



Snowmobile Safety

Avalanche Safety Tips

Any snow-covered slope has the ability to slide. The majority of avalanches start on slopes between 30 and 45 degrees, ideal snowmobiling slopes.

Be Prepared:

- ◆ Plan a trip (difficulty, length, danger exposure) that takes into consideration current conditions, people's interests and skills, terrain and other hazards.
- ◆ Ensure group members have proper avalanche safety training.
- ◆ Carry survival equipment in a backpack including: transceiver, shovel, probe and spare batteries.
- ◆ Obtain the Canadian Avalanche Centre (CAC) Public Avalanche Bulletin for latest conditions: 1-800-667-1105 or www.avalanche.ca. Consult the CAC Avaluator Trip Planner.
- ◆ Test the transceiver's transmit and receive functions at home.
- ◆ Ensure all transceivers are on transmit before leaving the trucks for the ride.

Route Selection. It's Up to You - Know Before You Go:

- ◆ Travel low angle slopes, heavily treed areas, ridges and broad valley bottoms to avoid avalanche paths.
- ◆ If you choose to ride an avalanche slope, minimize your risk.
- ◆ Avoid slopes with excess wind loaded snow.
- ◆ Learn the significance of wind, sun, shade, and terrain shape on avalanche danger.
- ◆ Be aware of escape routes and safe stopping areas.
- ◆ Avoid terrain traps or terrain features that can:
 - ◆ Increase the depth of burial
 - ◆ Gullies
 - ◆ Steep transition areas (sharp changes in the slope angle)
 - ◆ Sharp valleys
 - ◆ Creek beds
 - ◆ Walls or ridges crossing the natural path

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- ◆ Decrease the chance for escape
 - ◆ Gullies
 - ◆ Crevasses
 - ◆ Open water
- ◆ Increase the chance of injury
 - ◆ Cliffs
 - ◆ Rocks and trees in avalanche path

Keep in contact:

- ◆ Always ride in a group.
- ◆ Maintain constant visual contact at all time.
- ◆ Cross suspect slopes one at a time.
- ◆ Use a hand signal for "avalanche path...spread out".
- ◆ Listen to concerns of all group members.

Travel Habits:

- ◆ Park in safe areas, pointed to safer areas (escape route).
- ◆ Kill switch up.
- ◆ Allow the snow to settle after a storm.
- ◆ Test (track up) small slopes with low consequences.
- ◆ Test slopes using wide, fast passes before placing yourself in committing terrain.
- ◆ Make sure that only one machine is on the slope at any time, even if your buddy is stuck.
- ◆ Do not let your guard down - slopes can avalanche even after multiple passes.

If you're caught in an avalanche, try to:

- ◆ Call out, draw attention to yourself.
- ◆ React fast, attempt to ride out of the slide.
- ◆ If no longer in control, separate yourself from your snowmobile.
- ◆ FIGHT HARD with swimming motions, trying to stay on top of the snow and get to the side.
- ◆ Grab trees, rocks, etc. to avoid being tumbled down the slope.
- ◆ Keep your mouth closed and your teeth clenched.

When the avalanche slows, try to:

- ◆ Use your hands to create airspace in front of your face.
- ◆ Wiggle to make airspace around your body.

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- ◆ Thrust an arm to the surface.
- ◆ Once the avalanche stops the snow sets up like concrete.

When the avalanche stops, try to:

- ◆ Remain calm.
- ◆ Control your breathing to conserve your oxygen, relax.
- ◆ Shout only when rescuers are very near (sound does not travel well within the snow pack).

Searching for a Victim:

Someone needs to take charge.

- ◆ Take a moment to organize the rescue.
- ◆ Consider the possibility of another avalanche before attempting a rescue. Set an escape route and post a lookout if necessary.
- ◆ Look for surface clues: a hand, hat, glove, etc.
- ◆ Note the last seen point of the victim(s).

Search with Beacons:

- ◆ Ensure all rescuers' beacons are switched to receive.
- ◆ Spread out at 30 metre intervals to cover the debris.
- ◆ Don't litter the slope with rescuers' belongings.
- ◆ Search around and downhill of any clues.
- ◆ When a signal is picked up assign one or two to locate it while others continue the search.
- ◆ Pinpoint the signal to a small radius, then probe to find the victim.
- ◆ Without removing the probe, quickly dig out the victim.
- ◆ Turn the victim's beacon to receive if others are still buried.

**Public Avalanche Bulletins
are available by calling 1-800-667-1105
www.avalanche.ca**

If you have any suggestions on traffic safety issues that are of interest to you and your community, or for more information, please contact:

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Website: www.saferoads.com

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