



STATE SAFETY OFFICE
HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
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LATHAM, NEW YORK 12110



SAFETY MESSAGE 19-05

Winter Activity Safety

Winter activities can help Soldiers and their families stay active, get outdoors, and enjoy being together. If you or your family are feeling like cabin fever is taking over and you have watched all the movies you can stand, look into some (or all) of the following outdoor activities and be safe while enjoying them.

Cross-Country or Downhill Skiing:

Skiing is a great outdoor activity for all members of the family, no matter the age. Whether you can handle the Black Diamond trails or just like to play around on the Bunny Slope, a day at the slopes is fun for all. Here are some tips that will help make sure that the trip is enjoyable: (Some of these also apply to snowboarding.)

- Obtain proper equipment. Be sure to have your ski or snowboard bindings adjusted correctly at a local ski shop. You can rent good ski or snowboarding equipment at resorts.
- When buying skiwear, look for fabric that is water and wind-resistant. Look for wind flaps to shield zippers, snug cuffs at wrists and ankles, collars that can be snuggled up to the chin and drawstrings that can be adjusted for comfort and keep wind out. Be sure to buy quality clothing and products.
- Dress in layers. Layering allows you to accommodate your body's constantly changing temperature. For example, dress in polypropylene underwear (top and bottoms), which feels good next to the skin, dries quickly, absorbs sweat and keeps you warm. Wear a turtleneck, sweater and jacket.
- Be prepared. Mother Nature has a mind of her own. Bring a headband or hat with you to the slopes, 60 percent of heat-loss is through the head. Wear gloves or mittens (mittens are usually better for those susceptible to cold hands).
- Wear sun protection. The sun reflects off the snow and is stronger than you think, even on cloudy days!
- Always wear eye protection. Have sunglasses and goggles with you. Skiing and snowboarding are a lot more fun when you can see.

<https://www.nsa.org/safety-programs/safety-facts-tips/skiing-snowboarding-tips/>

Snowmobiling:

If skiing isn't an option, but you still want to enjoy the winter outdoors, maybe snowmobiling is a better option. Snowmobiling can allow you to travel further and get out into the wilderness more easily. Snowmobiles come in many different sizes to enable younger riders to operate their own machines. NYS requires all persons who are at least 10 years of age and less than 18 years of age to take a New York State Approved **Snowmobile Safety** Course, and obtain a **snowmobile safety** certificate when riding on public lands. More safety tips:

- Be prepared for changing trail and weather conditions
- Obey NYS snowmobiling laws
- Always ride with another snowmobiler
- NYSSA reminds riders that many snowmobile-related accidents would be prevented if every rider made the smart choice for zero alcohol.
- It is recognized that riding a snowmobile is a voluntary activity that may be hazardous. Operating a snowmobile requires peak concentration and reactions at all times.

Anyone operating or riding on a snowmobile in New York State must wear an approved safety helmet except when operating on property owned by the operator or passenger. Snowmobiling exposes operators and passengers to excessive wind speeds that could result in frostbite occurring very quickly. It is critical to cover all exposed skin to prevent frostbite. As you can see from the wind chill index chart, the faster your speed, the colder the equivalent temperature is:

U.S. ARMY WIND CHILL INDEX							
<i>(Equivalent Temperature in cooling power on exposed flesh under calm conditions)</i>							
TEMP.	30	20	10	0	-10	-20	-30
WIND MPH							
10	16	2	-9	-22	-31	-45	-58
15	11	-6	-18	-33	-45	-60	-70
20	3	-9	-24	-40	-52	-68	-81
25	0	-15	-29	-45	-58	-75	-89
30	-2	-18	-33	-49	-63	-78	-94
35	-4	-20	-35	-52	-67	-83	-98
40	-4	-22	-36	-54	-69	-87	-101

(Wind speeds greater than 40 mph have little additional chilling effect)

So get out of the house and enjoy some winter activities! Just be safe while enjoying them so you can relax with your family afterwards and share the memories.

<http://www.saferiderssafetyawareness.org/>

<http://nysnowmobiler.com/safety/>

To find previously published Safety Messages go to our NYARNG Safety Website:

<http://dmna.ny.gov/safety/>

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