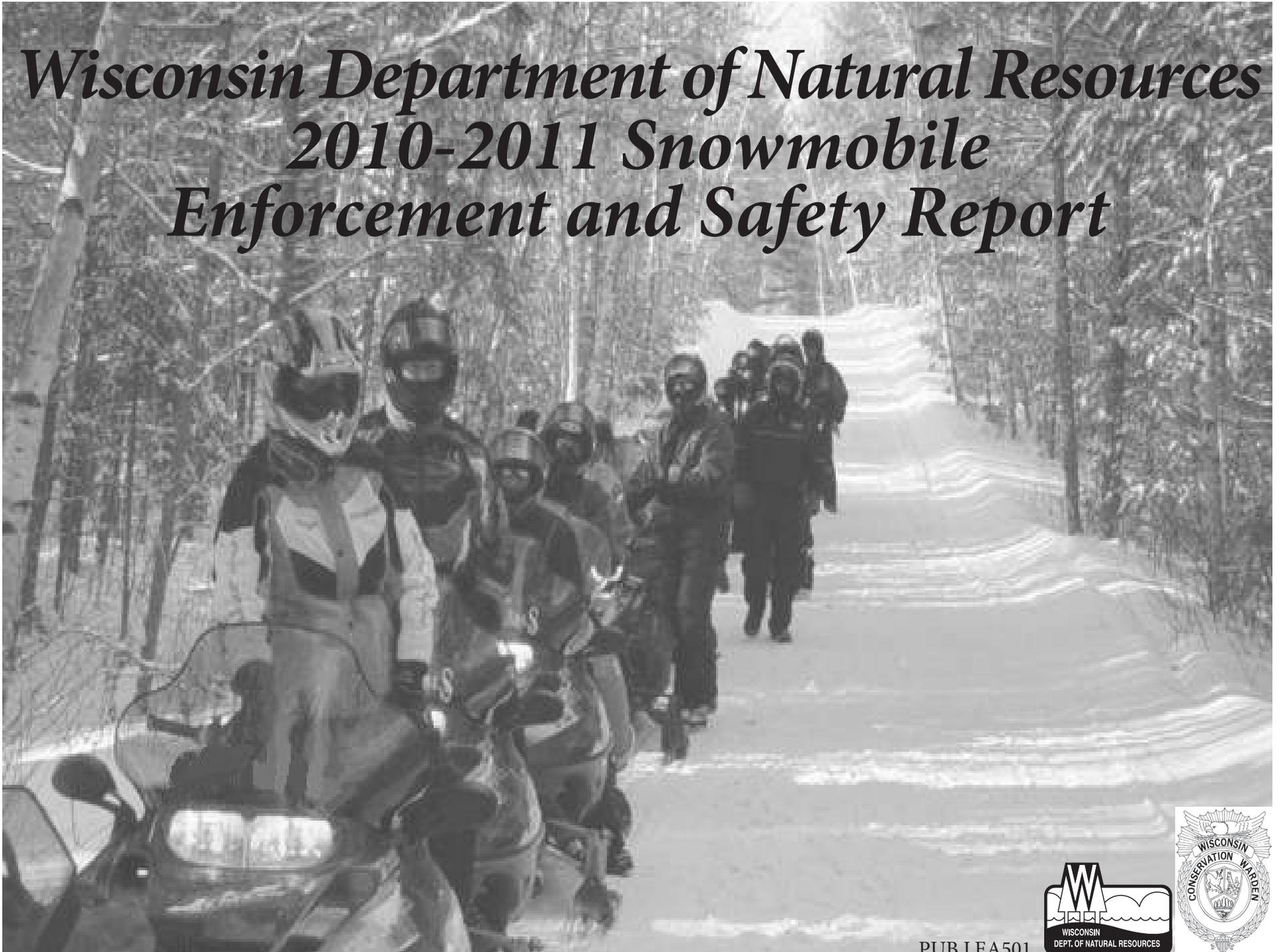


# *Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources 2010-2011 Snowmobile Enforcement and Safety Report*



PUB LEA501



# Table to Contents

Summary.....	3
History of Wisconsin Snowmobile Fatal 1972-2011.....	4
History of Wisconsin Snowmobile Fatal per Registrations.....	5
History of Wisconsin Resident Snowmobile Registrations.....	4
History of Nonresident Snowmobile Trail Passes .....	5
History of Instructors & Students Certified.....	6
Alcohol Involvement in Snowmobile Fatalities.....	7
Age of Fatality victims.....	7
Number of Fatal Incidents by Time of Day.....	9
Incidents Occurring After the Hours of Darkness.....	9
Number of Fatal Incidents by Day of Week.....	9
Helmet Use.....	10
Operator Experience.....	10
Number of Fatal Incidents by Speed and Location.....	8
Number of Fatal Incidents by Type.....	8
Main Factors Involved in Incidents.....	11
Victim Operator Snowmobile Safety Training.....	10
Victim Operator vs. Passenger.....	11
Total Snowmobile Injury Incidents Reported.....	14
Citations Issued Summary (2010-2011).....	15
Snowmobile Fatality Summary.....	12

# Snowmobile Safety Program

## Employees

Randall Stark, *Chief Warden*  
Bureau of Law Enforcement  
Department of Natural Resources

Gary Eddy, *ATV/Snowmobile Administrator*  
Recreation Enforcement and Education  
Bureau of Law Enforcement  
Department of Natural Resources

Todd Schaller, *Director of Safety Programs*  
Recreation Enforcement and Education  
Bureau of Law Enforcement  
Department of Natural Resources

Julie Fitzgerald, *Operations Associate*  
Recreation Enforcement and Education  
Bureau of Law Enforcement  
Department of Natural Resources

Erin Ridley, *Operations Associate*  
Recreation Enforcement and Education  
Bureau of Law Enforcement  
Department of Natural Resources

# Introduction

## *2010-2011 Yearly Summary*

The 2010-2011 Snowmobile Program Report was compiled from crash, registration and arrest data collected during the period of July 1 - June 30. The 17 fatal incidents in 2010-2011 were four less than the 2009-2010 fatality total of 21. The only additional safety measure implemented during recent years was the nighttime, 55 m.p.h. speed limit which was supported by the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs and the Governor's Snowmobile Recreation Council. Fatality rates have continued to decrease since the speed limit was enacted in 2006. Volunteer snowmobile safety instructors certified 10,090 students, 3,530 of which were certified via the Internet Safety Course. This was the largest number of students certified since the 2001 - 2002 season when 14,588 students were certified due to Snowmobile Safety Education becoming mandatory.

Conservation Wardens are required to investigate all snowmobile fatalities; Wisconsin law also requires that a conservation warden or law enforcement officer be notified immediately of any snowmobile incident that results in an injury requiring medical treatment by a physician. In addition, the operator(s) involved in these reportable incidents must file a written report with the Department of Natural Resources within 10 days.

## *Contributing Factors to Fatal Snowmobile Accidents*

- ▶ Alcohol and speed continue to be the main contributing factors in fatal snowmobile incidents during the 2010-2011 season. 76% of the incidents were alcohol involved and 65% were speed related.
- ▶ 47% of fatal accidents occurred during the hours of darkness.
- ▶ The number of operators arrested for operating a snowmobile while intoxicated was 98, up from the 96 during the 2009-2010 season.
- ▶ The top locations where fatal incidents occurred were trails with 5 (29%) and lake/rivers, private land and public roads (not a route) with 3 each (18%).
- ▶ Top cause for the fatal incidents was collision with a fixed object (12) 71%. Collision with a motor vehicle was second at (2) 12%.

