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Maine Snowmobile Law, 1971

Maine Parks and Recreation Commission

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Maine
Snowmobile
Law



State Park & Recreation Commission
Augusta, Maine 04330

Effective date October 1971

INDEX

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Definitions | Section 1971 |
| Registration | Section 1972 |
| Form | Section 1973 |
| Numbers permanent | Section 1974 |
| Vehicles exempt | Section 1975 |
| Dealers | Section 1976 |
| Authority under registration | Section 1977 |
| Operation | Section 1978 |
| Regulatory authority | Section 1979 |
| Reciprocity | Section 1980 |
| Application | Section 1981 |
| Accidents | Section 1982 |
| Enforcement | Section 1983 |
| Penalty | Section 1984 |
| Public utility exemption | Section 1985 |

Safety Tips

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Game urges everyone to ride safely and have a good time and always to

1. Travel in groups and inform some responsible person of your plans
2. Know your machine and its capabilities
3. Respect the rights and property of others
4. Do not use your machine to harass wildlife or in areas frequented by game
5. Learn the Maine Snowmobile Law and always abide by it.

Remember, common sense is the secret to safe, enjoyable snowmobiling.

THE MAINE SNOWMOBILE LAW

TITLE 12

CHAPTER 304

SNOWMOBILES

§ 1971. Definitions

As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the following meaning:

1. Cowling. "Cowling" means the forward or rear portion of the vehicle usually of fiberglass, or similar material, surrounding the motor and clutch assembly.

2. Operate. The verb "to operate" in all its moods and tenses when it refers to a snowmobile means to use that vehicle in any manner within the jurisdiction of the State whether or not said vehicle is under way.

2-A. Owner. "Owner" for the purposes of registration shall mean any person, firm or corporation or association holding title to a snowmobile or having exclusive right to the use thereof for a period greater than 30 days.

3. Snowmobile. "Snowmobile" means any vehicle propelled by mechanical power that is primarily designed to travel over ice or snow supported in part by skis, belts or cleats.

§ 1972. Registration

Except as otherwise provided, no snowmobile shall be operated within the jurisdiction of the State unless registered by the owner as provided in this chapter. In any event, all snowmobiles owned by Maine residents and operated in Maine must be registered in this State. The Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Game is authorized to register and assign a registration number to all snowmobiles, upon application and payment of an annual fee of \$10 by the owner. The registration fee shall be credited as follows: \$3 of each fee shall be credited to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Game; \$1 of each fee shall be credited to the State Park and Recreation Commission and \$6 of each fee shall be annually distributed to the municipality of the owner's residence as shown on his registration certificate. All other moneys received under this chapter, including dealer license fees, shall be credited to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Game.

All moneys credited to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Game including registration fees shall be expended by the department solely for the cost of administration,

establishment of a safety program for snowmobile operators and enforcement of this chapter. The moneys credited to the State Park and Recreation Commission shall be expended for the purpose of marking or clearing of snowmobile trails and providing educational and informational materials for the use of operators of snowmobiles. The State Park and Recreation Commission may charge a reasonable fee for said services and materials when the moneys credited to it under this paragraph are insufficient to satisfy the demand for said services and materials. All fees so collected shall be deposited in the State Park and Recreation Snowmobile Trail Fund. If any of such moneys are not expended during the year in which they are collected, the unexpended balance shall not lapse but shall be carried as a continuing account available for the purposes specified until expended.

The moneys distributed to the municipalities by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Game may be appropriated by the municipalities for any purpose for which they may lawfully appropriate moneys.

A registration shall be valid for one year commencing July 1st of each year. No municipality or political subdivision of this State may adopt any ordinance, law or regulation dealing with the operation or registration of snowmobiles or any other subject matter of this chapter.

Whoever transfers the ownership or permanently discontinues the use of a registered snowmobile and applies for registration of another snowmobile in the same registration year shall be entitled to a certificate of registration upon payment of a transfer fee of \$2 and shall not be required to pay the regular registration fee of \$10.

§ 1973. Form

Such registration shall be issued by the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Game or by agents designated by him and shall be in such form as the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Game may determine. The registration certificate shall be subject to inspection by any law enforcement officer on demand. The registration number assigned to a snowmobile shall be displayed in such form and manner as the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Game shall determine.

