

**NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT (EXCERPT)**  
**Act 451 of 1994**

**324.82126 Operation of snowmobile; prohibitions; exemption; construction, operation, and maintenance of snowmobile trail; conditions; demarcation of trail by signing; "operate" defined; prohibited conduct; assumption of risk; violation of subsection (2) as civil infraction; fine.**

Sec. 82126.

(1) A person shall not operate a snowmobile under any of the following circumstances:

(a) At a rate of speed greater than is reasonable and proper having due regard for conditions then existing.

(b) In a forest nursery, planting area, or on public lands posted or reasonably identifiable as an area of forest reproduction when growing stock may be damaged or posted or reasonably identifiable as a natural dedicated area that is in zone 2 or zone 3.

(c) On the frozen surface of public waters as follows:

(i) Within 100 feet of a person, including a skater, who is not in or upon a snowmobile.

(ii) Within 100 feet of a fishing shanty or shelter except at the minimum speed required to maintain forward movement of the snowmobile.

(iii) On an area that has been cleared of snow for skating purposes unless the area is necessary for access to the public water.

(d) Within 100 feet of a dwelling between 12 midnight and 6 a.m., at a speed greater than the minimum required to maintain forward movement of the snowmobile.

(e) In an area on which public hunting is permitted during the regular November firearm deer season from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., except under 1 or more of the following circumstances:

(i) During an emergency.

(ii) For law enforcement purposes.

(iii) To go to and from a permanent residence or a hunting camp otherwise inaccessible by a conventional wheeled vehicle.

(iv) For the conduct of necessary work functions involving land and timber survey, communication and transmission line patrol, or timber harvest operations.

(v) On the person's own property or property under the person's control or as an invited guest.

(f) While transporting on the snowmobile a bow, unless unstrung or encased, or a firearm, unless unloaded in both barrel and magazine and securely encased.

(g) On or across a cemetery or burial ground.

(h) Within 100 feet of a slide, ski, or skating area except when traveling on a county road right-of-way pursuant to section 82119 or a snowmobile trail that is designated and funded by the department. A snowmobile may enter such an area for the purpose of servicing the area or for medical emergencies.

(i) On a railroad or railroad right-of-way. This prohibition does not apply to railroad personnel, public utility personnel, law enforcement personnel while in the performance of their duties, or persons using a snowmobile trail located on or along a railroad right-of-way, or an at-grade snowmobile trail crossing of a railroad right-of-way, that has been expressly approved in writing by the owner of the right-of-way and each railroad company using the tracks and that meets the conditions imposed in subsections (4) and (5). A snowmobile trail or an at-grade snowmobile trail crossing shall not be constructed on a right-of-way designated by the federal government as a high-speed rail corridor.

(2) Except as provided under subsection (3), a person shall not operate a snowmobile unless the snowmobile is equipped with a muffler in good working order and in constant operation from which noise emission does not exceed either of the following:

(a) For a snowmobile manufactured after July 1, 1977 and sold or offered for sale in this state, 78 decibels at 50 feet, as measured using the 2003 society of automotive engineers standard J192.

(b) For a stationary snowmobile manufactured after July 1, 1980 and sold or offered for sale in this state, 88 decibels, as measured using the 2004 society of automotive engineers standard J2567.

(3) A person is exempt from the requirement of subsection (2) under either of the following circumstances:

(a) While operating a snowmobile during an organized race on a course that is used solely for racing.

(b) While operating a snowmobile on private property, with the permission of the private property owner, in preparation for an organized race, if the operation of the snowmobile is in compliance with applicable local noise ordinances.

(4) A snowmobile trail located on or along a railroad right-of-way shall be constructed, operated, and maintained by a person other than the person owning the railroad right-of-way and the person operating the railroad, except that an at-grade snowmobile trail crossing of a railroad right-of-way shall be constructed and maintained by the person operating the railroad at the sole cost and expense of the person operating the trail connected by the

crossing, pursuant to terms of a lease agreement under which the person operating the trail agrees to do all of the following:

(a) Indemnify the person owning the railroad right-of-way and the person operating the railroad against any claims associated with, arising from, or incidental to the construction, maintenance, operation, and use of the trail or at-grade snowmobile trail crossing.

(b) Provide liability insurance in the amount of \$2,000,000.00 naming the person owning the railroad right-of-way and the person operating the railroad as named insureds.

(c) Meet any other obligations or provisions considered appropriate by the person owning the railroad right-of-way or the person operating the railroad including, but not limited to, the payment of rent that the person owning the railroad right-of-way or the person operating the railroad is authorized to charge under this part and the meeting of all construction, operating, and maintenance conditions imposed by the person owning the railroad right-of-way and the person operating the railroad regarding the snowmobile trail.

(5) A snowmobile trail shall be clearly demarcated by signing constructed and maintained at the sole cost and expense of the grant program sponsor. The signing shall be placed at the outer edge of the railroad right-of-way, as far from the edge of the railroad tracks as possible, and not closer than 20 feet from the edge of the railroad tracks unless topography or other natural or manmade features require the trail to lie within 20 feet of the edge of the railroad tracks. The at-grade snowmobile trail crossing of a railroad right-of-way shall be aligned at 90 degrees or as close to 90 degrees as possible to the railroad track being crossed, and shall be located where approach grades to the crossing are minimal and where the vision of a person operating a snowmobile will be unobstructed as he or she approaches the railroad tracks. The design of the snowmobile trail, including the location of signing, shall be included upon plan sheets by the person constructing, operating, and maintaining the trail, and shall be approved in writing by the person owning the right-of-way and the person operating the railroad. Signing shall conform to specifications issued by the department to its snowmobile trail grant program sponsors.

(6) Notwithstanding section 82101, as used in this section, "operate" means to cause to function, run, or manage.

(7) A person shall not alter, deface, damage, or remove a snowmobile trail sign or control device.

(8) Each person who participates in the sport of snowmobiling accepts the risks associated with that sport insofar as the dangers are obvious and inherent. Those risks include, but are not limited to, injuries to persons or property that can result from variations in terrain; surface or subsurface snow or ice conditions; bare spots; rocks, trees, and other forms of natural growth or debris; and collisions with signs, fences, or other snowmobiles or snow-grooming equipment. Those risks do not include injuries to persons or property that can result from the use of a snowmobile by another person in a careless or negligent manner likely to endanger person or property. When a snowmobile is operated in the vicinity of a railroad right-of-way, each person who participates in the sport of snowmobiling additionally assumes risks including, but not limited to, entanglement with tracks, switches, and ties and collisions with trains and other equipment and facilities.

(9) A person who violates subsection (2) is responsible for a state civil infraction and shall be ordered to pay a civil fine of not less than \$100.00 or more than \$250.00.

**History:** Add. 1995, Act 58, Imd. Eff. May 24, 1995 ;-- Am. 1995, Act 201, Imd. Eff. Nov. 29, 1995 ;-- Am. 1996, Act 500, Imd. Eff. Jan. 9, 1997 ;-- Am. 1998, Act 30, Imd. Eff. Mar. 18, 1998 ;-- Am. 2003, Act 2, Imd. Eff. Apr. 22, 2003 ;-- Am. 2008, Act 27, Imd. Eff. Mar. 13, 2008 ;-- Am. 2008, Act 399, Imd. Eff. Jan. 6, 2009

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