

From the Office of the Sheriff: "New ATV Snow Removal Laws"

This past summer the Wisconsin Legislature published new laws which allow for ATV's to be used on roadways for the purpose of snow removal, if the ATV is equipped with a snow removal device. A snow removal device can be a plow, blade, bucket, blower, or brush.

With this legislation comes a host of rules and regulations which must be adhered to ensure you are legally operating the ATV for snow removal purposes. They include, 1) speed may not exceed 5 mph on any sidewalk, 2) speed may not exceed 15 mph adjacent to or on any roadway, 3) may operate only on roadways with a speed limit of 45 mph or less, 4) must operate on the far right hand side of the road, 5) on roads posted as an ATV Route and currently open for ATV use, 6) ATV operator must be 16 years of age or older and possess a ATV Safety Certificate if born after 12-31-1987, 7) operation may only occur between Oct 1st and April 30th, 8) distance traveled may not exceed 2 miles from original start or unloading point, and 9) you must display one or more illuminated, yellow lights that are flashing or rotating and visible for 360 degrees.

ATV's operating within 150 feet of a dwelling must slow to 10 mph and must have their headlights on at all times while operating on a roadway. Operators must ensure the snow removal equipment does not interfere with the legal lighting requirements. Your ATV must be registered for Public Use which is different than an ordinary Private ATV registration. Public Use Registration allows for operation on public roadways, public road right of ways and on public sidewalks. If the operator is under the age of 18, a helmet is required if operating the ATV off private property that is owned by a parent or guardian.

These new rules will generate questions. Can I operate my ATV snowplow to the gas station or store? NO! What if my snow plow customers are more than two-miles from my house? You are then required to trailer your ATV. Can I cruise around, within the two mile zone and look for snow plowing jobs? No. I only plow my driveway and my neighbors; do I still need the yellow light? Yes. Is my out-of-state ATV trail pass good to operate on WI roads? No, you must register in WI. I just plow my driveway and sidewalk and do not operate on the roadway. Do I need the Public Use registration? No, as long as you remain on your private property.

It will take some time to get ATV operators and the public familiar with these new laws. The Dodge County Sheriffs' Department will do what it can to educate the public as well as enforce these new laws. I strongly encourage those who plan on plowing snow with their ATV to access the DNR website and read the entire law at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/2009/data/acts/09Act367.pdf>.

Another issue we deal with regarding snow removal is those who plow their snow across the public roadway into the ditch. First and foremost this is illegal; secondly, many of these violators leave a bunch of snow in the roadway causing a hazard to motorists. Very often the snow plow (truck or tractor) is operating with no warning lights or lights which make the plow visible from the side and this can be very hazardous. We field calls after major snowfalls from motorist complaining about a mess of the road due to pushing snow across both lanes of traffic, lets refrain from doing this.

Lastly, let's give our county snow plow operators a break, don't tailgate. Thanks for listening  
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