

# PERSONNEL SELECTION AND TRAINING

## Overview

Hiring the right staff for your snowmobile rental or outfitting business is crucial to the success of your business. You should hire individuals who think safety, first and foremost, and who lead by example. The continual training of all rental company or outfitter personnel is equally important. Ongoing staff training can help ensure that safe and responsible snowmobiling practices are being taught consistently to customers, and that only qualified personnel lead guided tours.

The continual investment in the training of your staff can be your best marketing tool. Customer satisfaction, word of mouth advertising, and customer loyalty will all contribute to the business's bottom line when customers have a positive snowmobile experience as a result of staff skill and experience.

This chapter highlights the importance of hiring qualified staff and offers guidelines on how to train and maintain highly qualified personnel who are committed to safety and the success of your business.



# Personnel

## HIRING AND EMPLOYMENT

### OBJECTIVES

The requirements and responsibilities of various positions in your business, which can range from reservation clerks/front desk staff to education/checkout staff to instructors to guides or administrative staff, all determine and shape your hiring needs. When hiring a new employee, look for a combination of job related education, skills, and practical experience consistent with a professional rental/outfitter culture that makes good business sense.

Front line employees should typically be skilled in many areas: customer service, snowmobile operation and safety, first aid, community relations, teaching, etc. Particularly for guides and checkout staff, it is desirable to hire individuals who are inherently risk management focused and are customer service minded as a result of their education and work experience. Such candidates can be a great asset to the business even if they lack advanced snowmobiling skills. Their practical experience and training should help them sense potential risks to safety and prevent incidents from occurring.

These types of employees can become well-rounded team members, able to competently perform the many jobs and responsibilities at the rental business with focused rental/outfitting training. Once they've obtained a snowmobile safety education certification, advanced instruction in snowmobile operations, and knowledge of snowmobiling in the local area, these employees can become ideal snowmobile safety professionals who are a credit to the rental/outfitter operation.

Depending upon the size of the rental operation, some staff may be specialized and perform only office duties or equipment upkeep, while others may focus on training, on-trail guiding, or checking equipment in and out with customers. While some staff may have a limited focus in their duties, cross-training between positions is a good idea, especially in the areas of renter education and on-trail guiding. Staff at small companies may need to be qualified in numerous or even all of these responsibilities.

Always keep in mind that past education, training, and work experience will likely result in a situation where your staff has a wide range of experience and abilities. To attract a higher level of trained staff to the business, you may have to pay more experienced employees more than others, but it will be money well spent.

## **HIRING CRITERIA**

Hiring qualified people from the start will help keep initial training demands and costs to a minimum. Since a snowmobile rental/outfitter business must always focus on safety and caring for the customer, it is essential that, in particular, guide and field operation staff's first aid skills are kept current by regular in-service training.

Hiring individuals with the right mix of skills and experience can enhance the business's image, as well as the reputation of snowmobiling in general.

## **Look to the Following When Hiring Staff:**

### **AGE AND MATURITY**

Staff must meet all state/provincial age restrictions for operating snowmobiles themselves. If the business offers guided trips, there may be instances when an employee's ability to handle an emergency could save a customer's life. Therefore, staff should possess a level of maturity that enables them to professionally ride in a safe and responsible manner. Management should assess their prior training, background, and practical experience during the interview process.

### **SNOWMOBILING EXPERIENCE AND BACKGROUND**

Successful completion of a recognized snowmobile safety education course does not necessarily guarantee excellent snowmobiling skills.

Checkout and guide staff should have practical, snowmobile-related experience for the job and shouldn't be hired simply because they have a snowmobile safety certification. They should be able to demonstrate advanced skills in snowmobile operation and handling, including snowmobile instruction, on-trail supervision of customers, on-trail snowmobile maintenance and repair, and trailering skills if the company operates off-site guided trips.