Whenever ownership is transferred or the use of a snowmobile for which a registration certificate has already been issued is discontinued, the old registration certificate

shall be properly signed and executed by the owner showing that the ownership of the snowmobile has been transferred or its use discontinued and returned to the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Game within 10 days of said event. If there is a change of ownership of a snowmobile for which a registration certificate number has previously been issued, the new owner shall apply for a new registration certificate and shall set forth the original number in the application. He shall pay the regular fee for the particular snowmobile involved. The holder of any registration certificate issued under this section may obtain a duplicate from the department upon application and payment of a fee of \$1.

§ 1974. Numbers permanent

All numbers once awarded under this chapter to a snowmobile shall remain with that snowmobile until the snowmobile is destroyed, abandoned or permanently removed from this State. The registrant shall notify the Department of Inland Fisheries and Game if a snowmobile is destroyed, abandoned or permanently removed from this State.

§ 1975. Vehicles exempt from registration.

No registration shall be required for a snowmobile owned and operated over the snow on land on which a person lives or on lands on which he is domiciled, provided the snowmobile is not operated elsewhere within the jurisdiction of the State. No registration shall be required for a snowmobile operated by a commercial ski area for the purpose of packing snow or for rescue operations thereon, unless the snowmobile is required to cross a public way during such operation. Snowmobiles owned and operated in this State by the Federal Government, the State or political subdivision of the State shall be exempt from registration fees, but shall be registered and required to display numbers.

The exemption from registration shall not apply to snowmobiles which are leased or rented for hire.

§ 1976. Dealers

Any person who is in the business of selling snowmobiles in the State shall register as a dealer and secure a dealer's license from the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Game. Snowmobiles so registered do not need to be individually registered. Dealers shall display their dealer's number on each such snowmobile being so used. Upon the sale of the snowmobile, it is then the owner's responsibility to register the snowmobile.

The dealer's license and registration fee shall be \$25 annually from each July 1st. Each dealer shall receive 2 dealer's number plates for the \$25 fee; additional plates, issued pursuant to regulations of the commissioner, may be obtained at \$10 for each additional plate.

The Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Game may issue temporary numbers and registrations to bona fide dealers who may upon the sale or exchange of a snowmobile issue them to new owners in order to allow them to operate snowmobiles for a period of 20 consecutive days only, after the day of sale in lieu of a permanent number as required by this chapter.

§ 1977. Authority under registration

No person shall operate a snowmobile upon controlled access highways or within the right-of-way limits thereof.

No person shall operate a snowmobile upon any plowed private road in the winter, after having been forbidden to do so by the owner thereof, either personally or by an appropriate notice posted conspicuously on said road.

No person shall operate a snowmobile upon the main travelled portion, the sidewalks, or the plowed snowbanks, or of any other public way, with the following exceptions:

1. Crossing ways. Properly registered snowmobiles may cross, as directly as possible, public ways, including sidewalks, except controlled access highways, provided that such crossing can be made in safety and that it does not interfere with the free movement of vehicular traffic approaching from either direction on such public way. It shall be the responsibility of the operator of the snowmobile to yield the right-of-way to all vehicular traffic upon any public way before crossing the same.

2. Other portions. Snowmobiles may operate on any portion of the public ways when the main travelled portion is unplowed and unused during the winter months by conventional motor vehicles. If the main travelled portion of a public way is plowed and utilized by conventional motor vehicles during the winter months, snowmobiles may operate only on that portion of the way not maintained or utilized for the operation of conventional motor vehicles, except that operation shall be prohibited during the hours from sunset to sunrise on the portion of the way not maintained or utilized for the operation of conventional motor vehicles. This subsection shall not be construed to prohibit snowmobiles from crossing said ways as provided in subsection 1.

Under no circumstances, except as provided, is a snowmobile to be operated on the main travelled portion of a way, or that portion of a way that has been plowed or on a snowbank immediately adjacent to the plowed way unless such operation is conducted for the sole purpose of crossing said way as provided in subsection 1.

§ 1978. Operation.

1. Reckless operation. It is unlawful for any person to operate any snowmobile recklessly.

2. Operating under the influence. It is unlawful to operate or attempt to operate any snowmobile in any place while intoxicated by the use of intoxicating liquor or drugs or to operate or attempt to operate any snowmobile in any place while a person's mental or physical faculties are impaired by the use of intoxicating liquors or drugs. The provisions of Title 29, section 1312 relating to weight of alcohol in defendant's blood and its admission in evidence shall apply to this subsection.

