**Oregon State Snowmobile Association**

**Snowmobile Buyers Guide**

Whether you are buying a new or used snowmobile, our goal is to help you purchase the snowmobile that will give you the most value for your dollar. We want you to not only make the best purchase possible, but also have the best snowmobile experience with your purchase.

Snowmobiles have been around for almost 100 years. The technology of snowmobiles gets better every year. Basically, the newer the better.

Safety

The #1 rule of snowmobiling is NEVER RIDE ALONE!

For more safety info see <http://www.oregonsnow.org/tips.aspx>

**Reasons to buy a snowmobile:**

Snowmobile riding season usually takes place November through April. That’s 6 months worth of riding fun!

* You can join a local snowmobile club and meet new friends.
* You don’t ever have to buy a lift ticket to snowmobile!
* Unlike snow skiing, you won’t get cold waiting for or sitting on a chair lift.
* Snowmobiles have windshields, heated handgrips and heat for your feet to keep you warm.
* Snowmobiling is a very safe family sport. Anyone from young to old, athletic to handicapped can ride a snowmobile.
* Snowmobilers care about our environment. Snowmobilers leave no trace.
* Do you get depressed in the winter? Snowmobilers always have a smile on their face when they are snowmobiling! The scenery is spectacular.

**Should I buy NEW or USED?**

Obviously a new snowmobile would be great, but not everyone can justify a new snowmobile. If you don’t want to invest in a new snowmobile here are some tips on purchasing a used snowmobile.

* Because you’re going to depend on your snowmobile for reliable, safe enjoyment, the service history is a top priority when choosing the right sled. Be sure you know it was taken care of properly
* If you don’t know the person you are buying it from, take it to your local dealer to have it inspected before purchasing. Just like an automobile, snowmobiles need repair and maintenance to be reliable. It’s very possible to buy a used snowmobile for $2,000 only to find out that it needs $3,000 worth of repairs.
* How many miles does it have? At 10,000 miles, most snowmobiles are basically worn out (similar to an automobile with 200,000 miles).
* Is the odometer correct? Odometers can easily be tampered with or replaced on snowmobiles. For this reason, if you don’t know the seller it’s especially important to have it inspected at your local dealer.
* Nada Guides can give you used snowmobile values, but remember the ultimate guide to a snowmobile’s value is what else can you buy for the same amount of money. Older snowmobiles in good condition with lower mileage tend to sell for more than book value.
* New or Used, any snowmobile you buy will make you smile!

**Should I buy a 2 Stroke or 4 Stroke?**

4 stroke engines tend to be more reliable, get better gas mileage and last longer. They are particularly popular in areas where people use them to commute to work. As a general rule, 2 Stroke snowmobiles tend to be more popular in the Pacific Northwest. You also never have to change the oil in a 2 Stroke, although you do have to add oil every time you fill it with gas. Most of the snowmobiles for sale in the Pacific Northwest are 2 Stroke. 4 Stroke or 2 Stroke, any snowmobile you buy will make you smile!

**Do I need a snowmobile with reverse gear?**

Not all snowmobiles come with a reverse gear. If you don’t have a reverse gear you will need a greater turning radius or you will be lifting the back of your snowmobile to turn around. If you have weak upper body strength or a bad back, make sure you buy a snowmobile with reverse. Reverse or No Reverse, any snowmobile you buy will make you smile!

**Do I need a snowmobile with electric start?**

Pro-riders normally don’t ride snowmobiles with electric start because the starter and battery add a small amount of weight to the snowmobile. Most everyday snowmobilers prefer having a snowmobile with electric start. If you have weak upper body strength or a bad back, make sure you buy a snowmobile with electric start. This is especially important on any snowmobile with over 600cc. Pull start or electric start, any snowmobile you buy will make you smile!

**Air cooled or water cooled?**

Almost all snowmobiles used to be air cooled. They have a belt driven fan that cools the engine. Snowmobile manufacturers later developed water cooled engines when they wanted to increase the horsepower. Some of the manufacturers still make air cooled snowmobiles today. These are great entry level snowmobiles as they tend to be lighter, have less horsepower and also cost a lot less. Air cooled snowmobiles are highly recommended for young people who are just learning to snowmobile. Air cooled or water cooled, any snowmobile you buy will make you smile!