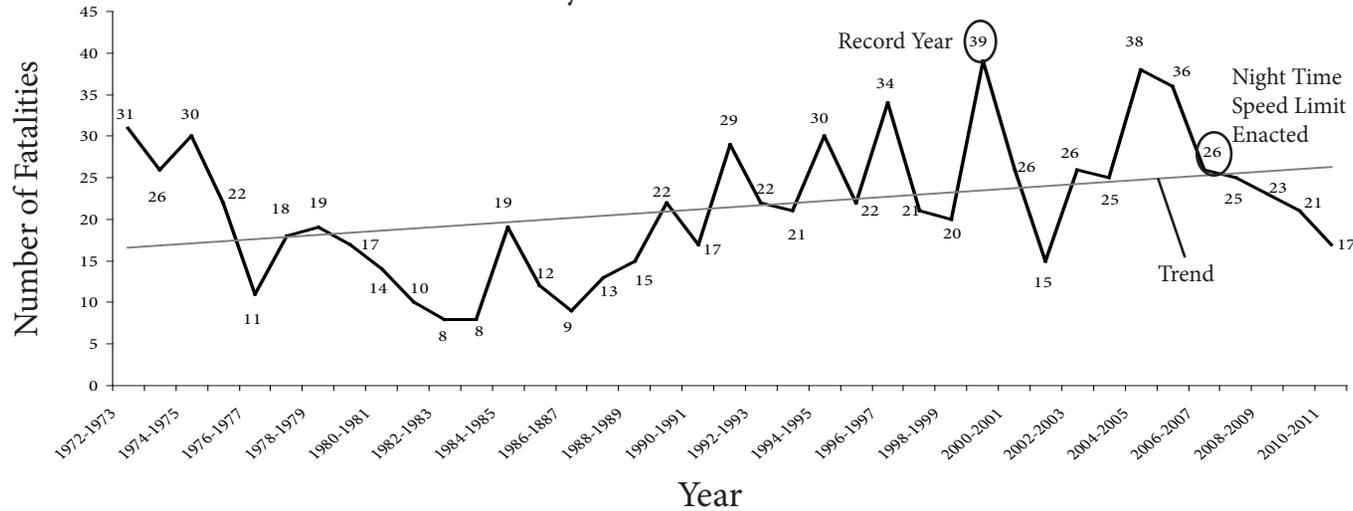
## *Snowmobile Safety Tips*

The Department recommends the following tips to help ensure safe, enjoyable and ethical snowmobile experience for everyone.

- ▶ Complete a Wisconsin Snowmobile Safety Course. This course helps establish a safety mindset and provides basic knowledge in safe, legal and ethical operation. Visit: [www.dnr.wi.gov](http://www.dnr.wi.gov) to find a course near you.
- ▶ When crossing roads, always take your safety into your own hands. Never allow someone to wave you across. Cross only when you have determined it is safe to do so.
- ▶ Use the highest degree of caution while traveling across frozen waterways. Check ice conditions with local law enforcement or bait shops, carry or wear a flotation device, limit travel at night and if you don't know, don't go.
- ▶ Use the buddy system, never ride alone.
- ▶ Don't drink and ride. Alcohol affects a person's reaction time and judgment. Wait until you're done riding for the day before consuming any alcoholic beverages. If not for yourself, do it for your family and friends.
- ▶ Slow down. High speed operation leaves little room for mistakes and greatly increases stopping distances. Many snowmobile fatalities could have been prevented if the operators were only going slower.
- ▶ Nighttime speeds above 40 m.p.h. cause operators to override their headlamps. At this speed, operators have little chance of avoiding a hazard once it is illuminated by their headlamps.
- ▶ When riding in groups, always maintain a safe following distance of 2-3 seconds. Increase your following distance when traveling at night or when experiencing snow dust.
- ▶ Respect private property. The majority of the snowmobile trails in Wisconsin are on private property. Snowmobile clubs invest much time and effort to set up agreements with landowners each year. Riding outside the marked trails on private property is trespass and has caused landowners to close their properties to trails, sometimes forever. Stay within the marked trails and don't cut corners.

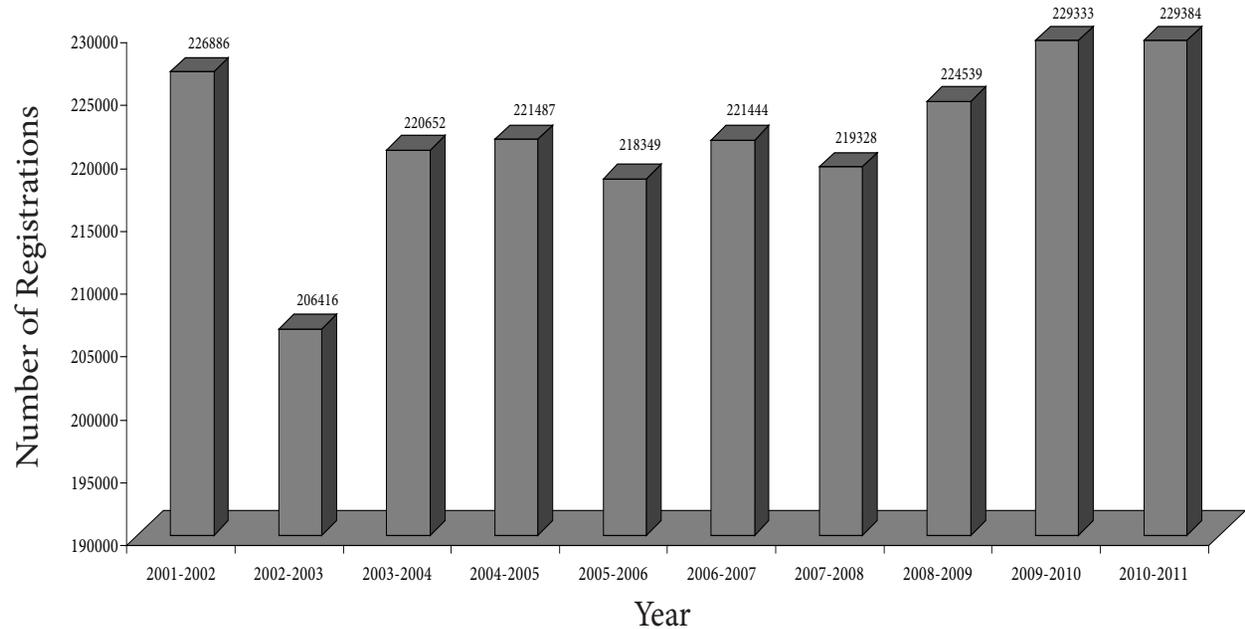
# Historical Data

## History of Snowmobile Fatalities



Since 1972, we have seen an increasing trend in deaths while operating a snowmobile. However, since the night time speed limit was enacted in 2006 the trend has shown a decrease in accidents and continues to do so. The majority of the victims were wearing helmets and had not taken a DNR Snowmobile Safety Education Course.

