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Introduction

2010-2011 Yearly Summary

The 2010-2011 Snowmobile Program Report was compiled from crash, registration and arrest data collected during the period of July 1 - June 30. The 17 fatal incidents in 2010-2011 were four less than the 2009-2010 fatality total of 21. The only additional safety measure implemented during recent years was the nighttime, 55 m.p.h. speed limit which was supported by the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs and the Governor’s Snowmobile Recreation Council. Fatality rates have continued to decrease since the speed limit was enacted in 2006. Volunteer snowmobile safety instructors certified 10,090 students, 3,530 of which were certified via the Internet Safety Course. This was the largest number of students certified since the 2001 – 2002 season when 14,588 students were certified due to Snowmobile Safety Education becoming mandatory.

Conservation Wardens are required to investigate all snowmobile fatalities; Wisconsin law also requires that a conservation warden or law enforcement officer be notified immediately of any snowmobile incident that results in an injury requiring medical treatment by a physician. In addition, the operator(s) involved in these reportable incidents must file a written report with the Department of Natural Resources within 10 days.

Contributing Factors to Fatal Snowmobile Accidents

- Alcohol and speed continue to be the main contributing factors in fatal snowmobile incidents during the 2010-2011 season. 76% of the incidents were alcohol involved and 65% were speed related.
- 47% of fatal accidents occurred during the hours of darkness.
- The number of operators arrested for operating a snowmobile while intoxicated was 98, up from the 96 during the 2009-2010 season.
- The top locations where fatal incidents occurred were trails with 5 (29%) and lake/rivers, private land and public roads (not a route) with 3 each (18%).
- Top cause for the fatal incidents was collision with a fixed object (12) 71%. Collision with a motor vehicle was second at (2) 12%.

Snowmobile Safety Tips

The Department recommends the following tips to help ensure safe, enjoyable and ethical snowmobile experience for everyone.

- Complete a Wisconsin Snowmobile Safety Course. This course helps establish a safety mindset and provides basic knowledge in safe, legal and ethical operation. Visit: www.dnr.wi.gov to find a course near you.
- When crossing roads, always take your safety into your own hands. Never allow someone to wave you across. Cross only when you have determined it is safe to do so.
- Use the highest degree of caution while traveling across frozen waterways. Check ice conditions with local law enforcement or bait shops, carry or wear a floatation device, limit travel at night and if you don't know, don't go.
- Use the buddy system, never ride alone.
- Don't drink and ride. Alcohol affects a person's reaction time and judgment. Wait until you're done riding for the day before consuming any alcoholic beverages. If not for yourself, do it for your family and friends.
- Slow down. High speed operation leaves little room for mistakes and greatly increases stopping distances. Many snowmobile fatalities could have been prevented if the operators were only going slower.
- Nighttime speeds above 40 m.p.h. cause operators to override their headlamps. At this speed, operators have little chance of avoiding a hazard once it is illuminated by their headlamps.
- When riding in groups, always maintain a safe following distance of 2-3 seconds. Increase your following distance when traveling at night or when experiencing snow dust.
- Respect private property. The majority of the snowmobile trails in Wisconsin are on private property. Snowmobile clubs invest much time and effort to set up agreements with landowners each year. Riding outside the marked trails on private property is trespass and has caused landowners to close their properties to trails, sometimes forever. Stay within the marked trails and don't cut corners.
Since 1972, we have seen an increasing trend in deaths while operating a snowmobile. However, since the night time speed limit was enacted in 2006 the trend has shown a decrease in accidents and continues to do so. The majority of the victims were wearing helmets and had not taken a DNR Snowmobile Safety Education Course.
In the beginning of the 1999-2000 snowmobile season the law changed requiring non-residential snowmobile trail passes on all out of state snowmobiles that were not registered in Wisconsin.

Over the past 12 years there has been a slightly decreasing trend in the number of fatalities per 100,000 registered snowmobiles (does not include snowmobile passes).
The Snowmobile Safety Education Program began in 1972 and has since expanded to include over 1,000 Active Snowmobile Volunteer Instructors.

The total number of active snowmobile instructors for 2010-2011 was 1,065. The trend shows a decrease in active instructors since 2003.

In 1999 the law changed, requiring mandatory snowmobile education for operators at least 12 years of age and born after January 1, 1985.

