Risks of Snowmobiling with Alcohol and Other Drug Use

Snowmobile Fatalities

The number of fatal snowmobile accidents increased to 23 in the 2013-2014 season. This is up from 10 in 2011-2012 and 20 in 2012-2013. Alcohol-related fatalities have also increased to 16 in the last three seasons.

Alcohol and Drug Citations are Rising

During the 2013-2014 season:
- 64 "operating snowmobile with alcohol concentration at or above .08%" citations were issued.
- 82 "operating snowmobile while under the influence of an intoxicant or controlled substance" citations were issued.

In Summary

The drinking culture within Wisconsin has helped contribute to these snowmobiling fatalities. Many accidents happen at night, supporting the unsafe risk of combining alcohol and snowmobiling. Neither experience nor helmets protect riders from these risks. Please stay safe and exercise caution this season out on the trail.

Fast Facts

- 70% of fatalities involved alcohol and 17% of fatal incidents alcohol information was not available.
- Most operators (78%) in fatal accidents had over 100 hours of driving experience.
- 87% of victims were wearing a helmet at the time of their accident.
- Most fatalities occur on Saturday (10) and Sunday (4), compared to weekdays (9).
- Most fatalities (18) happened between 4:00 PM and 4:00 AM.

Wisconsin Has High Rates of Fatal Accidents

During the 2013-2014 season, Wisconsin had 23 fatal snowmobile accidents and 237,803 registered snowmobiles.

Minnesota had more registered snowmobiles (258,000) and fewer fatalities (15).

While Michigan had 205,351 registered snowmobiles and 14 fatal accidents.

Sources:

2013-2014 Fatal Snowmobile Accidents, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Available at http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/enforcement/incident_reports/snowmobileaccidents14.pdf