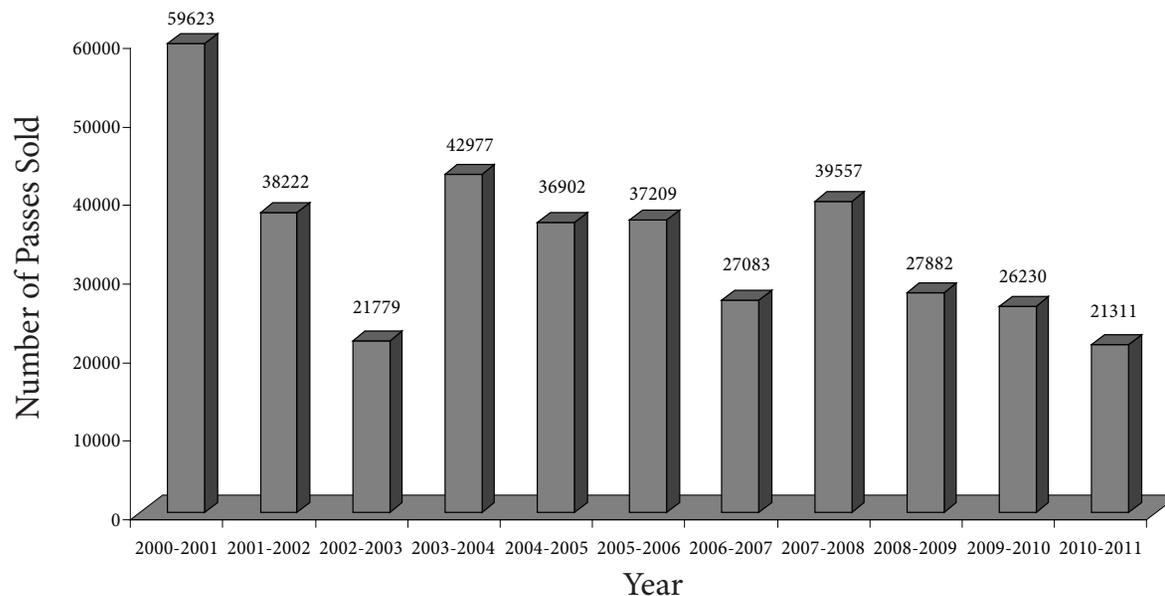
## History of Wisconsin Resident Snowmobile Registrations



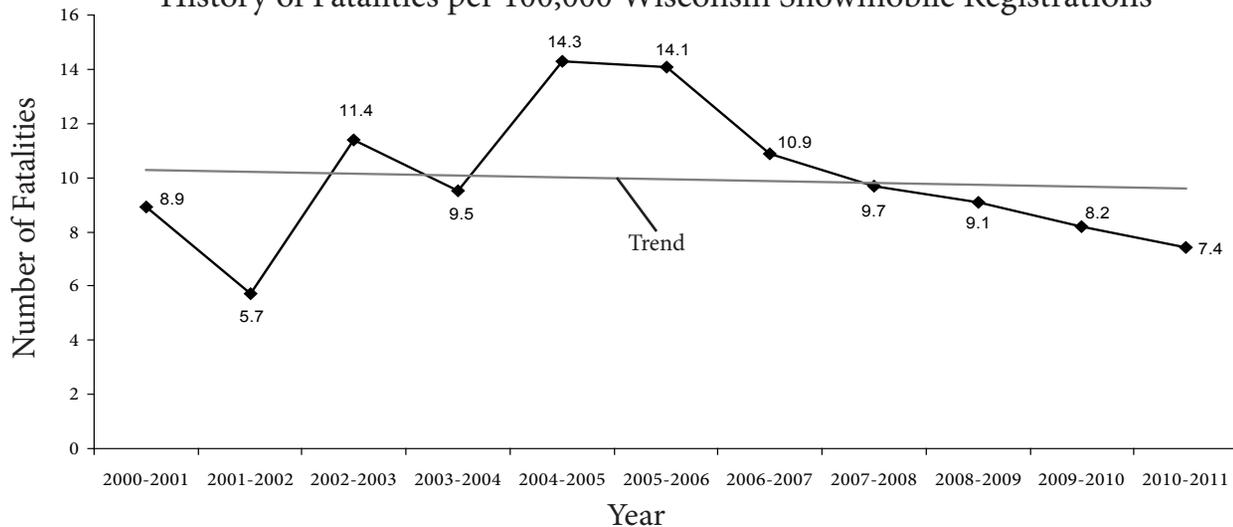
# Historical Data

In the beginning of the 1999-2000 snowmobile season the law changed requiring non-residential snowmobile trail passes on all out of state snowmobiles that were not registered in Wisconsin.

## History of Number of Snowmobile Passes Sold



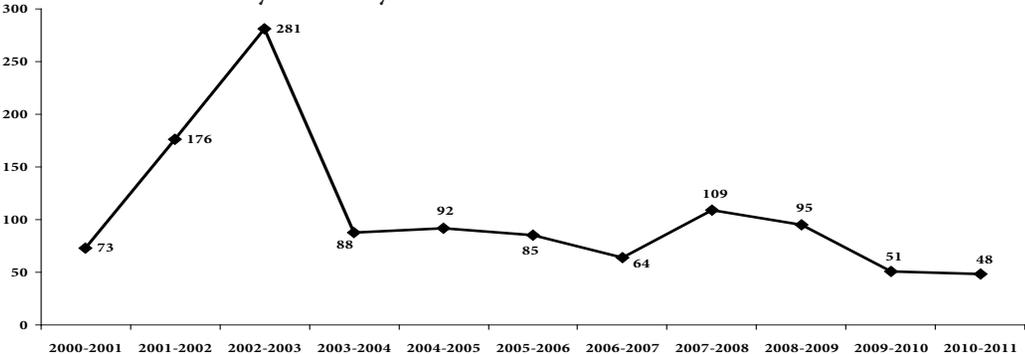
## History of Fatalities per 100,000 Wisconsin Snowmobile Registrations



Over the past 12 years there has been a slightly decreasing trend in the number of fatalities per 100,000 registered snowmobiles (does not include snowmobile passes).