3. Operating to endanger. It is unlawful for any person to operate any snowmobile as to endanger any person or property.

4. Prudent speed. It is unlawful to operate any snowmobile except at reasonable and prudent speed for the existing conditions.

5. Age restriction for operation. No person under the age of 14 years shall operate a snowmobile when crossing any public way maintained for travel. No operator's license shall be required for the operation of a snowmobile.

6. Noise. No person shall operate a snowmobile without an adequate muffler.

7. Operating on land of an other. Any person operating a snowmobile upon the land of another shall stop and identify himself upon the request of the landowner or his duly authorized representative.

8. Snowmobiles operated at prearranged racing meets. Snowmobiles operated at prearranged racing meets shall be exempt from the provisions of this chapter concerning registration, mufflers and lights during the time of such operation at prearranged organized racing meets. This shall include all prerace practice at the location of said meet.

9. Operation on railroad tracks. No person shall operate any snowmobile along or adjacent and parallel to the tracks of any railroad within the limits of the railroad

right-of-way without written permission from the railroad.

9-A. Operation in cemeteries. It shall be unlawful to operate any snowmobile in any cemetery or burying ground. Any person who violates this subsection shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$50 nor more than \$150, plus any damage to the memorials located in said cemetery, which was caused by snowmobiles. This subsection shall not apply to any person who is licensed under Title 32, chapter 21 by the Board of Funeral Service to engage in the funeral service profession, in conducting his profession.

10. Operation at certain times. Snowmobiles may be operated on streets and public ways during a period of emergency when the emergency has been so declared by a police agency having jurisdiction and when travel by conventional motor vehicles is not practicable. Snowmobiles may be operated on streets and public ways in special snowmobile events of limited duration conducted according to a prearranged schedule under a permit from the governmental unit having jurisdiction.

11. Lights. Every snowmobile shall have mounted on the front thereof at least one headlight capable of casting a white beam for a distance of at least 100 feet directly ahead of the snowmobile. Every snowmobile shall have mounted on the rear thereof at least one lamp capable of displaying a red light which shall be visible at a distance of at least 100 feet behind such snowmobile. These lights shall be in operation during the period of from 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise and at any time when, due to insufficient light or unfavorable atmospheric conditions, caused by fog or otherwise, other persons, vehicles and other objects are not clearly discernible for a distance of 500 feet ahead.

12. Stopping for law enforcement officer. Any law enforcement officer in uniform whose duty it is to enforce provisions of this chapter may stop and examine any snowmobile for the purpose of ascertaining whether it is being operated in compliance with this chapter and the officer may demand and inspect the operator's certificate of registration. He may also examine the identification numbers of said snowmobile and any marks thereon. It shall be unlawful for the operator of any snowmobile to fail or refuse to stop such snowmobile on request or signal of any such officer.

§ 1979. Regulatory authority.

The Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Game is authorized to amend and adopt rules and regulations in accordance with Title 5, Chapter 303, which are not inconsistent with this chapter on the following matters:

1. Procedure. Regulations to further establish administrative procedures including but not limited to: The appointment and compensation of agents for the issuance of registrations; the provision of procedures for issuance of registrations by such agents and methods of payment of their portion of the registration fees to municipalities.

2. Use and operation. Regulations governing the use and operation of snowmobiles to insure the safety of persons and property.

3. Equipment. Regulations governing safety equipment including type, quality and quantity of such equipment.

4. Temporary registration. Regulations providing for issuance of temporary registrations.

5. Racing. Regulations with respect to location, erection, construction and maintenance of grandstands, bleachers, stadiums, arenas, fences, safety barriers or other like structures intended principally to support or protect spectators during any type of snowmobile racing and any other regulations necessary to insure the safety of spectators at snowmobile races.

6. Issuance of dealer plates. Regulations providing for the issuance of dealer plates, including determination of the number of plates to be issued to persons who are in the business of selling snowmobiles.

7. Registration number. Regulations governing the form and manner for displaying the registration number assigned to a snowmobile.

The Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Game shall have authority to adopt or amend such regulations as he deems necessary to carry out the intent and purpose of this chapter.

Such action shall be subject to the following:

1. Public hearings. Set a time and place for a public hearing and publish notice thereof in a state paper at least 7 days prior to said hearing date, including the location, time and place and substance of said hearing.

2. Adoption or amendment. After holding said hearing he may adopt or amend any or all said proposed regulations.

3. Publication. He shall publish the so adopted rules and regulations in the state paper.

4. Effective date. Said rules and regulations shall become effective one week following publication in the state paper and shall have the full force of law.

