

Tips for Sharing Trails with Grooming Equipment

** First, recognize that trail groomers may be working on the trail at any time in effort to provide you with smooth, safe trails. Always keep your snowmobile under control and anticipate a groomer might be around the next corner or over the hill.

** Snowmobiles are much smaller and much more maneuverable than groomers, so always yield to a groomer. Always slow down when approaching or overtaking grooming equipment. Groomers move very slowly, typically only 10-15 km/h, so they are almost stationary when compared to a snowmobile traveling 50 to 80 km/h.

** When approaching an oncoming groomer on the trail, slow down and move your snowmobile to the far right side of the trail. Realize that the grooming drag behind the tractor may be very wide, may extend wider than the tracks of the tractor, and may essentially take up most or all of the trail's width. If the trail is narrow or winding, you may need to stop at the far outside edge of the trail to let the groomer pass.

** When overtaking a groomer from the rear, slow down and assess the situation ahead. If there is good sight distance and the trail ahead is clear of oncoming traffic, pass the groomer while operating with caution. Beware that the groomer may create snow dust and make visibility poor. If the trail is narrow or winding, you may need to stay behind the groomer until the operator pulls over and signals you to pass. Be patient because it may take time before there is a safe location and safe conditions for passing.

** If you need to stop a groomer to ask for information or assistance, understand this should be done only in an area where there is good sight distance and it is safe to stop. The groomer operator may request that you follow the groomer to a safer location where he can stop and assist you.

Trail Quality and Set Up Time

** Trail Grooming requires "set up" time for freshly groomed trails to re-freeze. Set up time will vary depending on temperature and moisture content of the snow. Generally two to six or even more than 10 hours may be needed for the freshly groomed trail to set up to the point where it is durable and will hold up to heavy snowmobile traffic.

** For longevity of trail quality, it is best to avoid riding a snowmobile on freshly groomed trails for at least two hours after the groomer passes. Choosing an alternate route helps improve the quality and durability of snowmobile trails. Avoid following directly behind a groomer because it immediately destroys the trails.

** If you come upon a groomer and you must use that route, try to minimize impacts to the trail: slow down; try to stay off the fresh grooming if the trail is wide enough to safely do so; operate only at the outside edge of the fresh grooming; ride in single file versus having everyone in the group take a different path on the fresh grooming; and don't purposely fishtail or power through the soft snow.

** Understand that aggressive riding styles can impact the quality and smoothness of the trails you ride on. Fast starts and stops, powering through curves, paddle tracks, carbide runners, traction services and powerful engines can all combine to destroy the smoothness of a trail. So, next time you hit the brake or the throttle, think about how much damage you have innocently contributed to destroying the trails you would really prefer to be smooth.



If you spot hazard on the trail please contact us at (709) 635-4395 or e-mail info@nlsf.org

TRAIL GROOMING AWARENESS



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT GROOMERS ON THE TRAIL

Where's The Groomer?

Ever wonder why the groomer is not out? Well, here's a little insight into trail grooming.

- ** The most important requirement for effective grooming is correct temperature. The ideal grooming temperature is between -5°C and -20°C . As snow is collected in the drag it has to be able to flow, like flour. As we all know, once the temperature gets close to 0°C snow begins to stick together. Instead of flowing out under the rear pan, the snow builds up in the drag until it spills out over the top in large chunks or balls. These large chunks are dangerous when they freeze in the middle of the trail.
- ** As the temperature drops below -20°C , steel starts to get brittle and equipment is more susceptible to breakage if it strikes a solid object such as a stump or rock. Cold temperatures must also be considered for operator safety in case of equipment problems. Although he/she is equipped with communications equipment and warm clothes, waiting for a snowmobile ride 40kms in the country at 3 am can be a very uneasy feeling.
- ** ***Question: We had a fresh 15cm snowfall last night. Howcome the groomer isn't out?***
In order to groom effectively and make the trail more durable, the idea is to cut the mogul off completely, not just fill in the void. Moguls have a memory. If you just fill in the void with new snow, by the time half a dozen snowmobiles run over it, the new snow settles and the mogul is back again. When you groom fresh snow, the drag can't be lowered deep enough to cut off the mogul because snow collects faster than it can flow out under the rear pan. Again, the drag fills up and spills out over the sides. After a fresh snowfall it's better to let the snowmobiles run it in and knock the air out of it. Then when the drag processes this finer snow, it packs much tighter.
- ** Most grooming is done at night because it's safer and more effective. Safer, because there are usually not as many snowmobiles on the trails and when there are the bright lights of the groomer are visible long before the machine itself. Grooming at night is more effective because it's usually colder and the snow sets faster. Also, the longer the trail sets before too many snowmobiles ride over it, the better. Set up takes anywhere from two to six hours, depending on temperature and moisture content. So, if you come up behind a groomer and the operator beckons you to go around, that's the main reason — to allow him to groom without snowmobiles on the trail hindering effective trail set-up.
- ** Grooming is not scheduled during heavy snowfalls or storms. Operator and snowmobiler safety are of principle concern, but it is also not productive to operate in these conditions.

Hopefully this gives you a little insight into grooming. So, if you see the groomer parked some day, it might not be broken down. We may be waiting for the right conditions.



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