

TIME TO SIGN UP FOR SNOWMOBILE SAFETY CLASS

CONCORD, N.H. - The seasons are changing fast, and now is the time to sign up for snowmobile education classes offered across the state. To operate a snowmobile in New Hampshire, any person over the age of 12 must have either a valid Motor Vehicle Driver's License or have successfully completed an approved Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle (OHRV) Safety Education class taught by volunteer instructors trained by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department. Additionally, all children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by a licensed adult when operating a snowmobile, unless they are on property belonging to their parents, grandparents or guardians.

Most snowmobile safety classes are offered in November and December, with a few in early January, so sign up soon. There is no charge for the classes, which are usually completed in a single day. Parents are encouraged to attend along with their children. For a current class schedule, visit <http://www.ride.nh.gov>.

"Snowmobiling is a great way for families to have fun exploring the great outdoors, but riders have a responsibility to obey the rules of the trails, to be courteous and -- most of all -- to ride safely," said Major Timothy Acerno, who coordinates Fish and Game's OHRV Education Program.

Many of the trained volunteer instructors teaching the safety classes are affiliated with one of the more than 100 snowmobile clubs in New Hampshire. "Joining a snowmobile club is a great way to learn about safe riding and help maintain trails for your own and others' enjoyment," Acerno said, noting that club membership also gives riders a \$30 discount on snowmobile registration fees.

The New Hampshire Snowmobile Association (NHSA) and its member clubs have actively promoted safe and responsible riding since 1969. NHSA members work with Fish and Game to manage over 6,800 miles of trails in New Hampshire and provide safety education to more than 2,500 children each year. For more information on how to become involved with a snowmobile club, visit <http://www.nhsa.com>.

In addition to safety education, this winter Fish and Game Conservation Officers will use innovative enforcement patrols to detect and apprehend impaired snowmobile operators; enhanced speed enforcement and modified exhaust patrols also will be conducted. These ongoing initiatives will help to keep the state's snowmobile trails safe for all outdoor enthusiasts during the upcoming season.

For snowmobile safety class listings and more, visit <http://www.ride.nh.gov>.