



Ontario Provincial Police  
Police provinciale de l'Ontario

## News Release/ Communiqué

**FROM: Highway Safety Division**

**DATE: January 19, 2017**

**OPP & OFSC KICK OFF SNOWMOBILE SAFETY WEEK (JAN. 21 – 29, 2017)**

*OPP Report on Recent Snowmobile Deaths*

**(BARRIE, ON)** –The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is reporting seven snowmobile fatalities since the start of the season, as they join the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) to kick off Ontario Snowmobile Safety Week.

With three of the seven victims dying as a result of their snowmobiles falling through the ice on waterways, the OPP and OFSC are reinforcing the importance of using OFSC trails as a safe way to enjoy this popular outdoor sport.

“We are seeing far too many snowmobilers riding on unsafe ice again this year and our fatalities this season speak volumes about how dangerous this is. We are also seeing riders using OFSC trails that are closed, which is against the law. Safe snowmobiling starts with choosing safe, reliable terrain to ride on. The OFSC does an outstanding job of providing a safe trail system and we want to see snowmobilers using them.”

-OPP Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair, Provincial Commander, Traffic Safety and Operational Support.

“Working in partnership with the OPP on snowmobile safety these past several years continues to be an effective way to promote safe snowmobiling, with the aim of reducing the number of snowmobile fatalities. While we are pleased to see many snowmobilers using OFSC trails safely and responsibly, there are still a number of them taking unnecessary chances and making bad riding choices.”

-Lisa Stackhouse, Manager, Participation and Partnership Development, OFSC.

Ontario Snowmobile Safety Week promotes using common sense, making smart choices, riding with care and control and within the law.

**Tips for arriving home safely after each ride:**

**Stay on the trail:** Staying on open OFSC trail is safer than riding anywhere else.

**Know the scenario:** Like other motorized recreational activities, snowmobiling poses certain inherent risks. Be prepared for the unexpected and avoid unnecessary risks.

**Choose the right time and place:** Make a smart choice about if, when and how to ride based on the conditions at the time.

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Ontario Provincial Police  
Police provinciale de l'Ontario

## News Release/ Communiqué

-2-

**Choose good visibility conditions:** On the snow, many factors can severely limit your ability to see properly, including snow dust, white-outs, heavy snow or freezing rain, sun glare, flat light or fog; fogging or icing of visor and/or eye glasses, and darkness or over-riding your headlights.

**Spread out:** Snowmobilers are reminded to keep a safe distance from other riders.

**Be vigilant:** Simply put, you always need to know what's going on around you to be able to properly assess your position and your next moves.

**Use hand signals:** Habitual use of the hand signals is both the courteous and responsible choice, so get in the habit of using them where it is safe and prudent to do so. The hand signals can be found at [www.ccsso-ccom.ca/hand-signals/](http://www.ccsso-ccom.ca/hand-signals/).

**Keep your wits:** Smart choices, good judgment, constant vigilance and sharp reactions are the four keys to snowmobiling without incident.

**Keep right:** By choosing to deliberately and constantly keep your sled on the right side of the trail, you'll dramatically increase your chances of staying out of harm's way.

**Know before you go:** No ice is completely safe. If you choose to cross anyway, you can reduce the personal risk you are accepting. Always cross in good visibility conditions and try to follow a stake line and/or previously beaten track. Never cross alone. Keep a sharp eye out for ice heaves and ice roads.

**Be prepared:** The best plans will have you prepared in the event that an incident occurs. You can help ensure your personal safety with preparations like filing a ride plan before leaving home, carrying a reliable communications device and a personal tracking unit, always riding with an emergency/survival kit and to packing spare parts and a tow rope.

The OPP is committed to saving lives on Ontario's highways, trails and waterways through the reduction of preventable injury and death. Initiatives are developed and delivered through the OPP Provincial Traffic Safety Program.

The OFSC is committed to proactive leadership in promoting safe, responsible riding, on and off Ontario snowmobile trails, by building safer snowmobiling knowledge, attitudes and behaviours through rider education, safety legislation development and enforcement.

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Police provinciale de l'Ontario

## News Release/ Communiqué

-3-

For more information, click on the following links:

[Snowmobile Safety in Ontario](#)

[Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs](#)

- 30 -

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