In 2009 the Internet Safety Course became available certifying 19 of the 9081 2008-2009 season students. In the 2010-2011 season 2006 of the 10,090 students were certified with Internet Safety Courses.
Alcohol was detected in seventy-one percent of the victims. An increase of fourteen percent from 2009-2010 (57%).

Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) Detected in the Victim at the time of the Accident

BAC Greater Than .20

BAC Pending

No Alcohol/Unknown

BAC .01-.19

The Average Age of fatality victims in 2010-2011 was 41 years old, with fifty-three percent of victims being above 40 years of age.

*All Data is representative of a percentage of the data from the 17 fatal accident victims from 2010-2011.  
*Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) is in grams/milliliter (g/ml)
2010-2011 Fatality Data

Location of the Incident
- Route/Road: 12% (2)
- Lake/River: 18% (3)
- Private Land: 18% (3)
- Public Trail: 29% (5)
- Public Road (Not a Route): 5% (1)

* A Snowmobile Route is a public road opened to legal Snowmobile travel by the local municipality.

Estimated Speed at the Time of the Accident
- 0-20 MPH: 35% (6)
- 21-30 MPH: 6% (1)
- 40-60 MPH: 18% (3)
- 70-90 MPH: 12% (2)
- Unknown: 21% (3)

Type of Snowmobile Incident
- Collision with a Fixed Object: 70% (12)
- Rollover: 6% (1)
- Ejection: 6% (1)
- Drowning: 6% (1)
- Collision with a Motor Vehicle: 12% (2)

Collisions with a Fixed Object:
- 0-20 MPH: 35% (6)
- 21-30 MPH: 6% (1)
- 40-60 MPH: 18% (3)
- 70-90 MPH: 12% (2)
- Unknown: 21% (3)
Most of the fatal crashes occurred between 2:00 pm and 12:00 am. In the 2009-2010 year most fatal crashes occurred between 10:00 pm and 2:00 am and 12:00 pm and 2:00 pm.

Most of the fatal crashes (11) occurred on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.
Operators of at least age twelve and born on or after January 1, 1985 are required by law to complete a Wisconsin Snowmobile Safety Certification Course or another state/province equivalent.

Past data shows that, on average, it is more likely that a snowmobile operator that has taken a Snowmobile Safety Course will not be involved in a fatal incident.
2010-2011 Fatality Data

2010-2011 Fatal Snowmobile Victim Operator vs. Passenger

- **Operator**: 94% (16)
- **Passenger**: 6% (1)

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2010-2011 Factors Contributing to Fatal Snowmobile Accidents

- **Alcohol**: 13
- **Speed**: 11
- **Failure to Maintain Control**: 2
- **Failure to Yield**: 1
- **Illegal Road Operation**: 1
- **Inattentive Driving**: 1
- **Operator Inexperience**: 1
- **Passenger's Actions**: 1
- **Unfamiliar with Area**: 1
## Wisconsin Snowmobile Fatality Summary for 2010-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type &amp; Cause of Incident / Fatality</th>
<th>Age / Sex</th>
<th>BAC / Residency</th>
<th>WI Safety Certified / Helmet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12/04/2010</td>
<td>Town of Polk</td>
<td>Rollover</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11:55 AM</td>
<td>Washington County (Private Property)</td>
<td>Speed/Passenger's Actions</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The victim was riding on a snowmobile with the adult owner. The victim pressed on the throttle causing the snowmobile to accelerate rapidly. The snowmobile then rolled and ejected both subjects. Neither subject was wearing a helmet.

| 2   | 01/31/2011   | City of Milton            | Collision with a Fixed Object                          | 39        | 0.172          | No                         |
|     | 11:32 PM     | Polk County (Private Land) | Speed/Alcohol/Drugs                                    | M         | WI             | No                         |

The victim left a tavern and proceeded down an alley at a high rate of speed. The victim proceeded through the intersection with the next street and hit a snow bank which launched the snowmobile and victim airborne, through a chain link fence and into a house.

| 3   | 01/14/2011   | Town of Cary              | Collision with a Fixed Object                          | 48        | 0.066          | No                         |
|     | 6:44 PM      | Iron County (Public Trail) | Alcohol/Speed                                          | M         | IL             | Yes                        |

