

OPP and OFSC launch Provincial Snowmobile Safety Week

Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) are launching Provincial Snowmobile Safety Week (Jan. 16 to 24) with a message for snowmobilers to focus on their own personal safety and the well-being of others. Riding within the law and making smart choices is the only way to ensure an enjoyable ride that gets you home safely to your family at the end of the day.

With the campaign underway, OPP and OFSC are reminding snowmobile enthusiasts to stay off the lakes and waterways for the time-being as conditions are generally poor in many parts of the province.

Stay on OFSC Prescribed Trails and don't ride impaired, speed or ride after dark.

Last winter, OPP investigated 15 snowmobile-related fatalities, a decrease from the previous two winters (21 in the 2013-14 season and 18 in 2012-13). While OPP and OFSC are relieved to see fewer lives lost, data clearly indicates that riding impaired, speeding and riding after dark continue to be major contributing factors in snowmobiling incidents ? 58 per cent of snowmobile-related fatalities involved alcohol or drugs; 57 per cent involved speeding or riding too fast for conditions; and 58 per cent occurred at dusk or after dark.

In particular, OPP and OFSC are looking to middle-aged males to ride with extra care and control this winter, as 87 per cent of last season's snowmobile-related fatalities involved male riders and 58 per cent were riders or passengers between the ages of 35 and 54. The campaign is also a great opportunity to caution all snowmobilers about avoiding road running wherever possible. Where snowmobiling on the side of a public road is legal and necessary to access trails, you should always adjust your speed to the conditions; watch out for parked vehicles and motor vehicles emerging from driveways; always give motor vehicles the right of way; be extra cautious when approaching intersections; observe and respect all traffic signs; and slow down wherever snow banks obstruct your view.

The motoring public is also being reminded to watch for snowmobiles along roads or those that cross roads at snowmobile trails. OPP is committed to saving lives on Ontario's highways, trails and waterways through the reduction of preventable injury and death. Initiatives are developed and delivered through the Provincial Traffic Safety Program.

OFSC is committed to proactive leadership in promoting safe, responsible riding, on and off Ontario snowmobile trails, by building safer snowmobiling knowledge, attitudes and behaviours through rider education, safety legislation development and enforcement.