

SNOWMOBILE TRAIL SIGNING

REF: DNR Trail Signing Handbook

Introduction: The purpose of posting trail signs is to regulate the flow of snowmobile traffic, inform riders of particular trail characteristics and provide information necessary to the enjoyment of the trail riding experience. The Department first published the Trail Signing Handbook in 1978. Its purpose to date has basically remained unchanged: to describe the techniques of posting standardized signs and to promote uniformity of snowmobile trail signing throughout the state. More than ever before, snowmobilers are traveling longer distances and go well beyond their local trail systems. On these unfamiliar trails, a rider's enjoyment and safety are enhanced by the use of standardized trail signs posted uniformly throughout the trail. Few experiences in snowmobiling rival the unpleasantness of feeling lost, hungry and being low on fuel somewhere on a poorly signed trail system.

General Guidelines

- * No trail sign shall be placed more than 6 feet from the edge of the groomed trail
- * Place signs carefully with regard to anticipated snowmobile speed, line of sight and anticipated snow depths. The desired mounting height of trail signs is a minimum of 40" above the snow depth.
- * Place trail signs to the right of the trail to conform to the rider's familiarity with the placement of highway signs.
- * If two signs are used on one post, place the sign with the more important message on top. Stop signs always convey the most important message.
- * Avoid overuse of all signs.
- * Informational signs may be placed on the trail by businesses, but these signs must conform to the standard, color and shape.

TRAIL SIGNS

BLAZER

The purpose of the blazer is to reassure the rider that he or she is on the designated trail. In heavily wooded areas where trail junctions are minimal, 3-4 blazes per mile is adequate.

- In open and agricultural areas, blazers should be closely spaced to clearly show the trail location. Spacing between the signs is dictated by sight distance, topography, and anticipated vehicle speed .
- In open areas, as the snowmobiler passes one blazer the next sign should be clearly visible during the day or night.
- When leaving an open area and entering a wooded area, blazers should be placed on both sides of the trail at the point where the trail enters the wooded area.
- Blazers should be placed on both the right and left sides of gate openings and be clearly visible from both directions.

DIRECTIONAL ARROW

The primary purpose of the directional arrow is to advise the rider of a significant change in trail direction. Directional arrows should only point left or right, and be placed in advance of the turn, placement distance to be determined by trail conditions, topography, anticipated speed, etc.

CAUTION

Caution signs are used to advise the rider to proceed with at a reduced speed (for example: “logging ahead”, “steep hill”, “bridge ahead”, “dip”).

- Normally one sign placed to the right of the trail will be adequate, but in potentially hazardous situations, a caution sign can be placed on each side of the trail in advance of the hazard.
- The use of a caution sign with a specific message (Bridge Ahead) is always better than posting the generic “Caution Ahead”. “Caution Ahead” by itself does not give a clear understanding of the trail conditions that lies ahead.

STOP AHEAD

The “Stop Ahead” caution sign should always be used in conjunction with a stop sign.

TRAIL INTERSECTION

These signs should be placed in advance of the trail junction or intersections.

CAUTION TURNS

Caution left or right curve, sharp curve, hairpin and jog signs are a much more effective means of indicating changes of direction that require a change in speed than the use of multiple directional arrows.

CHEVRON

In a sweeping curve, hairpin, or a sharp right angle turn situation, the addition of chevron(s) in the apex of the curve is very desirable.

- The chevron is NOT a replacement for a directional arrow. The chevrons are placed on the outside of a turn or curve at approximately a right angle to the approaching snowmobile traffic. This will result in the chevrons being placed on the left hand side of the trail on one approach.
- The minimum number of chevron(s) visible on approach is based upon trail design.
- The use of chevron(s) is always preceded by the use of an appropriate advanced caution sign. (right angle turn, hairpin, etc.)

STOP SIGN

The use of Stop signs is mandatory at all crossings where the snowmobile operator must cross one or more lanes of highway traffic.

- It is also mandatory where the snowmobile operator must enter and utilize a lane of traffic for a short distance, for ex: a highway bridge crossing.
- When unusual conditions exist, Stop signs should be placed on each side of the trail for added emphasis and visibility.

YIELD SIGN

Yield signs rather Stop signs may be used at trail intersections or junctions where speed and visibility allow the safe blending of snowmobiles without the necessity of a stop.

- Placement of stop or yield signs in the highway right -of-way requires the permission of the unit of government in charge of maintaining the highway.

REGULATORY

Regulatory signs are white and are used to inform the snowmobiler of laws or regulations that otherwise would not be apparent. For ex: one way, speed limit, no snowmobiles, no ATV's, etc.

BRIDGE, CULVERT AND HAZARD MARKERS

Snowmobile bridge and culvert crossings should be signed with the standardized reflective black and yellow hazard markers.

- Used in pairs, the hazard markers delineate an opening through which the rider must pass.
- Each hazard marker of the pair is placed with the alternate black and yellow diagonal stripes facing down and in toward the center of the bridge or culvert.
- A caution "Bridge Ahead" should be placed at a reasonable distance ahead of the bridge or culvert, depending on the terrain, to alert the rider of the impending crossing.
- Used singly, a hazard marker can mark an obstruction adjacent to the trail. When used in this manner, the black and yellow stripes slope downward away from the side of the obstruction on which the trail is to pass.

BARRIER AND GATE

When entry to a particular area or trail is to be restricted by a barrier or gate, the cable, chain, or bar should be marked with a reflectorized panels of red diagonal stripes on a white background.

- The stripes of each panel should point downward towards the center of the trail on both sides of the barricade or cable.
- The supporting posts may be signed in a similar fashion.
- However, if the gate is swung open to permit use for a period of time, the red and white markers must be removed from the gate posts and replaced with blazers.

GUIDE SIGNS

Guide signs are used to direct the rider to a destination on the trail. These signs must have a reflectorized white legend on a brown background. Mileage, direction, and services offered can also be indicated.

INFORMATIONAL SIGNS

Informational signs are used to furnish information to the rider about trails, facilities, road crossings, streams, lakes, geographic features, etc.

- They can be used as a matter of interest and help in establishing location, a safety issue. They are white on brown. Reflectorization is encouraged, but not required.
- Trail intersection signs are used in some counties. These signs are white on brown. These signs are posted in close proximity to the intersection and correspond to their respective numbers on the trail map.

YOU ARE HERE

A common method of helping a rider find his or her location is to provide trail maps along the trail with the location pointed out by the phrase “You are Here”.

CORRIDOR

The corridor sign designates major travel ways in East/West & North/South directions. The signs are white lettered, with a blue background and fully reflectorized. They are placed immediately after intersections to indicate the direction of the corridor.

SNOWMOBILE ROUTE SIGNS

The primary purpose of the snowmobile route sign and arrow is to alert the trail user that it is permissible to use the traveled portion of the road or highway. It also alerts traffic that snowmobiles will be using the road.

- Route signs and arrow should be placed at the beginning of a snowmobile route and at such intervals that enable the snowmobiler to follow the route.
- At the point where the trail user leaves a trail and enters a route, a green and white route arrow should indicate the direction of travel.
- At the point where the route ends and the trail begins, a yellow and black arrow is used to indicate the direction the trail takes.

SNOWMOBILE HIGHWAY CROSSING SIGNS

The highway crossing sign alerts traffic that snowmobiles will be crossing the highway. These signs can only be placed by the governing agency that maintains the road.