## **LIFE SKILLS: QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS**

Candidates who hold first aid, CPR, and/or avalanche rescue certifications should meet or exceed the minimum criteria required by the appropriate sanctioning agencies as pertinent to all job related functions they may be hired to perform. All certification, for 'the training' should be kept current and up-to-date as per sanctioning agency and industry recommendations throughout their employment.

## **SNOWMOBILE SAFETY EDUCATION: INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS**

While there are many different models of snowmobiles and riding techniques, all snowmobilers need to know the basic principles of operating snowmobiles safely. The education committee of the International Association of Snowmobile Administrators (IASA) has developed and endorsed minimum, internationally recognized, snowmobile education standards that rental/outfitter businesses should understand and follow. Generally, these standards share much uniformity (*and reciprocity*) among jurisdictions, including the United States and Canadian Provinces and Territories.

All employees who will be educating the rental/outfitter business's customers should have a comprehensive knowledge of snowmobile safety, as well as current laws, local regulations, and hazards particular to the local riding area. They should also possess the knowledge, skill, and abilities necessary to effectively teach snowmobile safety and responsible behavior to customers. (*See page 33, Customer Education*)

It is recommended that only staff who have successfully completed an IASA approved snowmobile safety education course, or a state/provincial equivalency exam, should qualify to be rental center training instructors or on-trail guides. It is also recommended that, to receive certification in these specific areas, candidates should pass a snowmobile knowledge/rider-instructor skills test conducted by the business and/or the local government jurisdiction.

Many areas have an existing pool of qualified snowmobile safety education instructors who have been trained through IASA endorsed education programs. You should consider using them to assist your rental operation.

## LOCATION SPECIFIC SNOWMOBILING KNOWLEDGE

Snowmobile guides and instructors need prior training and testing regarding local area snowmobile knowledge in order to teach rental customers. This includes hazards known to the area (*avalanche areas, cornices, thin ice, etc.*), area specific environmental considerations, as well as special rules of the road that may be applicable in the local area. Hiring individuals with personal snowmobiling experience in the local area can be an asset since these candidates should already be familiar with local regulations, courtesies, and varying conditions. Local snowmobile clubs and associations are one way the rental/outfitter business can find this information.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE TRAINING

It is possible that staff may have to respond to an emergency if the business offers guided trips. As a minimum requirement, staff who may be faced with this situation should hold current certification in CPR and first aid, along with avalanche rescue if operating in mountainous areas. Although the size, scope, and location of the rental/outfitter facility are a consideration, guide staff should generally be trained and be current with basic first responder skills. A safety audit (*See page 76, Risk Management*) by either the local emergency services office or other qualified agencies can help determine this.

## TRAITS AND SKILLS

Employees hired as guides should exhibit the following:

- ◆ Strong riding ability.
- ◆ Physical strength and agility.
- ◆ Good eyesight and hearing.
- ◆ Quick reflexes.
- ◆ Ability to work as a team member.
- ◆ Excellent communication skills.



## COMMUNITY RELATIONS SKILLS

Staff are important ambassadors for the business and recreational snowmobiling in general. Individuals who have had similar experiences with snowmobiling or other winter recreational activities are good candidates since they often have a multiple use perspective that is invaluable when promoting safe and responsible riding. Their knowledge and experience can help reduce inherent risks, while increasing the business's bottom line.

## Other Hiring Considerations

### LAWS GOVERNING HIRING PRACTICES

Strict State, Provincial, and Federal laws often affect the hiring process. United States Federal Equal Opportunity Employment Laws, for instance, prohibit discrimination based upon the following factors:

- ◆ Gender
- ◆ Age
- ◆ Color
- ◆ Race
- ◆ Disability
- ◆ National Origin
- ◆ Religion



### EMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTATION

The rental/outfitter company should document and file information for each staff member regarding their previous work experience, education, training, certifications, and any other information pertinent to their employment. Due dates for staff recertifications should also be noted in each employee's personnel file to help with follow up. This type of detailed documentation will help the business document its track record of hiring qualified personnel should any aspect of the operation ever be called into question.

### EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

The rental/outfitter company should establish a formal written agreement with each of its employees that includes the terms and conditions of their employment. An employment contract should include, but not necessarily be limited to :

- ◆ Salary/hourly wage.
- ◆ Term of employment.
- ◆ Pre-season and in-service training requirements.
- ◆ Code of conduct expectations.
- ◆ General duties and responsibilities per job description.
- ◆ Legal obligations the rental/outfitter company has to the employee.
- ◆ Legal obligations the employee has to the rental/outfitter company.
- ◆ Legal obligations the rental/outfitter company and employee have to customers.

## In-Service Training Program

Prevention is a key to safe and responsible snowmobiling, as well as to proper risk management throughout the business’s operations. Ultimately, risk prevention is the responsibility of both the rental/outfitter company and the employees. The company can help ensure that employees are ready and able to perform the various tasks responsibly and effectively by developing and maintaining appropriate knowledge skills among staff through regular in-service training. Staff training should be constant and thorough, covering many of the crucial areas of the business in order to instill confidence in employees and business operations as a whole. Training should be designed to enhance, through practice sessions, the job related skills of all staff responsible for customer safety. Continuous in-service training will help rental/outfitter businesses routinely focus on the issues that matter the most.

Regular in-service training can help personnel:

- ◆ Have sufficient technical knowledge, experience, and practice to impart proper instruction and information to all customers.
- ◆ Effectively teach safe and responsible snowmobiling practices.
- ◆ Properly evaluate the facility, equipment, and their customers on an ongoing basis.
- ◆ Sustain the business’s preventative approach to safety and responsible behavior.
- ◆ Identify individual roles and responsibilities.
- ◆ Keep individual’s qualifications and certifications current.

Supplement in-service training programs by working directly with outside professionals to develop and maintain processes and procedures.

The following chart provides examples:

INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS	SUBJECT EXPERTISE
Manufacturers or Dealers	Equipment Up-Keep and Maintenance
Land Management Agencies	Rules & Regulations/Snowmobiling and Trail Management Issues
Law Enforcement Agencies	Laws, Rules, and Regulations
Red Cross, Ambulance Services, Fire Department and Emergency Response Teams	CPR, First Aid, Emergency Response Procedures, Safety Audits, etc
Avalanche Education Centers	Avalanche Awareness and Avalanche Search Techniques

## EMPLOYEE TRAINING MANUAL

Part of the excitement and challenge of starting a new job is learning the ropes. New employees need to learn how the rental/outfitter company does business and what procedures their employer expects them to follow. An effective way to introduce a new employee to business operations is through a training manual.

A training manual can help provide common instructions for staff so that procedures are carried out consistently. The manual also acts as an excellent reference if they have questions or are unsure about a specific procedure. It should be readily accessible to all employees throughout the term of their employment.

Information about developing a training manual may be found in the business section of the local library or by contacting the local small business resources center servicing your area.



## EMPLOYEE TRAINING TECHNIQUES

### 1. *Effective Training Requires Small Steps.*

Too much information delivered too quickly can be overwhelming. There is a lot to learn about the rental business, so take a step-by-step approach, allowing new staff time to absorb and apply what they've learned.

### 2. *Effective Training is Chronological.*

Staff training should begin with simple tasks that need to be performed immediately. Teaching personnel the more difficult tasks should be delayed until they are oriented and familiar with their basic work.

### 3. *Effective Training is Continuous.*

People learn better in creative, energetic environments. Whenever possible, add a little variety to the training program: vary the schedule, where, and how you train.

### 4. *Effective Training has New Employees Feeling Productive - even on the first day!*

One successful technique for novices to learn the various roles and responsibilities of a new job is by shadowing or following an experienced worker. They should be encouraged to complete various tasks on their own with less supervision as they move along. This systematically helps them build confidence while at the same time helps them feel good about the business and themselves.



## **5. Effective Training Evaluates an Employee's Progress.**

Take time to measure staff performance. One way to improve performance is by observing employees in action or by role-playing (*e.g. you pretend to be the customer*) and afterward, discussing their progress. When evaluating employees, also place written documentation in their personnel file.

## **Customer Education and Operations Training: CONTENT AND GUIDELINES**

In order to maintain a safe and secure environment, staff should be coached to:

- ◆ Adopt and maintain a 'Safety First' attitude.
- ◆ Readily identify safety and other concerns that could adversely affect the business, its customers, or its staff.
- ◆ Quickly and decisively end a customer's snowmobile ride when necessary (*e.g. Unsafe snowmobile handling, ignoring the 'rules of the road', inclement weather, or other emergencies, etc.*)

## **SAFE SNOWMOBILING FUNDAMENTALS**

It is essential that staff be familiar with safe, responsible snowmobiling practices, and that their snowmobile handling skills are kept current.

Basic training should include:

- ◆ Snowmobile operational characteristics.
- ◆ Snowmobile operational responsibilities.
- ◆ Snowmobile trip preparation (*e.g. route or trip planning*).
- ◆ Trail courtesy rules and etiquette.
- ◆ Laws and regulations.
- ◆ Local trail/landowner issues and hazards.
- ◆ Multiple use issues (*co-existing with other recreation user groups and other land uses*).
- ◆ Protecting staff and customers from environmental stressors (*e.g. sun, temperature, altitude, wind, flat light, etc.*).
- ◆ Maintaining respect for the environment and natural resources.

In-service training and refresher courses should be a part of your business culture since they will help ensure that employee experience and knowledge keep pace with developing industry standards.

## CUSTOMER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Every employee who is responsible for customer education and training must be able to communicate and teach effectively. It is the rental/outfitter company's responsibility to ensure their personnel have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to properly educate customers about safe snowmobiling practices.

There are various methods available to help assist staff provide information and instruction to rental/outfitting customers, including: reading safety posters or brochures, watching a video, verbal instructions or presentations by staff, physical demonstrations, and hands-on practice.

An instructor in-service training program should complement an IASA certified Snowmobile Safety Education Course and focus on the following:

- ◆ Instructor's listening and observational skills.
- ◆ Instructor's interpersonal skills.
- ◆ Logical flow of information/subject matter.
- ◆ Lesson planning.
- ◆ Teaching methods.
- ◆ Instructional aids.
- ◆ Risks or handicaps to learning.
- ◆ Evaluating customer performance.



## TELL-SHOW-DEMO

An effective method to instruct customers on the safe and proper way to handle a snowmobile is to combine proven teaching methods. For example:

- ◆ **Tell** the customer how the emergency stop switch must be in the run (up) position.
- ◆ **Show** the customer how to turn the switch on and off.
- ◆ **Demonstrate** to the customer how the emergency stop switch shuts the motor off when depressed.

The Tell-Show-Demo instruction method should be taught to the rental company's instructors and supervisors. This method can easily be applied to the list of procedures and information that an authorized renter/operator should know and do in order to operate a snowmobile safely and responsibly. (See page 37, *Customer Education*)

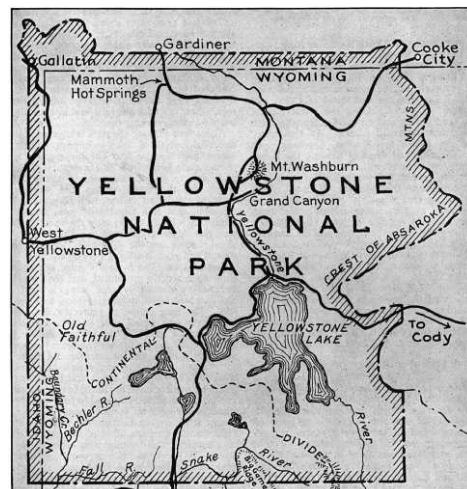
## A Case Study

### GUIDE OR RENTAL COMPANY REQUIREMENTS

The majority of states and provinces do not require snowmobile rental/outfitter companies to have certified guides, although snowmobile safety advocates generally recommend it. Federal land managing agencies in the United States, like the National Park Service and the United States Forest Service, generally have the most stringent requirements for snowmobile guide certification. Two examples from federal agencies, along with examples of requirements for rental companies and guides in various states and the Yukon Territory are as follows:

### YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK: REQUIREMENTS FOR GUIDED SNOWMOBILE TOURS

All snowmobiles entering the park must be accompanied by a licensed guide who is employed by a rental company authorized by the National Park Service to provide guided interpretive snowmobile tours within the park. Only 720 snowmobiles may enter the park each day between mid December and early March guided by one of approximately 23 companies who have been authorized under a concessions contract. The rental company must submit a Certificate of Insurance and Monthly Use Reports as one condition of their contract.



Guides are responsible for the behavior of clients in their party. Only 'Best Available Technology' (BAT) snowmobiles can be operated within the park. The maximum group size is 11 snowmobiles, including the guide. Snowmobiles can operate in the park from 7 AM to 9 PM only.

Rental company employees are required to wear a visible name tag or have their company name embroidered on outerwear identifying the concessionaire. All guide sleds must have either a bicycle safety flag or a sign in the windshield to identify them. All rental snowmobiles must clearly display the company's logo or name to aid in their easy identification.

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Rental companies must provide training and orientation to each employee working with the public to ensure they provide friendly, helpful service and are capable and willing to answer questions and provide visitor assistance. This includes interpretive skills training, knowledge about park regulations, and making sure the employee is familiar with equipment to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip for park visitors. Prior to guiding clients, new guides must accompany an experienced guide into the park on several trips.

All snowmobile renters must be given basic instruction on the safe operation of snowmobiles prior to beginning the trip. Emphasis is placed on traffic regulations and the similarity of snowmobiles to automobiles. All aspects of the safe operation of a snowmobile must be emphasized in this instruction. Renters must also be given the opportunity to operate a snowmobile or examine one in enough detail to ensure their ability to physically operate the controls. The rental company must also ensure the renter is safely equipped and properly clothed prior to the trip.

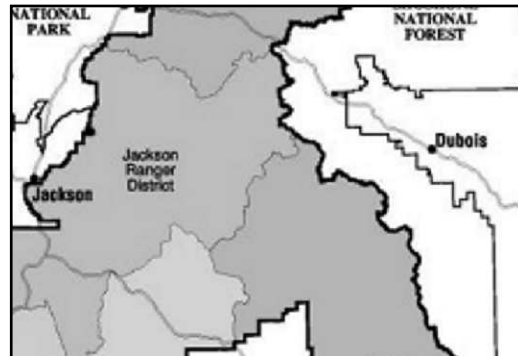
Guides and renters must wear helmets. Renters may not carry alcoholic beverages on day trips and if on an overnight trip the unopened beverage must remain stored in their luggage. Rental companies must ensure each group carries a basic first aid kit, matches, instant hot packs, and a blanket that is more substantial than a foil blanket.

All guides must possess at least current first-aid certification or higher and have completed a CPR course. Guides who have been certified in first-aid and CPR during the past 18 months but whose certification has expired may conduct trips for 30 days pending re-certification.

All snowmobiles must pull over to the far right and park in single file when the group stops along the trail. All snowmobile operators must possess a valid motor vehicle operator's license (*no learner's permits allowed*) and the license must be carried on the operator's person at all times. Any towed equipment such as trailers and sleds must have a rigid hitch and can be only pulled by the guide's sled. Double riding is only permitted on machines designed for double riding and no triple riding is allowed. Snowmobiles are not allowed to idle for more than one minute when stopped. All guides and renters must have a rearview mirror on their machine or utilize a handheld or wrist mirror.

## **Bridger-Teton National Forest Teton Division - Jackson, Wyoming: Avalanche Training Policy**

This policy applies to snowmobile outfitters who guide backcountry snowmobiling trips and Forest Service employees whose primary purpose is to patrol by snowmobile in the backcountry. The purpose of this policy is to address public, employee, and outfitter client safety.



