

Snowmobile Safety

AVALANCHE SAFETY TIPS

In mountain areas always assess avalanche danger and carry an electronic tracking device.

Be Prepared:

- ✎ Create a trip (difficulty, length, danger exposure) that takes into consideration current conditions, people's interests and skills, terrain and other hazards.
- ✎ Ensure group members have proper avalanche safety training.
- ✎ Carry survival equipment in a backpack including: shovel, probe and spare batteries and wear your transmitter.
- ✎ Call the Public Avalanche Bulletin for latest conditions: 1-800-667-1105 or www.avalanche.ca.
- ✎ Test the transceiver's transmit and receive functions at home.
- ✎ Ensure all transceivers are on transmit before leaving the trucks for the ride.

Route Selection. It's Up to You - Know Before You Go:

- ✎ Travel low angle slopes, heavily treed areas, ridges and broad valley bottoms to avoid avalanche paths.
- ✎ If you choose to ride an avalanche slope, minimize your risk.
- ✎ Avoid slopes with excess wind loaded snow.
- ✎ Learn the significance of wind, sun, shade and terrain shape on avalanche danger.
- ✎ Be aware of escape routes and safe stopping areas.
- ✎ Avoid terrain traps or terrain features that can:
 - √ increase the depth of burial
 - Gullies
 - Steep transition areas (sharp changes in the slope angle)
 - Sharp valleys
 - Creek beds
 - Walls or ridges crossing the natural path
 - √ decrease the chance for escape
 - Gullies
 - Crevasses
 - Open water

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- √ Increase the chance of injury
 - Cliffs
 - Rocks and trees in avalanche path

Keep in contact:

- 📖 Always ride in a group.
- 📖 Maintain constant visual contact at all time.
- 📖 Cross suspect slopes one at a time.
- 📖 Use a hand signal for “avalanche path...spread out”.
- 📖 Listen to concerns of all group members.

Travel Habits

- 📖 Park in safe areas, pointed to safer areas (escape route).
- 📖 Kill switch up.
- 📖 Allow the snow to settle after a storm.
- 📖 Test (track up) small slopes with low consequences.
- 📖 Test slopes using wide, fast passes before placing yourself in committing terrain.
- 📖 Make sure that only one machine is on the slope at any time, even if your buddy is stuck.
- 📖 DO NOT LET YOUR GUARD DOWN, slopes can avalanche even after multiple passes.

If you're caught in an avalanche, try to:

- 📖 Call out, draw attention to yourself.
- 📖 React fast, attempt to ride out of the slide.
- 📖 If no longer in control, separate yourself from your snowmobile.
- 📖 FIGHT HARD with swimming motions, trying to stay on top of the snow.
- 📖 Grab trees, rocks, etc. to avoid being tumbled down the slope.
- 📖 Keep your mouth closed and your teeth clenched.

When the avalanche slows, try to:

- 📖 Use your hands to create airspace in front of your face.
- 📖 Wiggle to make airspace around your body.
- 📖 Thrust an arm to the surface.
- 📖 Once the avalanche stops the snow sets up like concrete.

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When the avalanche stops, try to:

- ✎ Remain calm.
- ✎ Control your breathing to conserve your oxygen, relax.
- ✎ Shout only when rescuers are very near (sound does not travel well within the snow pack).

Searching for a Victim

- ✎ The most experienced person should:
- ✎ Take a moment to organize the search party.
- ✎ Consider the possibility of another avalanche before attempting a rescue. Set an escape route and post a lookout if necessary.
- ✎ Mark the last seen point of the victim(s).

Search with Beacons:

- ✎ Ensure all rescuers' beacons are switched to receive.
- ✎ Spread out at 30 metre intervals to cover the debris.
- ✎ Look for surface clues: a hand, hat, glove, etc.
- ✎ Don't litter the slope with rescuers' belongings.
- ✎ Search around and downhill of any clues.
- ✎ When a signal is picked up assign one or two to locate it while others continue the search.
- ✎ Pinpoint the signal to a small radius, then probe to find the victim.
- ✎ Without removing the probe, quickly dig out the victim.
- ✎ Turn the victim's beacon to receive if others are still buried.

**Avalanche forecast information reports
are available by calling 1-800-667-1105
www.avalanche.ca**

If you have any suggestions on traffic safety issues that are of interest to you and your community, or for more information, please contact:

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Edmonton, AB T6B 2X3
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Fax: (780) 422-3682
Website: www.saferoads.com

OR

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Edmonton, AB T5M 3K6
Ph: (780) 427-2695
Fax: (780) 415-1779
Website: www.altasnowmobile.ab.ca