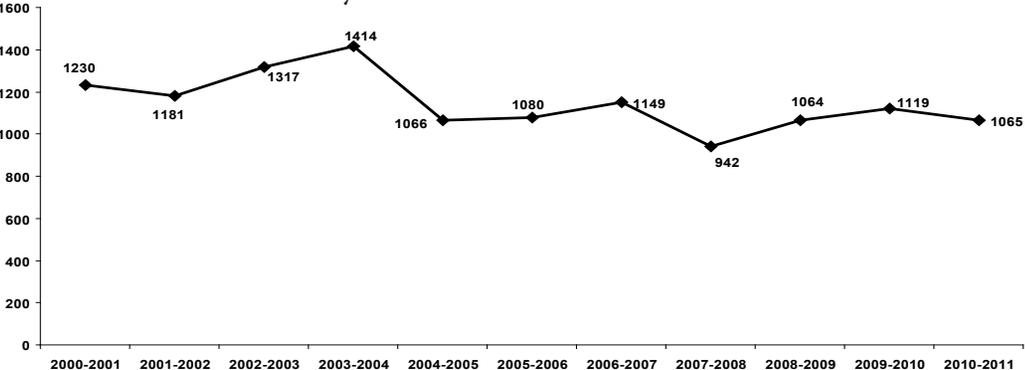
# Historical Data

History of Newly Recruited Snowmobile Instructors



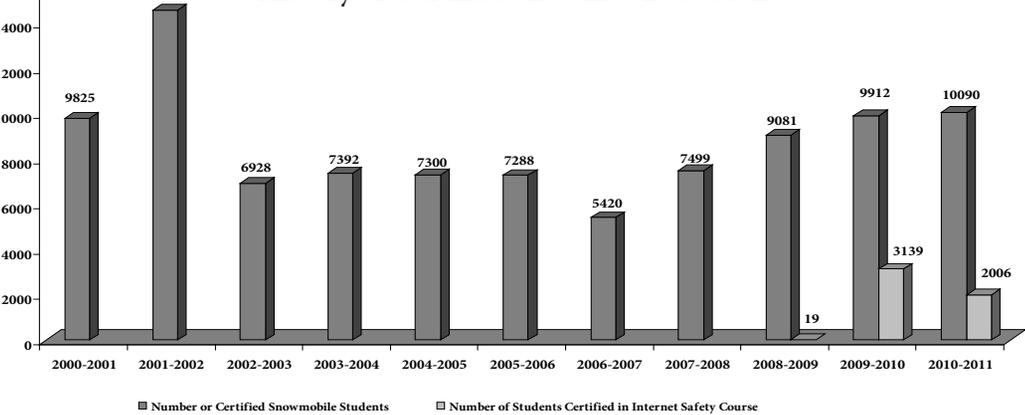
The Snowmobile Safety Education Program began in 1972 and has since expanded to include over 1,000 Active Snowmobile Volunteer Instructors.

History of Active Snowmobile Instructors



The total number of active snowmobile instructors for 2010-2011 was 1,065. The trend shows a decrease in active instructors since 2003.

History of Certified Snowmobile Students

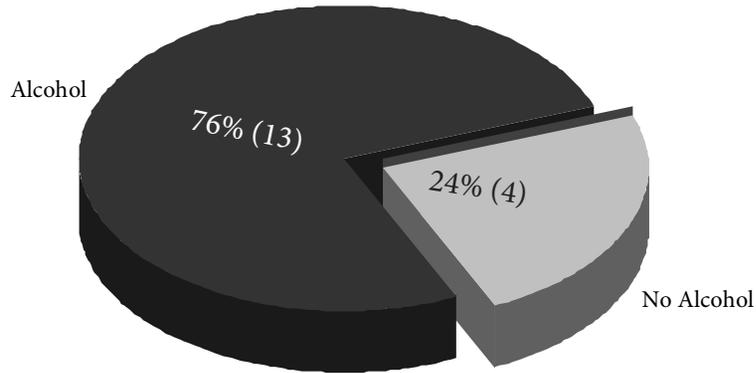


In 1999 the law changed, requiring mandatory snowmobile education for operators, at least 12 years of age and born after January 1, 1985.

In 2009 the Internet Safety Course became available certifying 19 of the 9081 2008-2009 season students. In the 2010-2011 season 2006 of the 10,090 students were certified with Internet Safety Courses.

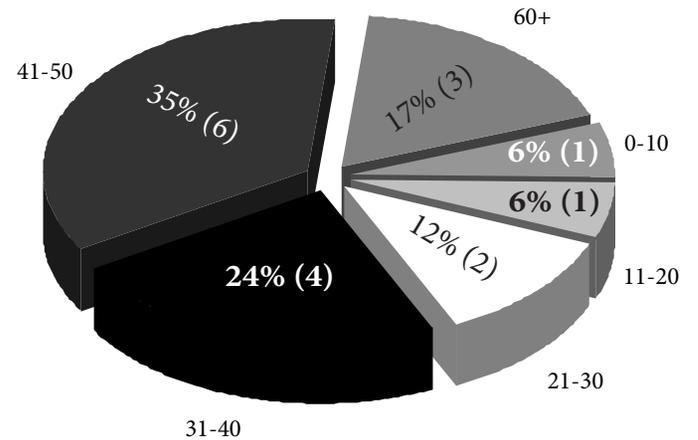
# 2010-2011 Fatality Data

Alcohol as a Contributing Factor



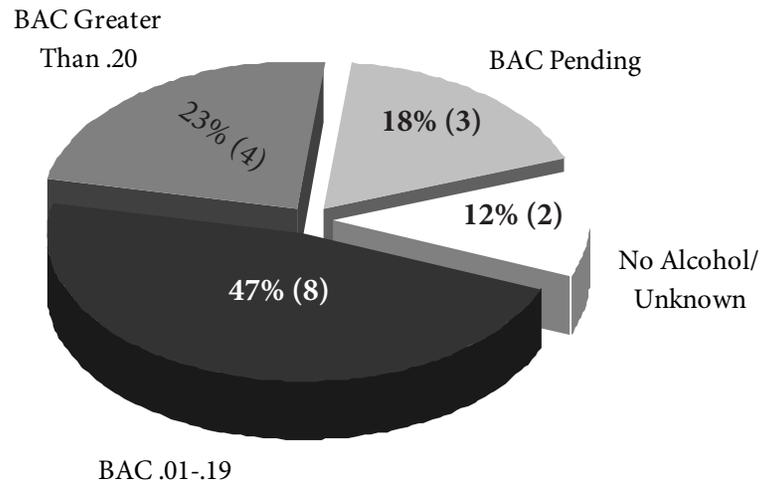
Alcohol was detected in seventy-one percent of the victims. An increase of fourteen percent from 2009-2010 (57%).

Age of the Victims



The Average Age of fatality victims in 2010-2011 was 41 years old, with fifty-three percent of victims being above 40 years of age.

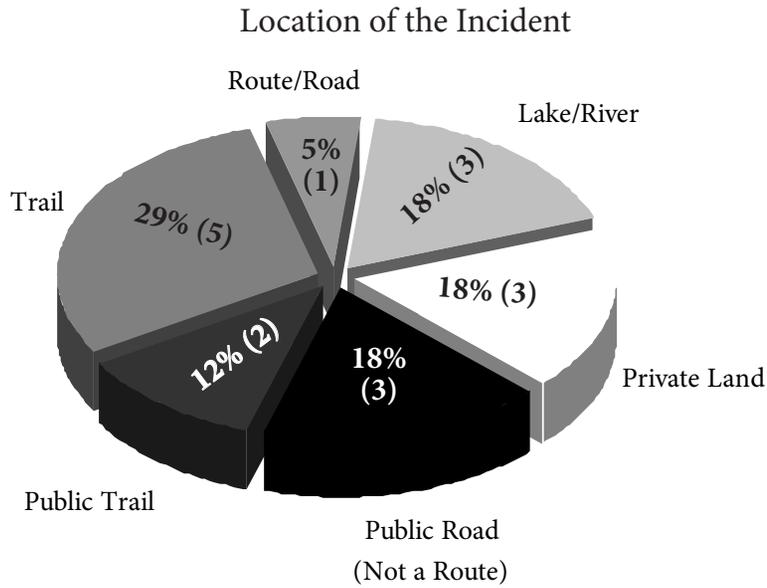
Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) Detected in the Victim at the time of the Accident