The long term goal is to have all snowmobile guides and winter patrollers (*Forest Service employees*) trained at a basic level for avalanche safety. A curriculum has been developed for a Snowmobile Avalanche Education Course that consists of 12 hours of instruction, which includes 4 hours in the classroom and 8 hours in the field. Training is required only once. However, an annual refresher among employees (*guides*) must be documented by the rental company and documentation provided to the Forest Service. Employees and guides are required to have a minimum of safety equipment along with them while on tours, with the type of equipment available dictated by the intent of the tour.

This policy was implemented by phasing in the requirements over a two year period.

**Year 1:** Beginning with the 2003/2004 winter season, all guides who lead advanced off-trail tours, with the primary purpose of the tour being technical powder riding and hill climbing in avalanche prone terrain, are required to have completed a basic 12 hour snowmobile avalanche education course within three months of their initial employment. All clients and guides must wear avalanche transceivers and a minimum of two shovels and probe poles must be carried within the group. A safety briefing must be conducted at the beginning of the tour that includes a demonstration of the avalanche safety equipment.

**Year 2:** Beginning with the 2004/2005 winter season, all snowmobile guides and winter patrollers are required to be trained at the basic 12 hour snowmobile avalanche education course level, within three months of the beginning of their initial employment. On all tours, a minimum of two shovels and two probe poles must be carried within the group and the location and proper use of the equipment must be shown to the rental clients at the beginning of the tour.

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Avalanche transceivers are not required for tours that use standard play areas along the groomed State Trail System that are not in potential avalanche terrain (*steep slopes or run-out zones*). There must be an annual pre-season refresher among employees that have completed the 12 hour course that covers transceiver and rescue drills and safe travel techniques. At a minimum level, this can be covered in one-half day. Each rental company must document the avalanche refresher course given to their employees and provide the Forest Service with a list of the company's guides who have attended. Rental companies who desire assistance from the Forest Service in providing the annual refresher may arrange this through their permit administrator.

Only guides who have completed the avalanche education course can lead advanced, off-trail, powder riding tours. In addition, all members (*guides and clients*) of advanced tours must wear avalanche transceivers. A minimum of two shovels and probe poles must be carried with each group. The pre-tour safety briefing must include a demonstration of the avalanche safety equipment.

There are several organizations authorized to offer snowmobile specific avalanche training for the Teton Division. These organizations include: the Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF) Avalanche Forecast Center, Jackson Hole Mountain Guides, the American Avalanche Institute, and the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS).

Rental companies may also develop their own avalanche safety programs. In this case, an Avalanche Safety Plan must be established by the rental company that describes the company's training program and Standard Operating Procedures. The Avalanche Safety Plan must be updated annually and submitted to the Forest Service for acceptance and approval. The rental company must have an Avalanche Director who is responsible for training employees and ensuring that the plan is followed. The Avalanche Director is required to have a minimum of Avalanche Level II training or must have attended the National Avalanche School.



## IDAHO

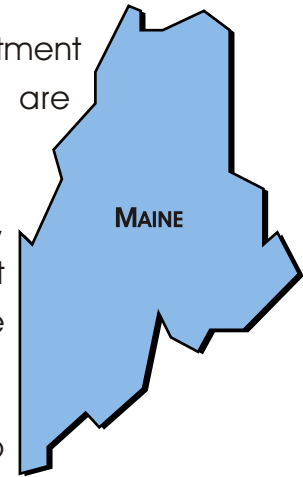
All rental snowmobiles must display a rental snowmobile registration.

## MAINE

Guides for any purpose must be licensed by the Maine Department of Conservation. In the case of snowmobiling, guides are considered in the category of a 'Recreational Guide'.

Rental companies must purchase a 'Rental Agents Certificate', register each snowmobile in the state of Maine, and instruct each person who rents a snowmobile how to operate the snowmobile safely.

Rental companies can issue a temporary safety certification to rental snowmobile operators. Companies must present a short course that includes instruction on the use of brakes, throttle, kill switch, and hand signals.



