

Snowmobiles

Section 321G of the Code of Iowa allows the operation of snowmobiles within highway right of way under certain conditions and stipulations, and snowmobile trails are common in the northern half of the state. To provide uniform response and administration for trail establishment, operation, and maintenance, road agencies should adopt a policy to govern authorization and usage of public highway right of way for this purpose. The appendix includes a sample snowmobile policy and permit application.

Transverse crossings of public roads by established snowmobile trails should be undertaken by mutual consent of the trail sponsor and road authority after appropriate analysis of road and trail users' safety. Crossings should be kept to a minimum to avoid potential conflicts by motor vehicles and snowmobiles.

Warning signs for trails include the Snowmobile sign (W11-6) and the Snowmobile Crossing sign (W11-6AX). The supplemental plaque (W11-6P) can also be used for additional emphasis in advance of crossings. Since crossing use by snowmobiles is seasonal, these signs should be removed or covered when not needed.

Signing along the established trail is usually the responsibility of trail users. However, uniform signing should be used, and signs can be obtained from the Department of Natural Resources. Only these uniform signs should be permitted within the public right of way.



W11-6



W11-6AX



W11-6P

Signs may be installed to mark trails, identify hazards, and establish any desired operating controls. These signs should not be permitted to be placed on or attached to an official highway sign or other traffic control device but should be installed independently on supports near the right of way line. "Danger" warning signs, however, may be placed near the potential hazard. It is also not recommended to place trail signs within the clear zone (defined on page C14.1 of this manual) or within roadway slope limits.



Stop Sign

PURPOSE: to be used along trails prior to a road crossing
SIZE: 12"x12" - 9"x9"
BACKGROUND COLOR: red
BORDER AND LEGEND: silver



Dead End Private Trail

PURPOSE: to indicate a limited use trail or designate a restricted area
SIZE: 12"x12" - 9"x9"
BACKGROUND COLOR: silver with red ball
BORDER AND LEGEND: silver



Permissive

PURPOSE: to indicate snowmobile trails and other areas where snowmobiling is permitted
SIZE: 12"x12" - 9"x9"
BACKGROUND COLOR: silver
LEGEND: green circle, black snowmobile symbol



Restrictive

PURPOSE: to indicate areas where snowmobiling is not permitted
SIZE: 12"x12" - 9"x9"
BACKGROUND COLOR: silver
LEGEND: red circle, black snowmobile symbol

Regulatory signs

Trail Intersection

PURPOSE: to indicate an intersection in the trail
SIZE: 12"x12" - 9"x9"
BACKGROUND COLOR: orange with black border
LEGEND: black 2"x11" vertical and 2" x 5 1/2" diagonal



Danger

PURPOSE: to indicate an area of danger on the snowmobile trail
SIZE: 12"x12" - 9"x9"
BACKGROUND COLOR: yellow
LEGEND: black



Warning signs

Trail Blazer

PURPOSE: to reassure the user he is on the trail
SIZE: 5" x 7" - 6" x 6"
BACKGROUND COLOR: orange with black border



Directional Blazer

PURPOSE: to indicate changes in trail direction
SIZE: 9 1/4" x 12" - 9" x 9"
BACKGROUND COLOR: orange with black border
LEGEND: black 5 1/4" directional arrow



Informational signs

Other issues to consider with snowmobile trails can include temporary structures and maintenance operations such as "grooming." These points should be addressed in an agency's policy and included in a preuse agreement or permit with the trail sponsor. Actual dates of permitted use may be included in the permit or agreement stipulations, but in any regard, removal of all trail signs and temporary structures should be undertaken when trail use ceases.

For more information and recommendations on establishment of snowmobile trails, please refer to the Iowa Department of Transportation and Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR).