



SNOWMOBILE NORTH DAKOTA

TRAIL PROGRAM

2009 SIGN GUIDELINES

Snowmobile North Dakota

**1600 East Century Avenue, Suite 3
Bismarck, ND 58503-0649**

**701-328-5377
701-328-5363 Fax**

**snodak@midconetwork.com
www.snowmobilend.org**

Chapter 1: Travel Management Strategy

- 1.1 Two Kinds of Trails
- 1.2 Driver Concepts
- 1.3 Driver Expectancy

Chapter 2: Signing Concepts**Chapter 3: Sign Types****Chapter 4: Signing Standards**

- 4.1 Sign Shapes
- 4.2 Sign Color
- 4.3 Sign Sizes
- 4.4 Sign Message

Chapter 5: Sign Placement

- 5.1 Sign Locations
- 5.2 Visibility
- 5.3 Horizontal Placement
- 5.4 Height
- 5.5 Mounting
- 5.6 Sign Plan

Chapter 6: SND Signing Requirements

- 6.1 Standard Signs
- 6.2 Sign Requirements

Chapter 1: Travel Management Strategy

1.1 Two Kinds of Trails:

Encouraged: the snowmobile trail program promotes riding on the trail system

Allowed: the snowmobile trail program doesn't promote riding on the trail system but it is permitted

When establishing a trail system the first step is to determine if a trail system is encouraged or allowed. The difference in the two trails will determine how a trail system is signed and maintained during the snowmobile season. The majority of North Dakota's snowmobile trails are encouraged trails meaning Snowmobile North Dakota promotes and markets the trail system. There are several trail systems throughout the state which Snowmobile North Dakota does not recognize as a state trail system. These trail systems are considered an allowed trail system because snowmobiling is allowed on the trail but it is not promoted.

1.2 Driver Concepts

When signing a trail system the volunteer must assume the following about the snowmobile users.

Assume driver:

1. is reasonable and prudent;
2. has a map;
3. is traveling at a speed at or below which is 85 percent of the motorized vehicles travel.

1.3 Driver Expectancy

Drivers are influenced by what was experienced on the previous section of trail. When signing a trail system avoid surprise elements. Surprise elements occur from inconsistencies in the signing from what a prudent driver would expect.

To avoid surprise elements use uniformity when signing a trail system.

Uniformity:

1. recognition and understanding;
2. reduces perception and reaction time;
3. gives some interpretation;
4. efficiency in manufacture, installation, maintenance, and administration.

Chapter 2: Signing Concepts

When signing a trail system always remember to fulfill an important need.

1. command attention;
2. convey a clear, positive, friendly, simple message;
3. generate respect for the user;

4. give adequate time for proper response.

Chapter 3: Sign Types

There are three different types of signs which include regulatory, warning, and guide.

Regulatory Signs: inform of traffic laws and regulations

1. protect trail and resources;
2. ensure safety and enjoyment of users;
3. stress educational vs. restrictions;
4. keep on-trail signing to a minimum.

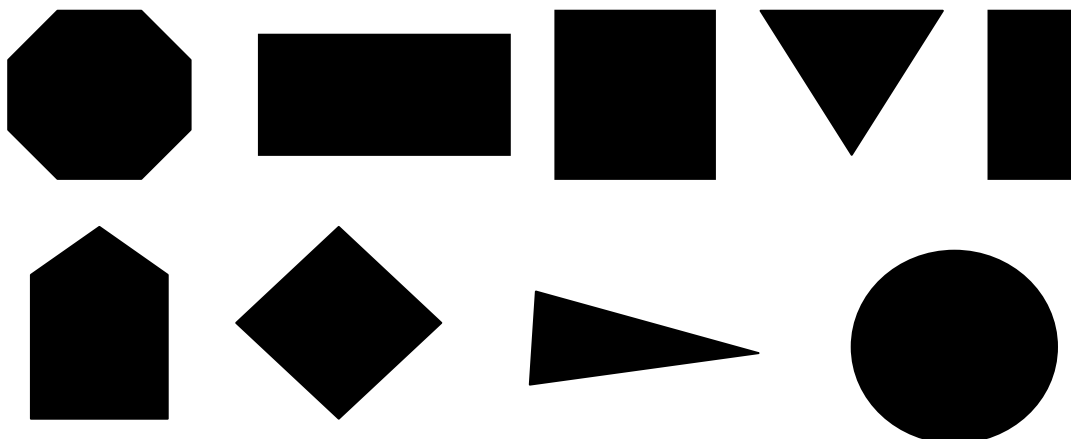
Warning Signs: alert users of upcoming riding conditions.

