

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Forest Preserve reminds snowmobilers to be safe and sober on the trails

Snowmobile Safety volunteers help patrol District

GENEVA, IL — With winter officially here and snow sure to follow, the Forest Preserve District of Kane County would like to remind snowmobilers to stay safe and follow the law.

“Snowmobiling is great exercise that brings people outdoors to interact with nature and each other. It is great for stress release and good mental health,” says Forest Preserve Officer Rick Splittgerber.

“But it’s so important to be safe, use common sense, and follow all laws while riding,” he adds.



Snowmobile Safety Patrol Volunteer Ron Julian and Forest Preserve Officer Rick Splittgerber pose with new ‘You Drink, You Ride, You Lose’ signage to discourage operating snowmobiles under the influence this winter.

Splittgerber suggests the following safety tips before every trip:

- Point your snowmobile in a safe direction.
- Check the steering system. Does it move easily?

— MORE —

— **ADD ONE** —

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- Check the throttle. Does it move easily? (Press in and release. Make sure it is not frozen in the “on” position.)
- Check the brakes. Do they stick or bind?
- Check the headlights and taillights. Do they both work?
- Check the fuel level. Is it enough for the return trip?
- Check the oil injection. Is the oil well full?
- Check the emergency stop switch. Does it work?
- Is the track clear of snow and ice?
- Are you dressed property?
- Always tell someone where you are going and approximately when you expect to be back.
- Never go alone. Always use the buddy system. Your life may depend on it.

In addition to regular trail signage, this year, “You drink, you ride, you lose” signs have been posted along the trail. The District hopes it will discourage riders from being under the influence of alcohol while operating a snowmobile.

Trails are patrolled by the Forest Preserve District police, the Kane County Mounted Rangers, and the Snowmobile Safety Patrol.

In the Kane County forest preserves, snowmobiling is only allowed on trails marked specifically for this purpose, including:

- Campton Forest Preserve (on internal, marked trails only)
- Great Western Trail (west of Wasco, only)
- Hampshire Forest Preserve (on internal trails only)

Snowmobiling is also allowed for transit only through the following:

- Burlington Prairie Forest Preserve (transit through preserve only on marked trail)
- Glenwood Park Forest Preserve (on the Batavia Branch of the Illinois Prairie Path)

— **MORE** —

— **ADD TWO** —

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- Rutland Forest Preserve (parking only)
- Muirhead Springs Forest Preserve (transit through preserve only on marked trail)

There must be 4 inches of snow and the ground must be frozen. Snowmobiling hours are sunrise to sunset, except on the Great Western Trail, west of Wasco, where it is permitted from sunrise to 11 p.m. The speed limit in all preserves and on all trails is 15 mph, except the Great Western Trail west of Wasco, where it is 35 mph. Riders must stay on trails as marked.

The District also wants riders to be aware of recent changes made to the Illinois Snowmobile Registration and Safety Act, in April 2011. Snowmobiles must now be covered by liability insurance (unless riders stay exclusively on private property not denoted as a snowmobile trail). Proof of insurance is required. Additionally, non-Illinois residents are required to purchase a yearly snowmobile trail use sticker, if the vehicle is not registered in Illinois.

For more information on snowmobiling in the Kane County forest preserves, visit <http://kaneforest.com/publications/brochures/winterActivities.pdf>.

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