The victim was third in a group of five snowmobiles when he failed to negotiate a turn and collided with a tree.

| 4   | 01/22/2011   | Town of Bovina            | Collision with a Motor Vehicle                         | 29        | 0.215          | Yes                        |
|     | 6:21 PM      | Outagamie County (Roadway) | Speed/Alcohol/Illegal Road Operation                    | M         | WI             | Yes                        |

The victim was operating a snowmobile illegally on a roadway behind a companion operating a motor vehicle with a trailer. The victim was operating at a rate of high speed and collided with the rear of the trailer. The motor vehicle had just stopped for a roadway sign and was pulling away when the victim ran the stop sign and collided with the trailer.

| 5   | 01/22/2011   | City of Mt. Pleasant      | Collision with a Fixed Object                          | 37        | 0.240          | No                         |
|     | 9:00 PM      | Racine County (Railroad Property) | Alcohol                                    | M         | WI             | Yes                        |

The victim was operating along a railroad track when he collided with a signal light and went airborne.

| 6   | 02/04/2011   | Town of Hughes            | Collision with a Motor Vehicle                      | 45        | 0.114          | Yes                        |
|     | 5:17 PM      | Bayfield County (Public Road) | Alcohol/Speed/Failure to Yield                     | M         | WI             | Yes                        |

The victim failed to stop for a sign and struck a vehicle.

| 7   | 02/05/2011   | Village of Beldenville    | Collision with a Fixed Object                        | 68        | 0.000          | No                         |
|     | 12:10 PM     | Pierce County (Road)      | Operator Inexperience                                 | F         | WI             | Yes                        |

The victim was attempting to turn into a parking lot off of a village street when she accelerated and struck a snow bank causing the victim to lose control of the snowmobile and was ejected.

| 8   | 02/09/2011   | Town of Three Lakes       | Collision with a Fixed Object                        | 69        | 0.078          | No                         |
|     | 8:50 PM      | Oneida County (Road/Route) | Alcohol/Inattentive Driving                         | M         | WI             | Yes                        |

The victim failed to negotiate a curve in the roadway and struck a tree.

| 9   | 02/11/2011   | Town of St. Germain       | Collision with a Fixed Object                        | 44        | 0.028          | No                         |
|     | 2:29 PM      | Vilas County (Lake)       | Alcohol/Speed                                         | M         | IL             | Yes                        |

The victim was operating across the lake and struck a plowed embankment.
## Wisconsin Snowmobile Fatality Summary for 2010-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
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<th>BAC / Residency</th>
<th>WI Safety Certified / Helmet</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>02/11/2011</td>
<td>Town of Fountain</td>
<td>Ejected off Snowmobile</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The victim drove off the trail at a ditch crossing and was ejected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5:16 PM</td>
<td>Juneau County (Trail)</td>
<td>Speed/Failure to Maintain Control</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>02/13/2011</td>
<td>Town of Willow Springs</td>
<td>Collision with a Fixed Object</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.207</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The victim drove off a steep embankment hitting a tree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:45 PM</td>
<td>Lafayette County (Trail)</td>
<td>Speed/Alcohol</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>02/13/2011</td>
<td>City of Manitowoc</td>
<td>Collision with a Fixed Object</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.282</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The victim struck a branch from a downed tree and was ejected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11:05 PM</td>
<td>Manitowoc County (River)</td>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>02/25/2011</td>
<td>Town of Elcho</td>
<td>Collision with a Fixed Object</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The victim drove into a berm of the trail and struck a tree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3:00 PM</td>
<td>Langlade County (Trail)</td>
<td>Speed/Failure to Maintain Control</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>02/25/2011</td>
<td>Town of Bell</td>
<td>Collision with a Fixed Object</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0.202</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The victim drove off a curve in the trail and struck some trees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:49 PM</td>
<td>Bayfield County (Trail)</td>
<td>Alcohol/Speed</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>MN</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>03/03/2011</td>
<td>Town of Grant</td>
<td>Collision with a Fixed Object</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0.192</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The victim struck a tree on the right side of the trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:06 AM</td>
<td>Clark County (Trail)</td>
<td>Alcohol/Speed</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>03/12/2011</td>
<td>Town of Upham</td>
<td>Collision with a Fixed Object</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.159</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The victim was operating on a trail when he failed to negotiate a curve and collided with a tree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
<td>Langlade County (Public Trail)</td>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>03/13/2011</td>
<td>Town of Algoma</td>
<td>Drowning/Driven into Open Water</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0.275</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The victim was thought to have been pulling a companion's snowmobile into a garage. The victim was observed operating the snowmobile out onto Lake Buttes des Morts and into open water. As of 03/15/2011, the victim has not been located and is believed to be deceased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:48 AM</td>
<td>Winnebago County (Lake)</td>
<td>Alcohol/Unfamiliar with Area</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Total Snowmobile Injury Incidents
Reported to Law Enforcement by County