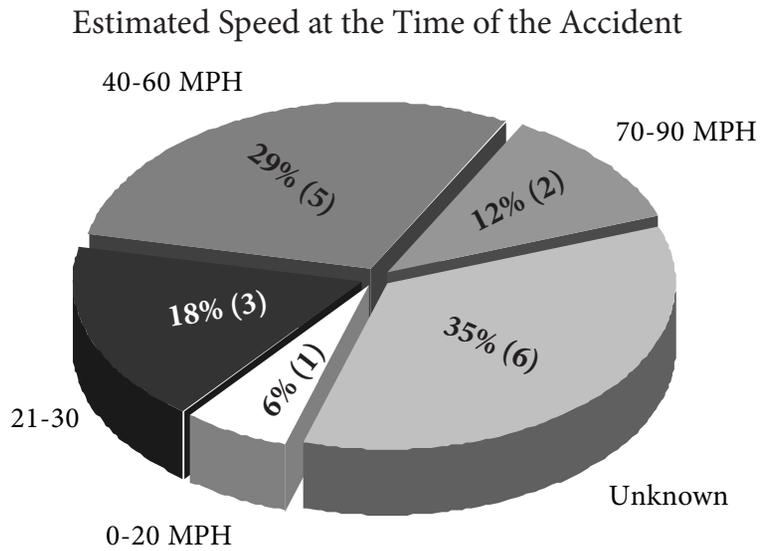
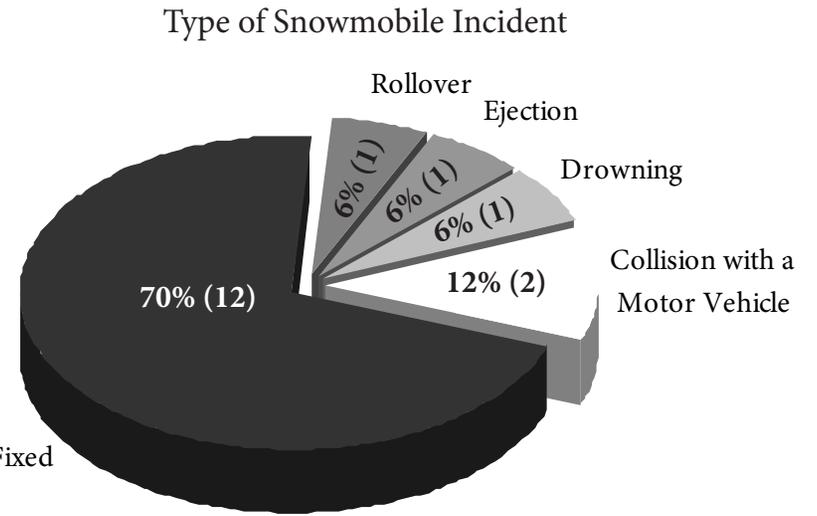
\*All Data is representative of a percentage of the data from the 17 fatal accident victims from 2010-2011.

\*Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) is in grams/milliliter (g/ml)

# 2010-2011 Fatality Data

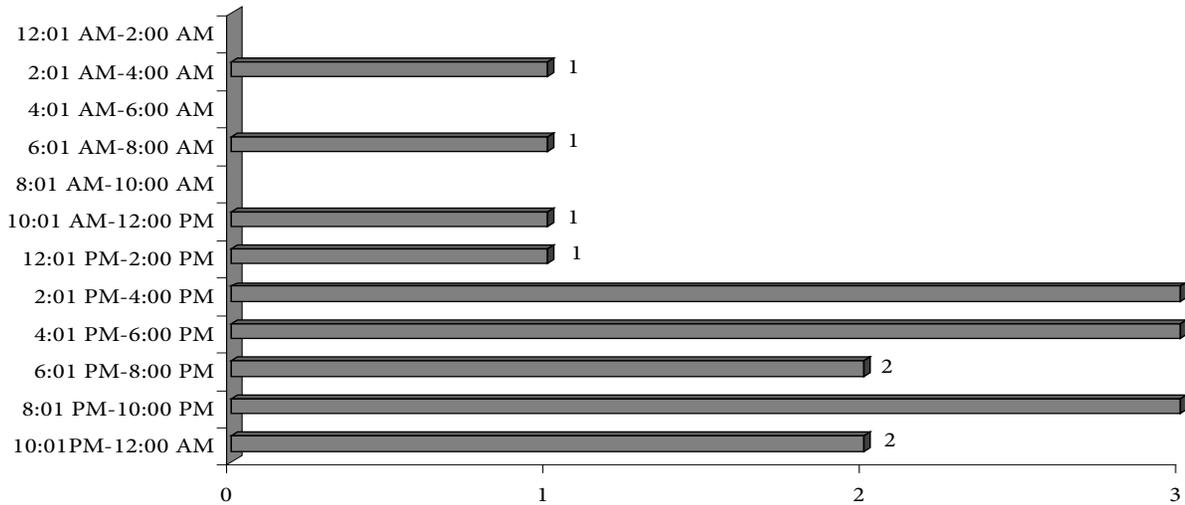


\*A Snowmobile Route is a public road opened to legal Snowmobile travel by the local municipality