## MICHIGAN

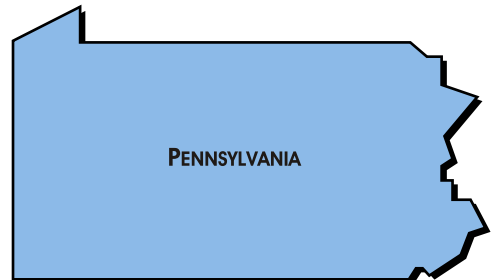
Snowmobile guides must be licensed if they are operating on state lands. Snowmobile rental companies must carry liability insurance.

## PENNSYLVANIA

Rental companies operating on State Forest Lands must have a Commercial Activities Agreement with the Bureau of Forestry and operate as follows:

Rental snowmobiles must be conspicuously marked with the word 'RENTAL' on both sides of the snowmobiles. A guide must accompany each party of renters with no more than 10 rented snowmobiles per guide or group.

The rental company must maintain a record of all rentals for one year, including the name, address, and age of the rental operator, along with the snowmobile make, model, and registration number. The rental company must also carry liability insurance.



## SOUTH DAKOTA

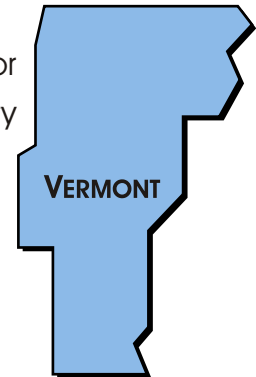
Any person who engages in the business of renting snowmobiles to another is 'required to maintain rental snowmobiles in a safe condition.'

# PERSONNEL

## VERMONT

Snowmobile guides must be a certified snowmobile safety instructor in order to guide persons who do not hold snowmobile safety certification certificates.

Rental companies are required to display a decal or flag on each rental snowmobile that identifies the rental company. All rental snowmobiles must display a commercial trail pass.



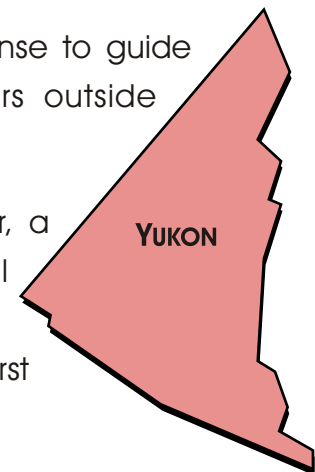
## WYOMING

All rental snowmobiles must display a commercial snowmobile registration.

## YUKON

Snowmobile outfitters must have a Wilderness Tourism License to guide commercial wilderness trips on Yukon lands and waters outside national parks.

The Wilderness Tourism Licensing Act requires an operator, a rental operator, or a client renting a vehicle or rental equipment to fill out a rental report and submit it to the registrar by May 31st or October 31st, whichever comes first after the rental.



## UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE - NATIONWIDE

Typically, a Special Use Permit is required to provide any services (*like guiding*) on National Forest System Lands or for a rental operator to deliver rental snowmobiles to NFS trailheads for clients to use for unguided trips. The Special Use Permit may require special stipulations, restrictions, and/or requirements for the permit.





## TRAILERING AND TOWING

Not all snowmobile rental businesses are located along the trail or at a trailhead. As a result the business may either provide trailers to customers who use their own tow vehicle or else transport the snowmobiles to a trailhead with the business's trailer and tow vehicle.

If so, staff are generally responsible for the routine inspection and maintenance of trailering equipment, ensuring that the right equipment is used for the job, and ensuring that customers know how to transport, unload, and load the rental sled(s) while using a trailer.

Staff should be familiar with the following information and procedures in order to adequately inform the rental customer of proper trailering techniques:

- ◆ Types of trailers and trailer hitches.
- ◆ Trailer lights and wiring.
- ◆ Pre-road checks.
- ◆ Trailer/vehicle handling and towing characteristics.
- ◆ Parking area/trailhead etiquette.
- ◆ Unloading and loading the rental sled.
- ◆ Equipment inspection and maintenance.

