Where's The Groomer?

- Snowmobilers often, mistakenly, comment that "the groomers can't be doing their job because I've never seen one." If snowmobilers do not see grooming equipment on the trails, that is generally a good thing. Groomers should work at night or when snowmobile traffic is the lowest to ensure that grooming efforts are the most effective and that there is proper time for the freshly groomed trail to re-freeze and set up. Trail grooming is very expensive so every effort should be made to ensure that, when grooming occurs, it will be effective and create trails that are as durable as possible.

- Groomers work at night so you can have better trails the following day. Give them a break and please do not follow them when they are working whether day or night.

Tips For Encountering Grooming Equipment On The Trail

Trail Quality and Set Up Time

Where's The Groomer?

iasa
International Association of Snowmobile Administrators

Trail Grooming Awareness

What You Should Know About Groomers On The Trail

Tips For Encountering Grooming Equipment On The Trail

- First, recognize that trail groomers may be working on the trail at any time. They are there in an effort to provide you with smooth, safe trails. Always keep your snowmobile under control and anticipate that a groomer might be around the next corner or over the hill.
- Snowmobiles are much smaller and much more maneuverable than groomers, so always yield to a groomer. Always slow down when approaching or overtaking grooming equipment. Groomers move very slowly, typically only 5 to 8 miles per hour, so they are almost stationary when compared to a snowmobile traveling 30 to 60 miles per hour.
- When approaching an oncoming groomer on the trail, slow down and move your snowmobile to the far right side of the trail. Realize that the grooming drag or tiller behind the grooming tractor may be very wide, may extend wider than the tracks of the tractor, and may essentially take up most or all of the trail's width. If the trail is narrow or winding, you may need to stop at the far outside edge of the trail to let the groomer pass.
- When overtaking a groomer from the rear, slow down and assess the situation ahead. If there is good sight distance and the trail ahead is clear of oncoming traffic, pass the groomer while operating with caution. Beware that the groomer may create snow dust and make visibility poor. If the trail is narrow or winding, you may need to stay behind the groomer until the operator pulls over and signals for you to pass. Be patient because it may take time before there is a safe location and safe conditions for passing.
- If you need to stop a groomer to ask for information or assistance, understand this should be done only in an area where there is good sight distance and it is safe to stop. The groomer operator may request that you follow the groomer to a safer location where he can stop and provide the assistance you need.

Trail Quality And Trail Set Up Time

- Trail grooming requires that "set up" time be allowed for the freshly groomed trail to re-freeze. Set up time will vary depending upon temperature and moisture content of the snow. Generally two to six or even more than ten hours may be needed for the freshly groomed trail to set up to where it is durable and will hold up to heavy snowmobile traffic.
- Try to avoid riding a snowmobile on freshly groomed trails for at least two hours after the groomer passes by choosing an alternate route to help improve the quality and durability of snowmobile trails. And never follow directly behind a groomer because it immediately destroys the trail.
- If you come upon a groomer and you must use that route, try to minimize impacts to the trail: slow down; try to stay off the fresh grooming if the trail is wide enough to safely do so; operate only at the outside edge of the fresh grooming; ride in single file versus having everyone in the group take a different path on the fresh grooming; and don't purposely fishtail or power through the soft snow.
- Understand that aggressive riding styles can impact the quality and smoothness of the trails you ride on. Fast starts and stops, powering through curves, paddle tracks, carbide runners, traction devices, and powerful engines can all combine to destroy the smoothness of a trail. So the next time you hit the brake or throttle, think about how you may have innocently contributed to destroying the trails you would really prefer to be smooth.