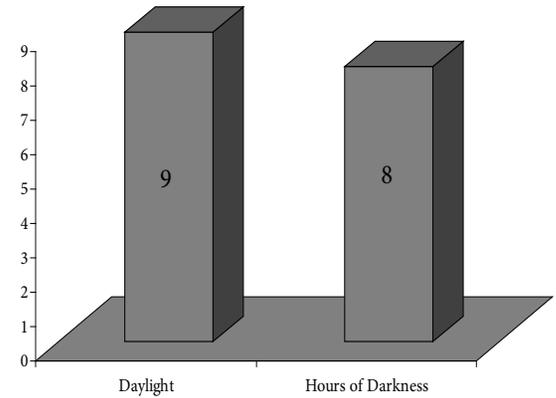


# 2010-2011 Fatality Data

## Fatal Snowmobile Accidents versus the Time of Day



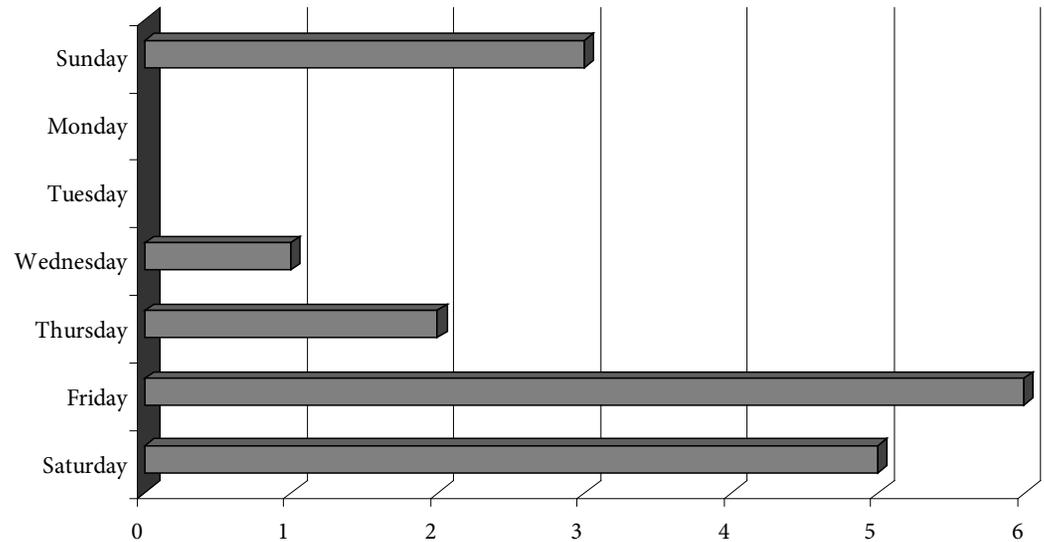
## Occuring After the Hours of Darkness



Most of the fatal crashes occurred between 2:00 pm and 12:00 am. In the 2009-2010 year most fatal crashes occurred between 10:00 pm and 2:00 am and 12:00 pm and 2:00 pm.

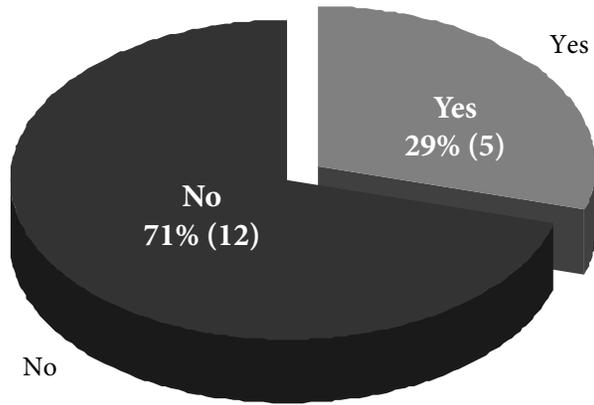
Most of the fatal crashes (11) occurred on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

## Fatal Snowmobile Accidents Versus the Day of the Week

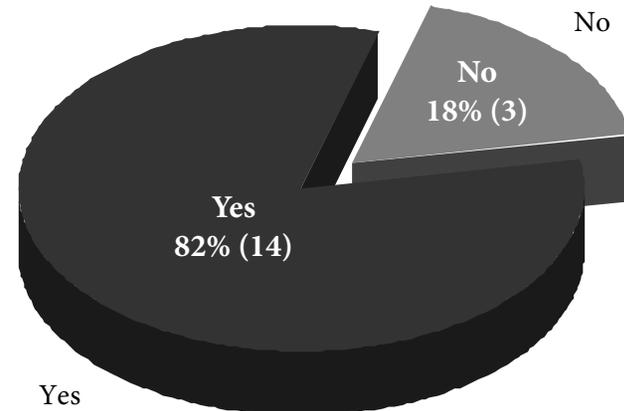


# 2010-2011 Fatality Data

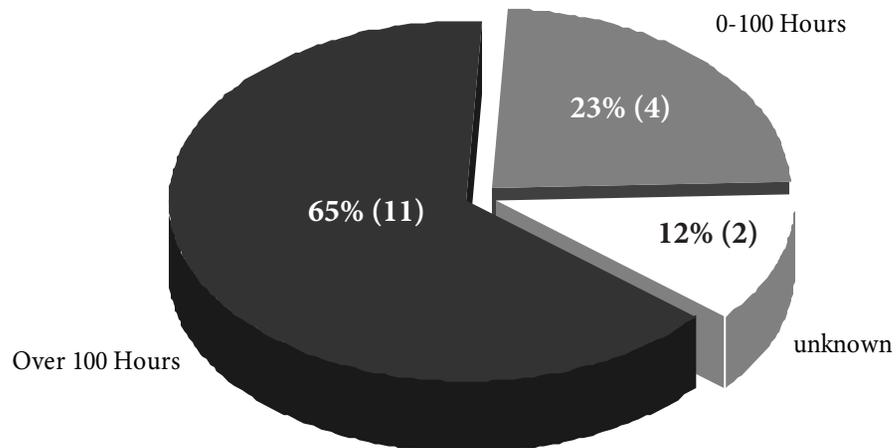
**Operator Safety Training Certificate**



**Helmet Use**



**Operator Experience Level**

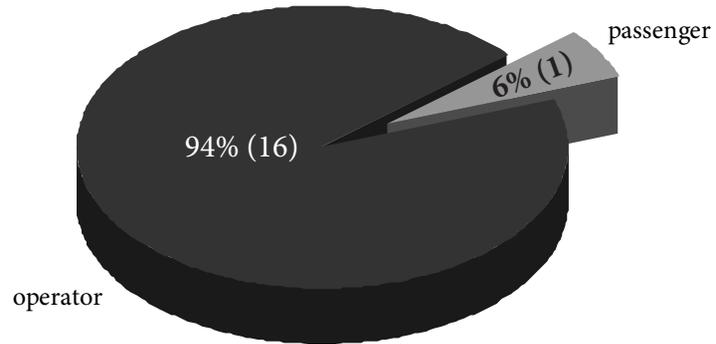


Operators of at least age twelve and born on or after January 1, 1985 are required by law to complete a Wisconsin Snowmobile Safety Certification Course or another state/province equivalent.

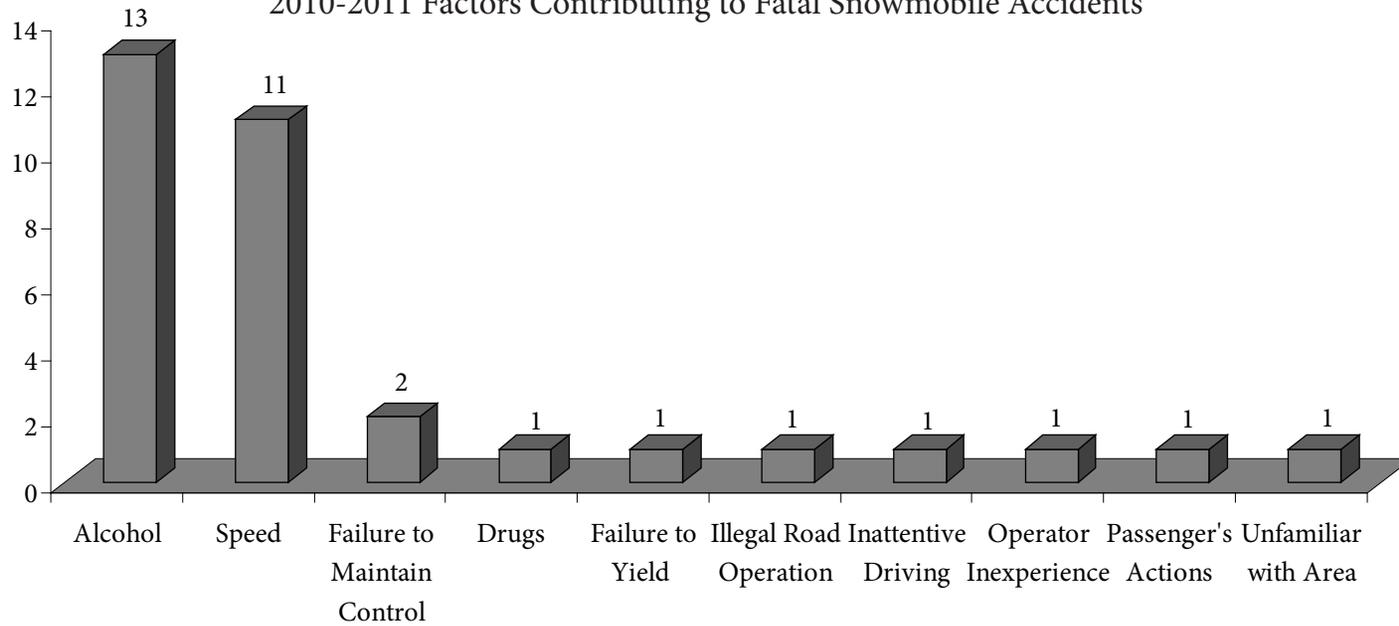
Past data shows that, on average, it is more likely that a snowmobile operator that has taken a Snowmobile Safety Course will not be involved in a fatal incident.

