

**CHAPTER 39-24**  
**REGULATION AND REGISTRATION OF SNOWMOBILES**

**39-24-01. Definitions.**

For the purposes of this chapter:

1. "Collector snowmobile" means a snowmobile that is twenty-five years old or older, was originally produced as a separate identifiable make by a manufacturer, and is owned and operated solely as a collector's item.
2. "Dealer" means a person engaged in the business of buying, selling, or exchanging snowmobiles, who advertises or holds out to the public as being engaged in the buying, selling, or exchanging of snowmobiles, or who engages in the buying of snowmobiles for resale.
3. "Operate" means to ride in or on and control the operation of a snowmobile.
4. "Operator" means every person who operates or is in actual physical control of a snowmobile.
5. "Owner" means a person, other than a lienholder, having the property in or title to a snowmobile and who is entitled to the use or possession of that snowmobile.
6. "Register" means the act of assigning a registration number to a snowmobile.
7. "Roadway" means that portion of a highway improved, designed, or ordinarily used for vehicular travel.
8. "Snowmobile" means a self-propelled vehicle intended for off-road travel primarily on snow, having a curb weight of not more than one thousand two hundred pounds [544.31 kilograms], driven by track or tracks in contact with the snow, steered by a ski or skis in contact with the snow, and which is not wider than forty-eight inches [121.92 centimeters]. The term does not include an off-highway vehicle as defined in chapter 39-29 converted to operate on tracks.

**39-24-02. Snowmobile registration - Title certificate - General requirements.**

Except as hereinafter provided, no person may operate any snowmobile unless the snowmobile has been registered in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

Any snowmobile purchased after July 1, 1973, must be titled under the provisions of chapter 39-05 in order to be operated under the provisions of this section. Any snowmobile purchased prior to July 1, 1973, may be titled under the provisions of chapter 39-05.

**39-24-03. Registration - Application - Issuance - Fees - Renewal.**

1. Application for registration must be made to the department in a form as the department shall prescribe and furnish and must state the name and address of every owner of the snowmobile and be signed by at least one owner. A copy of the application must be carried on the person when operating and shall serve as evidence of registration for a period of not more than thirty days from the date of application.
2. Upon receipt of the application and the appropriate fee, the department shall register a snowmobile and assign a registration number and a certificate of registration. The registration number must be at least one and one-half inches [3.81 centimeters] in height and of a reflectorized material and must be securely affixed on each side of the snowmobile in a position as to provide clear legibility for identification. The certificate of registration must include information regarding the make, year, serial number, and name and address of the owner. The fee for registration of each snowmobile must be five dollars for any portion of the registration period and the registration period is for two years beginning October first of each odd-numbered year. The fee for a duplicate or replacement registration number or registration card which is lost, mutilated, or becomes illegible may not exceed five dollars. In addition, in each year that fees are collected for the unsatisfied judgment fund there must be assessed a fee of one dollar per year for each snowmobile registered, which must be placed in the unsatisfied judgment fund. For each snowmobile registered under the provisions of this chapter, there must be assessed a snowmobile trail tax in the amount of thirty-five dollars.

3. Every owner of a snowmobile shall renew the registration in a manner as the department shall prescribe, upon payment of the same registration fees provided in this section.
4. Upon application for registration as prescribed in this section, any snowmobile dealer as defined in section 39-24-01 must be issued registration numbers distinctively marked as dealer's registration numbers upon payment of the appropriate fee as prescribed in this section. The dealer's registration numbers must be used only on snowmobiles owned by the dealership.

#### **39-24-03.1. Snowmobile safety fees.**

Upon the sale of a new or used snowmobile and in addition to other fees and taxes imposed under section 39-24-03, a dealer shall collect a five dollar safety fee from the buyer. Within fifteen days after the end of each calendar quarter, the dealer shall file a report with the parks and recreation department which discloses the number of snowmobiles sold during that calendar quarter and includes fees collected from the buyer. Fees imposed under this section must be deposited in the state snowmobile fund established under section 39-24-05. The parks and recreation department may use these funds solely for snowmobile safety education and promotion. The parks and recreation department shall report to the director within thirty days of the end of each calendar quarter the motor-powered recreational vehicle dealers that submitted a safety fee report and the number of vehicles sold, and shall identify every dealer not collecting or transmitting snowmobile safety fees.