**How long of a track do I need?**

121, 136, 145, 153, 154, 162, 163, and 172 are some of the common track sizes

As a general rule the longer the snowmobile the less likely you are to get stuck in deep snow. Also, the longer the snowmobile, the harder it will be to maneuver especially if you are a beginner or don’t have a lot of upper body strength. Ski Doo makes the 172 snowmobile and it is extremely long. If you are going to go off a groomed trail into the powder a 145 to 154 length is normally preferred for a beginner. Short track or long track, any snowmobile you buy will make you smile!

**What type of snowmobile do I want?**

The most common types are touring, trail, crossover, and mountain snowmobiles. You will want to purchase the type of snowmobile designed for the type of riding you plan on doing. All of these types can be used for beginners.

* Touring snowmobiles are designed for 2 riders. They are a lot heavier and are not recommended for off trail use as they will easily get stuck in deep snow.
* Trail snowmobiles are designed for groomed trails. They usually have shorter track lengths and a wider ski stance which make them more stable going around corners than the crossover and mountain snowmobiles.
* Crossover snowmobiles are designed to be good on trails and on the mountain. They also have a softer and more comfortable ride than mountain snowmobiles.
* Mountain snowmobiles are designed for deep powder and are least likely to get stuck in deep snow, but because of their longer tracks and narrower ski stance they are slightly more difficult to handle on groomed trails.

Touring, Trail, Crossover or Mountain, any snowmobile you buy will make your smile!

**How big of an engine do I need?**

When it comes to snowmobiling bigger is not always better, especially if you are new to the sport. Here are some general rules to consider about engine size and horsepower:

* The larger the engine the more the snowmobile weighs. The more your snowmobile weighs the easier it is to get stuck if you are a beginner.
* Less horsepower means longer engine life and less maintenance.
* Less horsepower is a lot safer and better when you are learning to ride.
* Less horsepower equals better fuel economy

During the last 10 years most snowmobiles were either 600cc or 800cc. Many new riders have had minor accidents with 800cc snowmobiles simply because of the extra horsepower. Most experienced snowmobilers don’t let their inexperienced friends ride their 800cc snowmobile for this reason. Most 600cc snowmobiles also cost less than most 800cc snowmobiles. Small engine or big engine, any snowmobile you buy will make you smile!

**What brand of** **snowmobile is the best?**

If you join your local snowmobile club, this will be a never-ending topic of discussion, kidding and laugher! Arctic Cat, Polaris, Ski Doo and Yamaha are the current snowmobile manufacturers.

* Every piece of machinery or equipment can break down and will need proper maintenance. Having a dealer close to you is a huge plus when you need parts or repair for your snowmobile.
* All 4 brands currently make really good snowmobiles. The differences between them are generally very slight and unless you are a pro-rider you will most likely not be able to tell the difference.
* Even among the pro-riders the differences in the brands tend to be more of a personal preference than anything.

Arctic Cat, Polaris, Ski Doo or Yamaha, any snowmobile you buy will make you smile!

**Important things to consider:**

* Join your local snowmobile club to optimize your snowmobile experience and learn how to ride like a pro.
* If you don’t have a valid Drivers License you will need a Snowmobile Operators Permit to operate a snowmobile in Oregon. To get a permit you will need to take a class sponsored by your local snowmobile club or Oregon State Snowmobile Association. If your child is old enough to read and comprehend they can usually qualify for a Snowmobile Operators Permit.
* Helmets are not required for snowmobiles in Oregon but you will rarely see anyone without a helmet. Helmets not only protect your head, but also help keep your warm.
* Snowmobile trail maps are available from your local snowmobile club and the Forest Service.
* Insurance is not required but is highly recommended. Full coverage is relatively inexpensive and will help to protect your investment. Even if you don’t want full coverage for your snowmobile, liability insurance is a must!
* Water cooled snowmobiles can overheat if you are operating at very slow speeds or on hard packed snow or ice. Overheating will destroy your snowmobile. Be sure your snowmobile has ice scratchers and learn how to use them.
* Still have questions? Come to our next club meeting (you don’t have to be a member to attend) and ask a question and enjoy all the answers you get from all the “experts” in our club. It’s fun, possibly hilarious, and you won’t regret it!

Finally, your local snowmobile club spends countless volunteer hours maintaining and grooming the snowmobile trails with equipment and funding provided by the Oregon State Snowmobile Association. Membership in most clubs is usually $60 a year or less for your whole family and includes a $35 membership in the Oregon State Snowmobile Association. Volunteering is not required to be a member, but you can still show your support by joining today. You’ll be glad you did!

For a list of local snowmobile clubs go to [www.OregonSnow.org](http://www.OregonSnow.org)