

Take charge of your own safety this snowmobile season

Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) are reminding riders that a snowmobile can quickly take you away from areas where services, communities and emergency assistance are easily accessible or available. Responsible snowmobilers take charge of their own safety and well being by preparing their sleds, gear and equipment before the first ride of the season. In addition to getting properly trained and knowing the law, there are other factors to consider when getting ready for safe snowmobiling.

? Service your sled ? Avoid breakdowns that can leave you stranded by having your sled professionally serviced before your first ride.

? Carry a repair kit ? Ensure that you have either the sled manufacturer's tool kit or one of your own on board, including the owner's manual, spare belt and spark plugs.

? Inspect your gear and equipment ? Make sure that everything still fits and works properly, and that nothing is missing before you head out.

? Prepare for first aid ? Pre-assembled first aid kits can be found at outdoor stores and online and so can information about first aid courses.

? Get a survival kit ? Any unexpected day or night spent out in the cold will be easier with assistance from a good survival kit, found at outdoor stores and online, including information about winter survival courses.

? Go high tech ? Devices like GPS, cell phones, satellite phones and personal tracking units can be very useful in avoiding or dealing with emergency situations.

? Contact companions ? Snowmobiling is more fun with riding buddies, and safer too, so avoid riding alone by getting in touch with friends and family who can join you on the trails.

? Review safety tips ? As experienced as you may be, it's always smart to renew your familiarity with your sled's safety manual and the Safe Riders messaging on the OFSC website ofsc.on.ca/safety

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. Visit opp.ca for more information.

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. Visit ofsc.on.ca for more information.