# 2010-2011 Fatality Data

2010-2011 Fatal Snowmobile Victim Operator vs. Passenger



2010-2011 Factors Contributing to Fatal Snowmobile Accidents



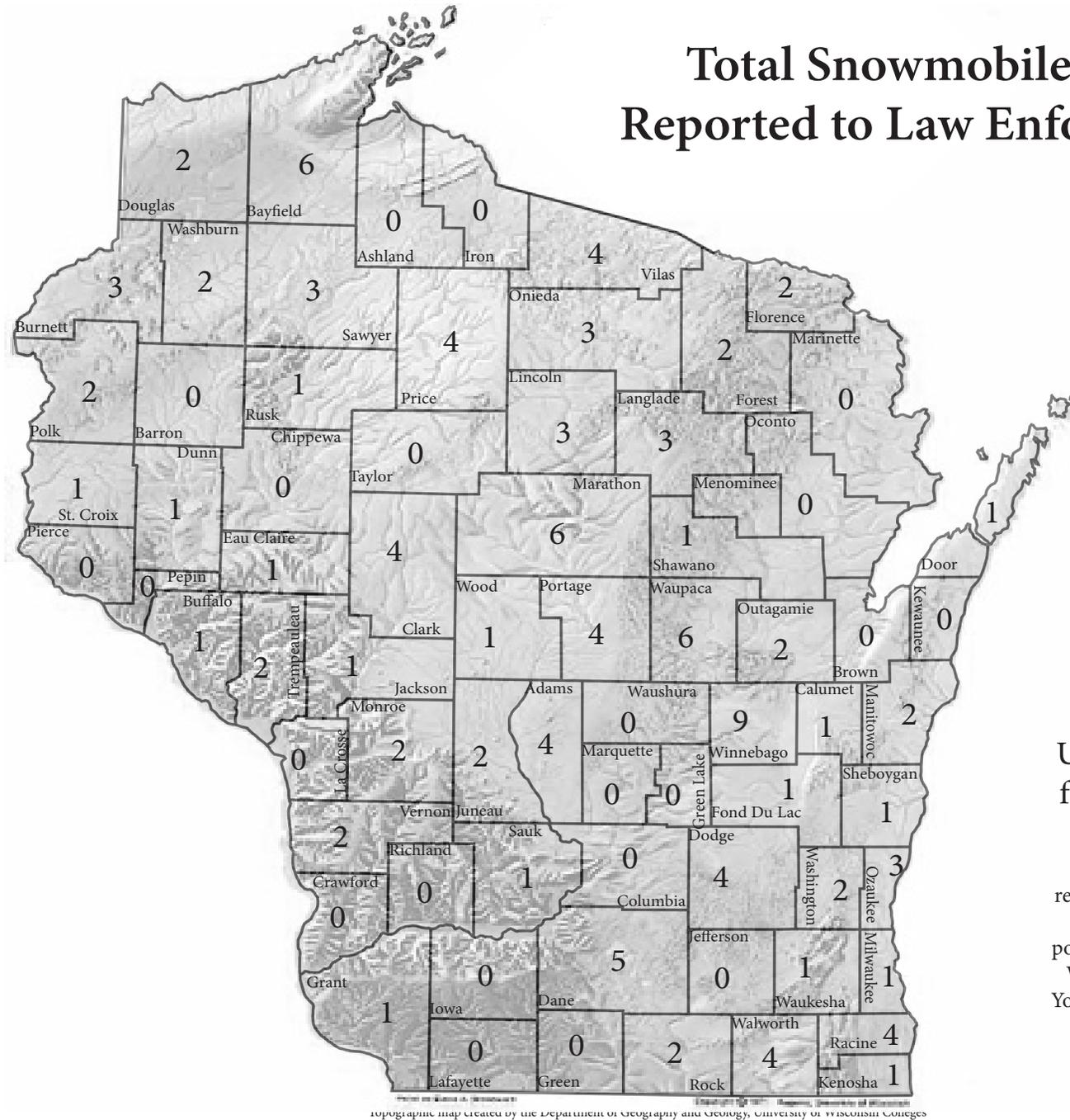
# Wisconsin Snowmobile Fatality Summary for 2010-2011

#	Date/Time	Location	Type & Cause of Incident / Fatality	Age / Sex	BAC / Residency	WI Safety Certified / Helmet
1	12/04/2010	Town of Polk	Rollover	7	N/A	No
	11:55 AM	Washington County (Private Property)	Speed/Passenger's Actions	M	WI	No
The victim was riding on a snowmobile with the adult owner. The victim pressed on the throttle causing the snowmobile to accelerate rapidly. The snowmobile then rolled and ejected both subjects. The adult received non-life threatening injuries. Neither subject was wearing a helmet.						
2	01/31/2011	City of Milwaukie	Collision with a Fixed Object	39	0.172	No
	11:32 PM	Polk County (Private Land)	Speed/Alcohol/Drugs	M	WI	No
The victim left a tavern and proceeded down an alley at a high rate of speed. The victim proceeded through the intersection with the next street and hit a snow bank which launched the snowmobile and victim airborne, through a chain link fence and into a house.						
3	01/14/2011	Town of Cary	Collision with a Fixed Object	48	0.066	No
	6:44 PM	Iron County (Public Trail)	Alcohol/Speed	M	IL	Yes
The victim was third in a group of five snowmobiles when he failed to negotiate a turn and collided with a tree.						
4	01/22/2011	Town of Bovina	Collision with a Motor Vehicle	29	0.215	Yes
	6:21 PM	Outagamie County (Roadway)	Speed/Alcohol/Illegal Road Operation	M	WI	Yes
The victim was operating a snowmobile illegally on a roadway behind a companion operating a motor vehicle with a trailer. The victim was operating at a rate of high speed and collided with the rear of the trailer. The motor vehicle had just stopped for a roadway sign and was pulling away when the victim ran the stop sign and collided with the trailer.						
5	01/22/2011	City of Mt. Pleasant	Collision with a Fixed Object	37	0.240	No
	9:00 PM	Racine County (Railroad Property)	Alcohol	M	WI	Yes
The victim was operating along a railroad track when he collided with a signal light and went airborne.						
6	02/04/2011	Town of Hughes	Collision with a Motor Vehicle	45	0.114	Yes
	5:17 PM	Bayfield County (Public Road)	Alcohol/Speed/Failure to Yield	M	WI	Yes
The victim failed to stop for a sign and struck a vehicle.						
7	02/05/2011	Village of Beldenville	Collision with a Fixed Object	68	0.000	No
	12:10 PM	Pierce County (Road)	Operator Inexperience	F	WI	Yes
The victim was attempting to turn into a parking lot off of a village street when she accelerated and struck a snow bank causing the victim to lose control of the snowmobile and was ejected.						
8	02/09/2011	Town of Three Lakes	Collision with a Fixed Object	69	0.078	No
	8:50 PM	Oneida County (Road/Route)	Alcohol/Inattentive Driving	M	WI	Yes
The victim failed to negotiate a curve in the roadway and struck a tree.						
9	02/11/2011	Town of St. Germain	Collision with a Fixed Object	44	0.028	No
	2:29 PM	Vilas County (Lake)	Alcohol/Speed	M	IL	Yes
The victim was operating across the lake and struck a plowed embankment.						