#### **39-24-04. Exemption from registration - Exemption from fees.**

1. A registration number must be issued without the payment of a fee for snowmobiles owned by the state of North Dakota or any of its political subdivisions upon application for the registration.
2. No registration or fees may be required of:
  - a. Snowmobiles owned and used by the United States or another state or its political subdivisions.
  - b. Snowmobiles registered in a country other than the United States and temporarily used within this state.
  - c. Snowmobiles validly licensed in another state and which have not been within this state for more than thirty consecutive days.
  - d. Snowmobiles operated upon lands owned or leased by the snowmobile owner.
  - e. Snowmobiles incapable of speeds in excess of ten miles per hour and with an engine displacement of less than one hundred cubic centimeters.
  - f. Collector snowmobiles. The director may issue a special permit to a person to operate in a parade; organized group outings, including races, rallies, or other promotional events; and for up to ten days each year for personal transportation. The director may impose a reasonable restriction of a permittee and may revoke, amend, suspend, or modify a permit for cause.
3. If a snowmobile is exempt from registration under subdivision b or c of subsection 2, the owner is required to purchase an out-of-state public trails and lands access permit received upon payment of a fifteen dollar per year fee. The permit must be in the operator's possession when that individual is operating the snowmobile within the state. Dealers or other agents authorized by the director of the parks and recreation department who sell out-of-state public trails and lands access permits may retain one dollar of the fifteen dollar per year fee and the remainder of the fees collected under this subsection must be deposited in the state snowmobile fund.

#### **39-24-05. Disposition of registration fees and trail tax - Transfer from highway tax distribution fund.**

Fees from registration of snowmobiles must be deposited with the state treasurer and credited to the highway tax distribution fund. The snowmobile trail tax must be deposited in a state snowmobile fund in the state treasury. Additionally, an amount equal to the tax collected on

thirty gallons [113.56 liters] of motor vehicle fuel multiplied by the number of collector snowmobiles and snowmobiles registered under this chapter must be transferred annually from the highway tax distribution fund, before allocation of the fund under section 54-27-19, and credited to the state snowmobile fund. The parks and recreation department may, upon appropriation by the legislative assembly, expend from such fund moneys it deems necessary for purposes of administering snowmobile safety programs and establishing and maintaining snowmobile facilities and programs.

**39-24-06. Transfer or termination of snowmobile ownership or change of address of owner.**

Within fifteen days after the transfer of ownership, or any part thereof, other than a security interest, or the destruction or abandonment of any snowmobile, or a change of address of the owner as listed with the application for registration, written notice thereof must be given by the owner to the director in such form as must be prescribed by the director.

**39-24-07. Licensing by political subdivisions.**

No political subdivision of this state may require licensing or registration of snowmobiles subject to the provisions of this chapter.

**39-24-08. Rules and regulations.**

Pursuant to this code and this chapter, rules for the regulation and use of snowmobiles must be adopted as follows:

1. The director shall adopt rules for the registration of snowmobiles and display of registration numbers.
2. The director has the authority in the interest of public health, welfare, and safety to regulate, restrict, or prohibit, by rule, the operation of snowmobiles on those highways under the director's jurisdiction. The director's authority to prohibit the use of snowmobiles is limited to the roadways, shoulders, inslopes, and medians within the right of way, except where such action is necessary to avoid an obstacle. Notwithstanding the racing prohibitions in section 39-08-03.1, the director may, on a case-by-case basis, permit organized and bona fide snowmobile races on the ditch bottoms, backslopes, and the top of the backslopes of the highway rights of way under the director's jurisdiction. The planning, organization, route selection, and safety precautions of any such race are the sole responsibility of the permittee. It is expressly provided that the director, and the department and the employees thereof, shall incur no liability whatsoever for permitting such races.
3. The director of the parks and recreation department shall adopt rules for regulating use of snowmobiles in state parks and other state-owned land under the supervision of the director of the parks and recreation department.
4. The governing bodies of political subdivisions shall promulgate rules and regulations for regulating use of snowmobiles in recreation and other appropriate areas under their jurisdiction. The governing bodies of cities may, by ordinance, regulate, restrict, and prohibit the use of snowmobiles when operated within the exclusive jurisdiction of cities.

**39-24-09. Rules for operation of snowmobiles.**

1. No person may operate a snowmobile upon the roadway, shoulder, or inside bank or slope of any road, street, or highway in this state except as provided pursuant to this chapter. No snowmobile may be operated at any time within the right of way of any interstate highway within this state except as provided in this section.
2. A snowmobile may make a direct crossing of a non-interstate street or highway provided:
  - a. The crossing is made at an angle of approximately ninety degrees to the direction of the highway and at a place where no obstruction prevents a quick and safe crossing;