Total Incidents = 146

Unknown counties account for 18 of the total incidents

A report must be filed for any crash that results in an injury requiring treatment by a physician or a fatal incident must be reported as soon as possible to a Conservation Warden or other law enforcement officer. You must file a written report of the incident within 10 days to the DNR.
Citations Issued for Snowmobile Violations in 2010-2011

Registration/Trail Pass Violations

Operate Snowmobile without Valid Registration (S-1)............................295
Fail to display or improper display of registration number or decal on snowmobiles (S-2)...............................................................72
Operate snowmobile without possession of valid registration certificate or validated application receipt (S-3)......................................................65
Fail to transfer registration of snowmobile (S-4)........................................31
Give permission to operate snowmobile without valid registration (S-5).................................49
Operate snowmobile in prohibited area on state lands (S-11)........................17
Operate snowmobile illegally on or in the vicinity of highways (S-12)........143
Operate at unreasonable, improper speed or in careless manner (S-17)..................79
Operate snowmobile on public or private property of another without consent (S-19).................................................................51
Operate a snowmobile on a snowmobile trail without a trail use sticker (S-33).................................138

Alcohol/Drug Related

Permit operation by person incapable because of age, physical or mental disability or under the influence (S-15).................................................31
Operate snowmobile while under the influence of an intoxicant or controlled substance (S-24).................................................................98
Operate snowmobile with alcohol concentration at or above 0.08% (S-25).................................................................83
Refuse to take intoxicated snowmobile test (S-26).........................................14
Cause injury by intoxicated operation of snowmobile or with detectable amount of a controlled substance in blood (S-30)..........................5

Speed Related

Operate snowmobile on or adjacent to a roadway in excess of the applicable roadway speed limit (S-37)...........................................................4
Operate snowmobile greater than 55 MPH during hours of darkness (S-55).................................................................44

Equipment Violations

Snowmobile Equipment Violations (S-14)....................................................7
Fail to display lights when required (S-18)....................................................1
Operate snowmobile with engine & exhaust noise in excess of legal decibel level (S-28).................................................................11
Manufacture or sell new snowmobile that exceeds 78 decibels of total vehicle noise; or modify snowmobile to exceed noise level (S-34)............15
Operate, manufacture or sell a snowmobile without a functioning muffler (S-29).................................................................3

Other Violations

Drive wild animals with a snowmobile (S-7)................................................1
Place, possess or transport an uncased or loaded firearm in or on a vehicle (S-8).................................................................19
Place, possess or transport an uncased or strung bow or crossbow in or on a vehicle (S-9).................................................................3
Shoot firearm or bow in or from snowmobile (S-10)....................................3
Fail to Report Snowmobile Accident (S-16)................................................12
Miscellaneous (Snowmobile races, derbies and routes) (S-20)....................2
Fail to stop for law enforcement officer (S-22)...........................................11
Operator fail to render aid at accident (S-23)..............................................4
Local snowmobile ordinance (S-31)..........................................................10
Fail to comply with regulatory signs (S-35).................................................261
Operate snowmobile without valid safety certificate or without carry proof of completion (S-36)..............................................................186
Fail to keep to the right and proceed with caution when passing another snowmobile in the opposite direction (S-38)..............................4

The Total Number of Citations (including warden and sheriff patrols) for 2010-2011 was 1772

*These numbers reflect the citations issued and processed through the court system and returned to the Department and entered into the DNR citations database.
Wear Your HELMET
While You RIDE
RESPONSIBLY...
UNDER CONTROL...
and
SOBER
and You Will
RIDE FOR LIFE

http://dnr.wi.gov/org/es/enforcement/safety/snowed.html