# Wisconsin Snowmobile Fatality Summary for 2010-2011

#	Date/Time	Location	Type & Cause of Incident / Fatality	Age / Sex	BAC / Residency	WI Safety Certified / Helmet
10	02/11/2011	Town of Fountain	Ejected off Snowmobile	17	0.000	Yes
	5:16 PM	Juneau County (Trail)	Speed/Failure to Maintain Control	F	IL	Yes
The victim drove off the trail at a ditch crossing and was ejected.						
11	02/13/2011	Town of Willow Springs	Collision with a Fixed Object	24	0.207	No
	2:45 PM	Lafayette County (Trail)	Speed/Alcohol	M	IL	Yes
The victim drove off a steep embankment hitting a tree.						
12	02/13/2011	City of Manitowoc	Collision with a Fixed Object	34	0.282	No
	11:05 PM	Manitowoc County (River)	Alcohol	M	WI	Yes
The victim struck a branch from a downed tree and was ejected.						
13	02/25/2011	Town of Elcho	Collision with a Fixed Object	67	0.000	No
	3:00 PM	Langlade County (Trail)	Speed/Failure to Maintain Control	M	WI	Yes
The victim drove into a berm of the trail and struck a tree.						
14	02/25/2011	Town of Bell	Collision with a Fixed Object	42	0.202	Yes
	8:49 PM	Bayfield County (Trail)	Alcohol/Speed	M	MN	Yes
The victim drove off a curve in the trail and struck some trees.						
15	03/03/2011	Town of Grant	Collision with a Fixed Object	41	0.192	No
	2:06 AM	Clark County (Trail)	Alcohol/Speed	M	WI	Yes
The victim struck a tree on the right side of the trail.						
16	03/12/2011	Town of Upham	Collision with a Fixed Object	39	0.159	Yes
	5:30 PM	Langlade County (Public Trail)	Alcohol	M	WI	Yes
The victim was operating on a trail when he failed to negotiate a curve and collided with a tree.						
17	03/13/2011	Town of Algoma	Drowning/Driven into Open Water	44	0.275	No
	6:48 AM	Winnebago County (Lake)	Alcohol/Unfamiliar with Area	M	WI	No
The victim was thought to have been pulling a companion's snowmobile into a garage. The victim was observed operating the snowmobile out onto Lake Buttes des Morts and into open water. As of 03/15/2011, the victim has not been located and is believed to be deceased.						

# Total Snowmobile Injury Incidents Reported to Law Enforcement by County



Total Incidents = 146

Unknown counties account for 18 of the total incidents

A report must be filed for any crash that results in an injury requiring treatment by a physician or a fatal incident must be reported as soon as possible to a Conservation Warden or other law enforcement officer. You must file a written report of the incident within 10 days to the DNR.

Topographic map created by the Department of Geography and Geology, University of Wisconsin Colleges

# Citations Issued for Snowmobile Violations in 2010-2011

## Registration/ Trail Pass Violations

Operate Snowmobile without Valid Registration (S-1).....	295
Fail to display or improper display of registration number or decal on snowmobiles (S-2).....	72
Operate snowmobile without possession of valid registration certificate or validated application receipt (S-3).....	65
Fail to transfer registration of snowmobile (S-4).....	31
Give permission to operate snowmobile without valid registration (S-5).....	49
Operate snowmobile in prohibited area on state lands (S-11).....	17
Operate snowmobile illegally on or in the vicinity of highways (S-12)..	143
Operate at unreasonable, improper speed or in careless manner (S-17).....	79
Operate snowmobile on public or private property of another without consent (S-19).....	51
Operate a snowmobile on a snowmobile trail without a trail use sticker (S-33).....	138

## Alcohol/ Drug Related

Permit operation by person incapable because of age, physical or mental disability or under the influence (S-15).....	31
Operate snowmobile while under the influence of an intoxicant or controlled substance (S-24).....	98
Operate snowmobile with alcohol concentration at or above 0.08% (S-25).....	83
Refuse to take intoxicated snowmobile test (S-26).....	14
Cause injury by intoxicated operation of snowmobile or with detectable amount of a controlled substance in blood (S-30).....	5

## Speed Related

Operate snowmobile on or adjacent to a roadway in excess of the applicable roadway speed limit (S-37).....	4
Operate snowmobile greater than 55 MPH during hours of darkness (S-55).....	44

## Equipment Violations

Snowmobile Equipment Violations (S-14).....	7
Fail to display lights when required (S-18).....	1
Operate snowmobile with engine & exhaust noise in excess of legal decibel level (S-28).....	11
Manufacture or sell new snowmobile that exceeds 78 decibels of total vehicle noise; or modify snowmobile to exceed noise level (S-34).....	15
Operate, manufacture or sell a snowmobile without a functioning muffler (S-29).....	3

## Other Violations

Drive wild animals with a snowmobile (S-7).....	1
Place, possess or transport an uncased or loaded firearm in or on a vehicle (S-8).....	19
Place, possess or transport an uncased or strung bow or crossbow in or on a vehicle (S-9).....	3
Shoot firearm or bow in or from snowmobile (S-10).....	3
Fail to Report Snowmobile Accident (S-16).....	12
Miscellaneous (Snowmobile races, derbies and routes) (S-20).....	2
Fail to stop for law enforcement officer (S-22).....	11
Operator fail to render aid at accident (S-23).....	4
Local snowmobile ordinance (S-31).....	10
Fail to comply with regulatory signs (S-35).....	261
Operate snowmobile without valid safety certificate or without carry proof of completion (S-36).....	186
Fail to keep to the right and proceed with caution when passing another snowmobile in the opposite direction (S-38).....	4

**The Total Number of Citations (including warden and sheriff patrols) for 2010-2011 was 1772**

\*These numbers reflect the citations issued and processed through the court system and returned to the Department and entered into the DNR citations database.

Wear Your *HELMET*  
While You *RIDE*  
*RESPONSIBLY...*  
*UNDER CONTROL...*  
and  
*SOBER*  
and You Will  
*RIDE FOR LIFE*

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/es/enforcement/safety/snowed.html>