- b. The snowmobile is brought to a complete stop before crossing the shoulder or main traveled way of the highway;
  - c. The driver yields the right of way to all oncoming traffic which constitutes an immediate hazard; and
  - d. In crossing a divided highway, the crossing is made only at an intersection of such highway with another public street or highway.
3. No snowmobile may be operated unless it is equipped with at least one headlamp, one taillamp, and brakes, all in working order, which conform to standards prescribed by rule of the director pursuant to the authority vested in the director by this code and this chapter.
4. The emergency conditions under which a snowmobile may be operated other than as provided by this chapter must be such as to render the use of an automobile impractical under such conditions at such period of time and location.
5. It is unlawful for any person to drive or operate any snowmobile in the following ways which are declared to be unsafe and a public nuisance:
  - a. At a rate of speed greater than reasonable or proper under all the surrounding circumstances.
  - b. In a careless, reckless, or negligent manner so as to endanger the person or property of another or to cause injury or damage to such person or property.
  - c. While under the influence of intoxicating liquor or a drug as defined in section 39-24.1-01, or a combination thereof.
  - d. Without a lighted headlamp and taillamp when required for safety.
  - e. In any tree nursery or planting in a manner which damages or destroys growing stock.
  - f. Without a manufacturer-installed or equivalent muffler in good working order and connected to the snowmobile exhaust system.
  - g. Upon any private land where the private land is posted by the owner or tenant prohibiting trespassing. The name of the person posting the land must appear on each sign in legible characters. The posted signs must be readable from the outside of the land and must be placed conspicuously at a distance of not more than eight hundred eighty yards [804.68 meters] apart, provided further that as to land entirely enclosed by a fence or other enclosure, posting of signs at or on all gates through the fence or enclosure constitutes a posting of all the enclosed lands.
6. It is unlawful for any person to operate a snowmobile pursuant to chapter 39-24 without having in possession a valid driver's license, except as provided by section 39-24-09.1.
7. If a snowmobile is operated within the right of way of any road, street, or highway of this state under this chapter, during times or conditions that warrant the use of lights, the snowmobile operator shall travel in the same direction as the direction of motor vehicles traveling on the side of the roadway immediately adjacent to the side of the right of way traveled by the snowmobile. An operator of a snowmobile traveling on a snowmobile trail maintained by the parks and recreation department which is within the right of way of any road, street, or highway of this state is exempted from this rule. The operator shall wait for all traffic to clear the roadway before crossing bridges and other similar structures.
8. It is unlawful for any person to operate a snowmobile within a highway right of way as defined in subsection 38 of section 24-01-01.1 between April first and November first of any year.
9. No snowmobile may be operated at any time within the right of way of any highway within this state while towing a sled, skid, or other vehicle, unless the sled, skid, or other vehicle is connected to the snowmobile by a hinged swivel and secure hitch.
10. No person under the age of eighteen years may operate, ride, or otherwise be propelled on a snowmobile unless the person wears a safety helmet meeting United States department of transportation standards.

11. A person may not operate a snowmobile, and an owner of a snowmobile may not knowingly permit the snowmobile to be operated, upon any property maintained, leased, or owned by the state parks and recreation department to which the public has a right of access for snowmobile or other vehicular use, without a policy of liability insurance which insures the person named, and any person using the snowmobile with the express or implied permission of the person named, against loss from the liability imposed by law for damages arising out of the ownership, maintenance, or use of the snowmobile within this state, subject to the following limits, exclusive of interest and costs, with respect to each snowmobile: twenty-five thousand dollars because of bodily injury to or death of one person in any one accident and, subject to the limit for one person, fifty thousand dollars because of bodily injury to or death of two or more persons in any one accident, and twenty-five thousand dollars because of injury to or destruction of property of others in any one accident. Upon request of a law enforcement officer, a person operating a snowmobile shall provide proof of liability insurance to that officer within twenty days.
12. A snowmobile may not be operated within the right of way of any interstate highway within this state except:
  - a. For emergency purposes; or
  - b. Across an interstate highway on an overpass or underpass, except where otherwise prohibited by law or by signing, provided the snowmobile crosses on the extreme right side of the overpass or underpass.

**39-24-09.1. Operation by individuals at least twelve years of age.**

An individual twelve years of age and over may not operate a snowmobile unless the individual is in possession of a valid driver's license, operates the snowmobile on private land, or unless the individual has completed a snowmobile safety training course as prescribed by the director of the parks and recreation department pursuant to chapter 28-32 and has received the appropriate snowmobile safety certificate issued by the director of the department of transportation. The failure of an operator to exhibit a snowmobile safety certificate upon demand to any official authorized to enforce this chapter is presumptive evidence that the individual is not the holder of the certificate. Fees collected from each individual receiving certification must be deposited into the snowmobile trail tax fund for purposes of establishing snowmobile safety programs.

**39-24-10. Enforcement.**

Peace officers of this state and their respective duly authorized representatives are hereby authorized to enforce the provisions of this chapter.

**39-24-11. Penalties.**

Any person who violates subsection 12 of section 39-24-09 must be assessed a fee of one hundred dollars. Any person who violates subdivision b or g of subsection 5 of section 39-24-09 is guilty of a class B misdemeanor. Any person who violates subdivision c of subsection 5 of section 39-24-09 is guilty of an infraction or a class B misdemeanor as determined by section 39-24.1-07. Any person who violates subsection 11 of section 39-24-09 is guilty of a class B misdemeanor and must be assessed a fine of at least one hundred dollars. Any person who violates any other provision of section 39-24-09 must be assessed a fee of twenty dollars. Any person, unless specifically exempted, who fails to register or fails to display a decal as required by sections 39-24-02 and 39-24-04 must be assessed a fee of fifty dollars. If the person provides proof of registration after the violation, the fee may be reduced by one-half. Any person who violates any other provision of this chapter for which a specific penalty is not provided must be assessed a fee of ten dollars.