§ 1980. Reciprocity

The provisions of this chapter relative to registration of snowmobiles do not apply to any nonresident owner or operator who has complied with the registration and licensing laws of his state, district or country of residence to the extent that that state, district or country of residence grants the same or similar privileges to residents of this State if the snowmobile is primarily operated in this State by such nonresident owner or operator. If the snowmobile is owned by a nonresident but is primarily operated in this State by a Maine resident, it must be registered under section 1972. The Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Game, after determining that like privileges are granted by a state, district or country, shall have the authority to enter into a formal written agreement or make other arrangements with such state, district or country for the purpose of carrying out the purpose of this section. Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize the operation of any snowmobile described in any manner contrary to this chapter.

§ 1981. Application

This chapter shall apply to the operator of snowmobiles on brooks, streams and great ponds.

§ 1982. Accidents

The operator of any snowmobile involved in any accident resulting in injuries requiring overnight hospitalization or death of any person or property damage to the estimated amount of \$100 or more, or some person acting for him, or the owner of said snowmobile having knowledge of the accident should the operator of same be unknown, shall immediately by the quickest means of communication give notice of the accident either to the State Police officer or warden of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Game assigned to the area wherein the accident occurred, to the nearest State Police office or to the sheriff's office within the county wherein the accident occurred, or the office of the police department of the municipality wherein the accident occurred. Failure of such persons to give notice of any accident requiring notice, to the State Police officer or warden or one of the

three offices named shall be prima facie evidence that such accident was not reported.

All accident reports made by investigating officers shall be for the purpose of a statistical analysis and for accident prevention purposes and shall not be admissible in evidence in any trial, civil or criminal, arising out of such accident, but any investigating agency may disclose, upon the request of any person, the date, time, location of the accident and the names and addresses of drivers, owners, injured persons, witnesses and the investigating officer. The investigating agency may upon written request furnish a photo copy of any report at the expense of the person making the request.

§ 1983. Enforcement

Every law enforcement officer in the State, including wardens of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Game, wardens of the Department of Sea and Shore Fisheries, foresters and wardens of the Forestry Department and supervisors and rangers of the State Park and Recreation Commission and Allagash Wilderness Waterway shall enforce this chapter.

§ 1984. Penalty

Any person who violates this chapter or any rules or regulations promulgated by the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Game shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$10 nor more than \$100 for each offense. The enactment of this chapter is in no way to be construed as giving license or permission to cross or go on the property of another. Any person in violation shall be held accountable to the owner under existing law.

§ 1985. Public utility exemption

So that public utilities may effectively and speedily carry out their obligations to the public, the restrictions imposed by section 1977, subsection 2, with respect to operation between sunset and sunrise and by section 1978, subsection 10, with respect to operation only after a "declared" snow emergency shall not apply to a snowmobile operated by a public utility regulated by the Public Utilities Commission while being operated in the course of the utility's corporate function.

FEE STRUCTURE

| | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Registration | \$10.00 |
| Transfers | 2.00 |
| Duplicates | 1.00 |

For Your Information

The Maine snowmobile law delegates responsibilities primarily to two state departments.

Administration and registration functions are assigned to the State Department of Inland Fisheries and Game.

Mail applications for snowmobile registration to: Division of Snowmobile Registration, Department of Inland Fisheries and Game, State Office Building, Augusta, Maine 04330.

The State Park and Recreation Commission will develop facilities and provide educational and informational materials for the snowmobile operators. For additional information, contact Snowmobile Coordinator, State Park & Recreation Commission, State Office Building, Augusta, Maine 04330 Telephone (207) 289-3821.

The first time a snowmobile is registered in your name you are subject to a sales tax. Send the sales tax certificate with the application. Casual sales are also subject to a sales tax.

Snowmobiles are not subject to excise taxation nor are they subject to taxation as personal property, except those constituting stock in trade.

Display of the snowmobile registration number must be painted or firmly attached to both sides of cowling. Color must be in contrast to the background to which the number is applied. Registration number must read from left to right with block character capital letters and Arabic numbers not to be less than 3 inches in height.

Please, No Litter!

Carry out the waste you accumulate from activities associated with snowmobiling . . . good manners in the out of doors reflect on all involved and improve relations with landowners . . . leave a clean trail by picking up litter you find as well as taking care of your own. Violators of the litter law face fines and other penalties.



Keep Maine Scenic