



Wisconsin is the birthplace of snowmobiling and continues to offer some of the best snowmobiling opportunities you are likely to find, especially in northern Wisconsin. More than 200,000 registered snowmobiles hit Wisconsin's 25,000 miles of groomed trails each winter.

What to know before you go

SNOWMOBILE TRAIL PASSES, FEES, PUBLIC-USE REGISTRATION AND COMMERCIAL CERTIFICATE CHANGES ARE IN EFFECT.

Linda Olver

Before heading out to snowmobile this season, it's important to know that changes to snowmobile trail pass requirements, trail pass fees and the period of validity for public-use registration and commercial snowmobile certificates (as written in 2014 Wisconsin Act 142) are now in effect.

Public-use registration and commercial certificates valid three years

Snowmobile public use registration certificates and commercial snowmobile certificates purchased after April 1, 2015 are now valid for three years rather than two years. Public use registration and commercial snowmobile certificate fees remain the same, \$30 and \$90, respectively.

Trail pass required

Formerly, only a snowmobile registered or in the process of being registered in another state, province or country was required to display a trail pass when operating on a Wisconsin snowmobile trail or corridor. Beginning with the 2015-16 snow season, all snowmobiles operating on a Wisconsin snowmobile trail or corridor must display a valid snowmobile trail pass.

The snowmobile trail pass is:

- An annual pass valid until June 30 each year

- Separate from snowmobile registration
- A 3-inch by 3-inch decal required to be permanently affixed to the bottom center portion of the snowmobile windshield
- Not required to operate on private property, on a snow route, or on frozen water if not on a marked corridor

Snowmobile trail pass fees

The trail pass fee is dependent upon whether the snowmobile is registered in Wisconsin and whether the owner is a current member of a snowmobile club and the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC). Trail pass sales are nonrefundable.

There are three types of trail passes and associated fees:

Nonresident trail pass – for a snowmobile registered in another state, province or country or in the process of being registered in another state, province or country - \$50 (formerly \$35).

Wisconsin trail pass – for a snowmobile registered in Wisconsin - \$30. A Wisconsin snowmobile registration number is required to purchase the Wisconsin trail pass.

Club member trail pass – for a snowmobile registered in Wisconsin and that is owned by a person who is a member of a snowmobile club affiliated with the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs - \$10.

Where can I purchase my trail pass?

Nonresident trail passes are available

online and at many authorized sales locations. Wisconsin trail passes may be ordered online or at any DNR license sales agent (via ALIS terminals). All trail passes will be delivered by U.S. mail. To locate an agent near you who sells the nonresident or Wisconsin snowmobile trail pass, please visit dnr.wi.gov and search “Sales Locations.”

Club member trail passes are available through AWSC only and can be purchased online at awsc.org, by mail, phone, or in person at the AWSC office in DeForest. All club member trail passes will be delivered by U.S. mail.

Purpose of the new law

The revenue generated directly benefits snowmobiling in Wisconsin. The additional revenue will increase the snowmobile segregated fund, which is used to pay for maintenance and development of snowmobile trails. In addition, the new law provides incentive for membership in local snowmobile clubs, whose members provide the majority of the labor and equipment used to maintain the snowmobile trails. The new law provides for an evaluation of this initiative in four years.

Antique registration

Additional changes to law allow resident owners of snowmobiles 35 years or older to register as antiques. As of press time, pending legislation would exempt antique snowmobiles from displaying a trail pass. Please visit dnr.wi.gov and search keywords “Snowmobile Trail Pass.”

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>>> WHAT CAN BE REGISTERED AS A UTILITY TERRAIN VEHICLE (UTV)?

State law [§23.33 (1)(ng)] requires a vehicle to meet one of two definitions before it can be registered as a UTV. A vehicle must meet each and every legal specification in order to be eligible for registration with the Department of Natural Resources.

Definition 1: Utility Terrain Vehicle

A vehicle must meet **all** of the following specifications:

1. Commercially designed and manufactured;
2. Four or more low pressure or non-pneumatic tires;
3. Dry weight less than 2,000 pounds;
4. Steering wheel;
5. One or more tail lights;
6. One or more brake lights;
7. Two headlights;
8. Width of 65 inches or less;
9. Seat belts for every occupant; and
10. Roll bar or device that protects occupants during a rollover.



Definition 2: Other vehicles qualifying as UTVs



Vehicles that would not qualify as an ATV because of their weight can be registered as a UTV if they meet all of the following specifications:

1. Commercially designed and manufactured;
2. Three or more low pressure or non-pneumatic tires;
3. Dry weight more than 900 pounds but less than 2,000 pounds;
4. Width of 50 inches or less; and
5. Equipped with a seat designed to be straddled by the operator.

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>>> UTV LAW CHANGES DROP CARGO BOX REQUIREMENT

The 2015-17 Wisconsin State Budget, approved as 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, included a law change related to UTVs. The change was made to the legal specifications (definition) for a UTV. It removes the requirement that the machine has a cargo box. Some “buggy” type of machines may now be legal to register as a UTV if they meet ALL other legal specifications. Please note that many of these machines do not come equipped with a tail light and/or brake light. If the manufacturer of the machine does not offer a tail light/brake light kit, the machine is not eligible to apply for registration. Lights may not be homemade or purchased from an aftermarket equipment company.