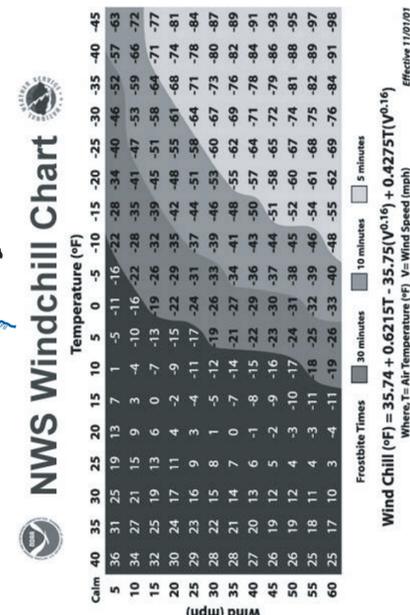
Keep calm - Notify proper authorities:
Law officer, Forest Service Personnel
GIVE PROPER INFORMATION



SNOWMOBILE OPERATOR'S CODE OF ETHICS

- 1) I will be a good sportsman. I recognize that people judge all snowmobile owners by my actions. I will use my influence with other snowmobile owners to promote sportsmanlike conduct.
- 2) I will not litter trails or camping areas. I will not pollute streams or lakes.
- 3) I will not damage living trees, shrubs or other natural features.
- 4) I will respect other people's property and rights.
- 5) I will lend a helping hand when I see someone in distress.
- 6) I will make myself and my vehicle available to search and rescue parties.
- 7) I will not interfere with or harass hikers, skiers, snowshoers, ice fishermen or other winter sportsmen. I will respect their rights to enjoy our recreation facilities.
- 8) I will know and obey all federal, state and local rules regulating the operation of snowmobiles in areas where I use my vehicle.
- 9) I will not harass wildlife. I will avoid areas posted for the protection or feeding of wildlife.

NWS Windchill Chart



IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS WILDLIFE WATCHING

- Follow these guidelines when viewing wildlife:
- Give wildlife plenty of space, they have to preserve precious energy to survive the winter. Even a small disturbance, causing them to run, may deplete energy reserves critical for survival. Avoid any action that causes them to move or alter their activity.
 - Observe animals from a safe distance. Use binoculars, spotting scopes and telephoto camera lenses.
 - Stay seated on your snowmobile and continue moving at a slow steady pace. Stopping or getting off your sled is more likely to disturb wildlife.
 - Respect closures or restrictions.

AIR QUALITY

- Reduce fossil-fuel emissions and protect Montana's unique environment.
- Reduce idling time of snowmobiles and automobiles. This not only avoids unnecessary adverse impacts to air quality, but saves gas and money, too.
 - Perform pre-trip tune-ups. This maintenance measure will also help ensure trouble free and safe winter travel.
 - Consider using synthetic biodegradable oils available from snowmobile dealers.

VEGETATION

AVOID RUNNING OVER THE EXPOSED TOPS OF TREES. Stay away from areas of little or shallow snow cover. Mechanical damage to the ground and vegetation can cause spring soil erosion and damage to other valuable resources.

SOUND

Montana law establishes a noise limit of 78 decibels for snowmobiles. When riding on public land, please use the manufacturer's muffler system. This not only satisfies Montana law, but also results in reduced impacts to wildlife and other winter recreationalists.