Guide Signs: provide guidance to and from destinations

1. identify all trail legs at all junctions;
2. sign destination until reached;
3. show distances with destinations;
4. it's recommended to place trail names and numbers on maps.

Chapter 4: Signing Standards

4.1 Sign Shapes



4.2 Sign Color

1. **Regulatory:** red, black, and white
2. **Warning:** yellow, lime green, orange, and magenta
3. **Guide:** blue, brown, and green

4.3 Sign Sizes

The dimensions and lettering on a trail sign are based upon the speed limit for the trail system. Please use the following speed limits to determine sizing:

If the trail is on a road:

Road Signs	Lettering
Speed Limit = Size	Speed Limit = Size
25 mph = 24"	35 mph = 4"
26-50 mph = 30"	35-50 mph = 5"
50 mph = 36"	50 mph = 6"

Size standards for a trail:

Trail Signs	Lettering
Minimum of 12"	Minimum of 2"

4.4 Sign Message

The message should be a maximum of three lines.

Message must:

1. be spaced;
2. be in an easy to read font;
3. show arrow placement and distances.

Chapter 5: Sign Placement

5.1 Sign Locations

Regulatory Sign Placement: at or before point of regulation

Warning Sign Placement: approximately 250' in advance of upcoming trail terrain allowing user to travel at a prudent speed

Guide Sign Placement: at or in advance of junctions

Always keep the following **five items in mind when signing a trail:**

1. poor weather and light conditions;
2. night use;
3. lack of tracks;
4. distances based on adverse conditions.
5. sign for individuals that have never rode the trail system before

Place the following signs accordingly:

Stop Sign: Place stop signs at all highway crossings. If there is a highway department stop already in place no additional sign is needed. Place stop signs at all railroad crossings and at all highly traveled road crossings.

Stop Ahead Sign: Place stop ahead signs 250' before all stop signs including highway department stop signs. If there is a highway department stop ahead sign already in place no additional sign is needed.

Yield: Place yield signs at all **less traveled** road crossings.

Slow: Place slow signs at a safe stopping distance, approximately 250' before warning.

Keep Right or Two-Way Traffic: When crossing a steep approach or when you cannot see a sled coming from the opposite direction.

90-Degree Turn Arrows: Place a 90-degree turn arrow 250' before the turn to show there is a turn ahead.

Arrows: Place an arrow at the start of each turn to show the direction of the trail.

Sharp Curve Ahead: When the trail travels out of the snowmobile users view, place a sharp curve ahead sign 250' before the curve to show a sharp curve ahead.

Chevrons: Place a minimum of three chevrons at the start of each sharp curve to show the direction of the trail.

Blazers: Blazers must be placed every ¼ of a mile if no other sign is being used to sign that particular section of trail. Also, use blazers to establish corridors to mark a safe trail in areas of warning.

Stay on Trail: Place a stay on trail sign at the trailhead, one in each direction, and also at restricted areas.

Parking: Place a parking sign in a designated spot.

Junction Ahead or 3-Way Intersection: Place a junction ahead or 3-way intersection sign 250' before all intersections.

Bridge and Gatemarkers: Place these signs at all bridges and gates to show safe passage for the snowmobile users.

Trail Closed: Trail closed signs must be posted on all state snowmobile trails at the trailheads when the trail is not in operation from December 1st to April 1st of each year. These signs can also be used to close particular sections of trail in a trail system due to the lack of snow. **The sign must be placed at the start of the section of trail which is closed. If there is more than one starting section, both sections must be marked.**

Trail Temporarily Closed: These signs are only to be used when a portion of the trail or the whole trail is closed temporarily due to warnings on the trail.

Trail Ends: In instances where the trail has a dead-end, place a trail ends sign at the ending of the trail.

Caution Bridge, Gate, & Ice Ahead and Dip Ahead Signs: Place these signs 250' before the hazard.

No Snowmobiling: Place no snowmobiling signs in areas along the trail system where no snowmobiling is allowed.

