



March 1997

# Youth Prevention Strategies

## What can child advocates do?

---

### **Child advocates and parents who snowmobile should be especially vigilant about the following practices**

- \* Wear a certified helmet with face protection at all times
- \* Prepare youth with the proper clothing for cold temperatures and maximum visibility
- \* Always use the buddy system--never ride off alone or leave youth unsupervised
- \* Avoid snowmobiling on bodies of water when you are uncertain about the conditions of the ice
- \* Travel at moderate speeds, especially on unfamiliar terrain
- \* Minimize snowmobiling during dawn, dusk, and dark
- \* Travel on groomed trails when possible
- \* Provide age-appropriate opportunities for safe youth participation in snowmobiling
- \* Know the weather forecast and call ahead to check on the conditions of the trails you will be traveling
- \* Avoid areas prone to snow avalanches

### **The magnitude and distribution of snowmobile-related morbidity, disability, and behavioral risk factors should be routinely monitored through public health surveillance systems**

- \* Hospital data should be based on external causes of injury (E-codes) [Off road E820.0-E820.9 and public highway E810.0-E819.9]
- \* Promote collection of statewide injury data that includes helmet use, time of day, snow conditions, snowmobile make/model, alcohol involvement, location, and injury severity

**State Maternal and Child Health agency staff should meet with staff of state agencies responsible for youth snowmobile training and enforcement to discuss methods to:**

- \* Promote snowmobiling as an enjoyable activity when proper precautions are taken
- \* Promote cooperation between local public health agencies, state and local snowmobile clubs, and agencies responsible for enforcement of snowmobile regulations
- \* Vigorously evaluate regulations and other interventions that potentially affect the risk of snowmobile-related injury
- \* Tighten enforcement of violations by youthful offenders and adults who put youth at risk
- \* Take the opportunity to offer the facts on childhood snowmobile-related injuries to snowmobile clubs, state organizations, or the media
- \* Increase access and availability of operator safety education and safe riding opportunities
- \* Establish and maintain a trauma system that is responsive to the needs of injured children and the off-trail nature of the sport
- \* Promote regulations and equipment manufacturing safety standards that promote safe youth involvement in the sport
- \* Work with hospitality, enforcement, and enthusiast interests to promote the safe and responsible use of alcohol by adults when snowmobiling
- \* Work with advertising media to portray safe and age-appropriate snowmobile products and activities
- \* Encourage the promotion of snowmobile injury prevention counseling as a component of routine health care

**Develop guidelines that are age- and developmentally-appropriate for snowmobile operation by youth. Guidelines should also consider legal, medical, physical, cognitive, and cultural factors**

h:\nfmcc\csn\snowmobil\prevstra.doc