When applicable, the business should conduct practical hands-on road training and testing of employees to ensure that proper trailering techniques (e.g. *backing up the trailer, taking wider turns, towing on snow packed or icy roads, etc.*) are both understood and practiced. Personnel should also understand and be proficient in the responsibilities assumed by the driver of a tow vehicle. It is important that they recognize the value of the cargo they may be hauling, both in terms of the property value of the snowmobiles being transported and, most importantly, the safety of the customers who may also be transported in the tow vehicle.

The results of the employee's road test should be recorded in the individual's personnel file to confirm that in-service training was successfully completed.



## EMERGENCY SITUATION PROCEDURES

An emergency can arise anywhere, at any time, on the trail or at the business. Each emergency will likely have unique circumstances and being able to meet the many challenges requires a considerable amount of knowledge, preparation, and practice. Accordingly, staff with the appropriate education, response training, and skill should be able to demonstrate that they can safely and effectively respond to and assist others in most emergencies.



## EMERGENCY SKILLS TRAINING AND RE-TRAINING

Skills get rusty, so practice needs to be a constant along with the many other important functions and responsibilities associated with the business. Staff training in the key areas should be consistent and regularly scheduled in order to maintain appropriate skill levels. It is up to the business to ensure that their front line personnel are not only snowmobile proficient and good instructors, but can also properly assess and handle incidents or emergencies. Clear and effective communication between all parties is paramount.

There are varying frequencies that in-service training should occur (*e.g. annually, pre-season, post-season, monthly, bimonthly, and weekly*) depending upon the activity and its importance, and can be related to how often a particular activity or skill is performed within the routine of normal business operations. A by-product of using outside experts for in-service training can be the added benefit of nurturing valuable community relationships with key agencies and organizations.








# PERSONNEL

## USE OF STANDARD HAND SIGNALS

In-service training should teach staff to understand and use a series of standard hand signals for visual communication with each other or customers while snowmobiling.

The following chart provides examples:



PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATION		SUBJECT EXPERTISE
Right Turn		Left arm raised at shoulder height, elbow bent, and forearm vertical with palm of hand flat.
Left Turn		Left arm extended straight out from shoulder and pointing in the direction of the turn.
Stop		Arm raised from the shoulder and extended up over the head with palm of hand flat.
Slowing		Left arm extended out and down from the side of the body with a downward flapping motion of hand to signal warning or caution.
Oncoming Sleds		Left arm raised at shoulder height, elbow bent and forearm vertical, wrist bent, move arm from left to right over head, pointing to right side of trail.
Sleds Following		Arm raised, elbow bent with thumb pointing backward in hitch-hiking motion move arm forward to backward over your shoulder.
Last Sled in Line		Left arm raised at shoulder height, elbow bent and forearm vertical with hand clenched in a fist.

## MANUFACTURER'S SAFETY WARNINGS

It is essential that all staff read *(and understand)* the owner's manuals for every make and model of snowmobile that the business rents. Particular attention should be paid to the snowmobile's safety warnings since it is unlikely that any manufacturer, regardless of the product, would want to scare off customers with unnecessary warnings. It is imperative that all warnings that are accompanied by a symbol that indicates "a potential for serious injury or death" be read and understood by the staff, so they can pass the information on to the customers as applicable.



## SUN AND WEATHER

Being out in the sun or cold all day can have an adverse affect on staff alertness, diminishing their preparedness to spot trouble before it happens, or to effectively respond to an emergency. Staff should be reminded to take every precaution to be sun and weather smart and to do their best to shield themselves from overexposure to the natural elements. A proper helmet, appropriate clothing, etc should all be considered as basic equipment for the job. Special attention should be made to ensure that staff wear layers of appropriate clothing *(non-cotton, synthetic materials that wick moisture away from the body and dry quickly)* to respond to changing weather conditions and varying levels of physical exertion during their shift. Staff and customers should drink water frequently throughout their shift or outing to prevent dehydration, particularly in high altitude locations.