No ATV's, No Wheeled Vehicles, and Snowmobiles Only: If the trail system is having a problem with wheeled vehicles and ATV's utilizing the snowmobile trails, place either of these signs within that particular section of trail.

Use Trail At Your Own Risk: The snowmobile trail program requires a Use Trail At Your Own Risk at all trailheads or towns along the trail system. If the sign is being placed by a town, place the sign at all parts of the trail where it exits the town.

5.2 Visibility

Make sure all trail signs are clearly visible to the user.

1. Minimize viewing obstructions;
2. dips, crests of hills, trees, signs;
3. protect from prevailing wind;
4. use trees or posts;
5. use high intensity sheetings.

5.3 Horizontal Placement

All regulatory trail signs must be on the right-hand side of the trail and 2-6' from the trail edge to the sign edge.

5.4 Height

A recommended height is eye level for the user of the trail system. This will require periodic inspections and adjustments of sign posts throughout the winter due to snowfall.

5.5 Mounting

Do not post a mix of sign types (please refer to different sign types on page 4) on one sign post. When posting more than one sign on a post it is a requirement they be the same sign type. Post no more than three signs on one post and they must compliment one another.

5.6 Sign Plan

All trail associations are required to complete a sign plan annually. The sign plan reflects the inventory of the trail signs within the trail system. The document accounts for signs located on the trail system and in the trail associations inventory. All of the trail associations must complete a sign plan to the Snowmobile North Dakota office by **April 30th** of each year.

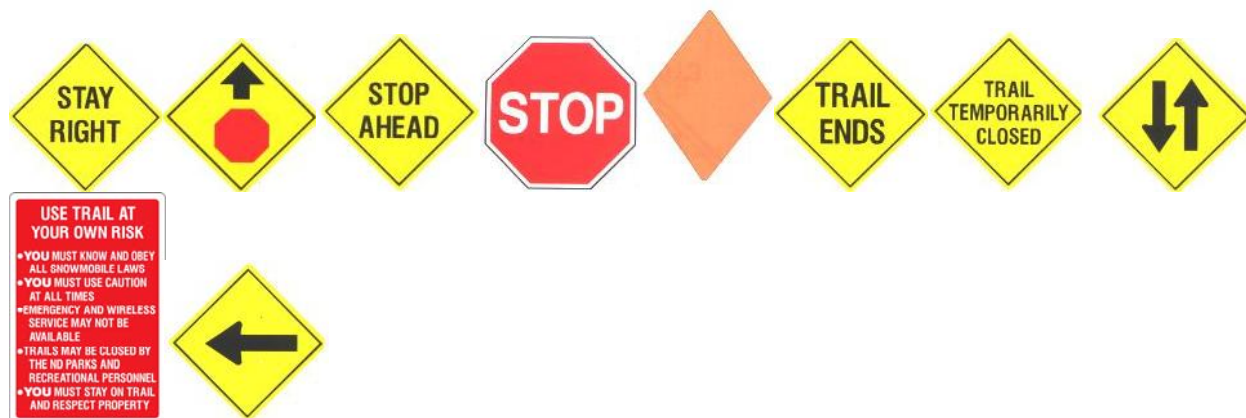
The sign plan will be evaluated by the **snowmobile trail program directors and staff** and will provide documentation to the organization regarding the signs which are used in the state snowmobile trail systems. All of the sign plans will be field verified when the state trail system is opened.

Chapter 6: SND Signing Requirements

The **snowmobile trail program** uses the Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Signing & Placement as the basis for all trail signing. The Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Signing & Placement **handbook** is distributed by the International Association of Snowmobile Administrators. This **handbook** reflects snowmobile trail signing standards for the United States and Canada. Please refer to the **handbook** for standard signing guidelines.

6.1 Standard Signs





6.2 Sign Requirements

1. **Compliance:** All trail associations must comply with the Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Signing & Placement handbook and the snowmobile trail programs requirements before the trail system can be opened for the season.
2. **Sign Corridor:** When signing a snowmobile trail always remember to sign a safe passage for travel for snowmobile users. **DO NOT MARK HAZARDS.**
3. **Sign Installation:** Signs can be placed on the snowmobile trail from October 1st to April 30th of each year.

Year Round Signage: Long-term signage placed on the snowmobile trail system from October 1st to September 30th. Year Round Signage eases volunteer time to maintain the trail system. Please refer to the following requirements for year round signage:

- a. Signs may be left up all year round in wooded areas.
 - b. If the landowner provided approval on the snowmobile land use agreement.
 - c. Not allowed where visible from communities or near high traffic roadways.
4. **Benchmark Funding Signing Requirements:** At least 80% of each Trail Association's signs must be posted by December 15th, in order to be eligible for the First Benchmark Funding Program. The remaining 20% must be posted before the association can enter the second benchmark within the funding program. All signs must be down before the association is eligible to receive funding in the third benchmark.
 5. **Trail Grubbing Equipment:** Trail grubbing equipment has been placed around the state to assist the clubs with posting and removal of signs.

Turtle River State Park: 2001 Polaris Ranger, 2004 Estate Mower, 2006 Beartrack Snowmobile Trailer, and a 2007 Beartrack Utility Trailer for hauling signs.

Ft. Ransom State Park: 2009 Polaris Ranger, 2007 Kunz Mower, and a 2007 Beartrack Utility Trailer.

Headquarters in Bismarck: 2007 Polaris 700 ATV and a 2007 Beartrack Utility Trailer for hauling signs.

6. **DOT Standards:** Signs are to not be posted on Department of Transportation sign standards, as well as city or county sign standards. This rule is strictly enforced and if it is not complied with, loss of funding could occur.

- a. Exception: If the governing land manager requires the signs be placed on existing sign standards, the trail association must obtain a letter of approval to post signs on the existing sign standards. This exception does not apply to Department of Transportation sign standards.
7. **Sign Requisitions:** Sign Requisition orders must be completed and submitted by the trail association by May 1st of each year. If the deadline is missed, the trail association is responsible for purchasing its own signs for the upcoming winter season. The trail signs must be purchased from the same vendor which the snowmobile trail program used to purchase the signs, so all trail signs will be alike throughout the trail system.
8. **Public Right-of-Ways:** If the trail system is located in a public right-of-way (ditch), the trail signs must be located within the right of way of any public roadway. If the public right-of-way is not wide enough for this task, a snowmobile land use agreement must be acquired with the property owner in order to locate the trail along the public roadway.

Right-of-Way Plats: The North Dakota Department of Transportation has the right-of-way plats located on the GIS Hub. For more information please visit the hub at: <http://web.apps.state.nd.us/hubexplorer/row/viewer.html>
9. **Communication Poles:** When posting trail signs on existing communication poles, first contact the company who owns the poles for approval. Make sure all guide wires for the communication poles are marked before opening the trail system. The company which owns the communication poles will provide covers for the guide wires.
10. **Sign Posts:** The standard sign posts used across the state are rolled rod rebar posts or heavy duty u-posts. These styles are not a requirement, however, it is recommended to stay away from lathe. Since the snowmobile trail program is purchasing heavier signs the lathe is no longer strong enough to hold the signs.
11. **Sign Orientation:** Signs may not be cut in half and used to mark the snowmobile trail. This is considered tampering with the trail sign and could result in a fine.
12. **Two-Way Traffic:** All trails maintained by the state snowmobile trail program are to be a minimum of ten feet wide to allow for two-way snowmobile traffic. This requirement also exists for snowmobile trails existing in right-of-ways.

Additional Information:

- a. North Dakota law states in times that require the use of lights of travel, you must travel in the same direction as other motor vehicles on the same side of the right-of-way. Encouraged snowmobile trails existing within a right-of-way of any road, street, or highway that are maintained by the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department are exempt from this rule.
- b. The state snowmobile trail program requires trail associations to contact county, township, or city commissioners when placing a state snowmobile trail in a right-of-way. Snowmobiles are allowed to operate in right-of-ways but to establish good communication with the land managers, this communication is required.
- c. If one-way traffic is required and the trail system does not make a loop, please acquire approval from the county, township or city commissioners to locate the trail system in both sides of the right-of-way following the county road or highway. Also, one-way traffic signs must be purchased from the trail associations sign budget to place along the trail.

Trail signing is checked periodically throughout the snowmobile season. Please comply with the above standards, otherwise trail closure or loss of funding according to the Benchmark Funding Program penalties or SNDTP reprimands could occur.