



Trail Patrol Program

Member Guide

Welcome!

Congratulations and Thank You for choosing to serve as an active Trail Patrol member.

This document is intended to provide Trail Patrol members with a reference guide summarizing the program and their critical role in making it a success. This information is intended to facilitate discussion and clubs and districts are encouraged to expand and adapt on materials provided to meet the needs of their local communities.

Experiences and feedback collected during this season, as well as accurate and specific statistics (sleds encountered vs permits), will be used to further shape and develop Trail Program support materials and help determine the program's success.

Whether you are a Trail Patrol member for the first time, or you've been a long time program participant, we believe you will find the simplified approach described by this guide to be exciting and rewarding.



A Simplified Approach

The Trail Patrol mission is stated in its tagline, "There for You!"

Understanding this message is key to understanding that the focus of the program is on promoting great rider experiences. Trail Patrol members act as an on-trail ambassador, educating sledders on permit compliance, the role of the club in community based snowmobiling, providing assistance & information on the trail, and generally making sledders feel welcome.

Trail Patrol is an informal, yet organized, program that can only be delivered by enthusiastic club volunteers, with the shared goal of increasing positive and valued interaction with snowmobilers.

The following are just a few positive outcomes of this ambassador approach:

- *Encouraging permit compliance in a non-threatening manner*
- *Educating the rider that permits are required under the law.*
- *Providing on-trail hospitality*
- *Promoting the club experience to snowmobilers in a fun environment*
- *Promoting safe and responsible family riding*
- *Meeting people and expanding the pool of potential future volunteers*
- *Providing riders with valuable information and assistance*



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Fostering Compliance

Permits are the Law. Trail Patrol is a crucial part of creating an overall “Culture of Compliance”

The goal of the Trail Patrol program is to foster an attitude within the snowmobiling community where individual riders accept, value, and consistently comply with trail permit, trespass and other legal requirements.

Maintaining a helpful, non-threatening and persistent on-trail presence is important to creating a culture where permits are routinely purchased before the trail is accessed and where trail use without permits is not tolerated by the snowmobiling community.

Enforcement of provincial law certainly remains important - but in many cases is best left to well-trained qualified enforcement personnel.

However as is the case for most laws pertaining to personal behavior, real compliance actually relies on individuals accepting and willingly conforming with legislation; enforcement serving only to compel compliance by the relatively small percentage who continue to act outside the law. Trail Patrol has the opportunity educate riders not only about where there permit dollars go, but ensuring that they understand the permit are required under the law.

Participation Commitments

The Obligations of Trail Patrol members are fewer and are easier to understand.

To participate as a Trail Patrol member, individuals must commit to the following:

- *Be selected by and be a "member in good standing" of a participating OFSC club.*
- *Participate in Trail Patrol orientation and communication opportunities.*
- *Support your club's Trail Patrol program as an active and engaged member.*
- *Provide professional, courteous, and friendly "Rider Care".*
- *Provide reliable and complete program tracking information.*
- *Willingness to identify yourself to the public as a Trail Patrol Member.*

What Trail Patrol Needs to Know

Knowledge is the most important asset for a Trail Patrol member.

To be effective, Trail Patrol Members need to have a working knowledge of how Ontario snowmobiling is organized, the requirements for safe snowmobile operation, and the features of the local trail network.

For the most part, this knowledge will be acquired and maintained through regular training, communication, and planning opportunities provided by their club.

However, to help frame out the nature of a Trail Patrol member's knowledge base, the following summary is provided as a preliminary reference.



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Key Knowledge Summary

Snowmobiling in Ontario

Trail Patrol members need to obtain and maintain a basic understanding of how Ontario snowmobiling is organized including:

- About the OFSC – high level who we are
- How organized snowmobiling is funded
- How funding is used
- How snowmobiling contributes to the local economies

Operational Requirements

Trail Patrol members need to obtain and maintain a basic understanding of the requirements governing snowmobile use both on and off OFSC prescribed trails including:

- Requirements to operate a snowmobile including
 - Vehicle registration
 - Personal liability insurance and registration
 - Operator training and licensing
- Requirements to access OFSC prescribed trails
 - Ontario snowmobile trail permit types & fees
 - Displaying trail permits
 - Trail permit exemptions
 - Penalties for non-compliance

Links and Resources:

Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs
www.ofsc.on.ca

Trespass to Property Act:
www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90t21

2016 Occupiers' Liability Act:
www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o02

Motorized Snow Vehicle Act:
www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90m4

Features of your Local Trail Network and Community

Trail Patrol members need to obtain and maintain a basic understanding of their local trail network and services available to riders:

- Routing and status of the local trail system
- Upcoming events – club and district
- Tourism opportunities – unique local features
- Availability of services including food, fuel accommodations, repair, and entertainment.

Benchmarks for Success!

In keeping with the desire to make the Trail Patrol program easy to deliver without a lot of cumbersome record keeping, Trail Patrol success will be measured with two simple criteria:

Number of people met and interacted with, and Number of those with permits vs. those without.

“The number of people met and interacted with” is a simple count of on-trail interactions between Trail Patrol members and individual snowmobilers using OFSC prescribed trails.

“The number of those with permits vs. those without” can most easily be understood as a record of the number of snowmobiles encountered during Trail Patrol interactions with and without valid Ontario Snowmobile Trail Permits.



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Improving Customer Experiences

Using well understood customer service values, Trail Patrol Members will improve rider experiences through a new approach represented by the acronym G.U.E.S.T.

Persistent and valued on-trail interaction and presence can only be achieved at the grassroots level by clubs who are actively committed to growing their membership and showing riders the fun side of snowmobiling. Trail Patrol has therefore been re-positioned to focus almost exclusively on being a valuable club outreach tool for promoting community-based snowmobiling and connecting with potential new members.

This initiative is especially timely given that we have attracted so many new participants, including many first timers and family riders who are looking for good times, new friends and something to belong to. At the same time, club administrative workload is being considerably reduced by new innovations like online permit sales and internal restructuring, so clubs can focus more on having fun, being social and running great events.

Care” developed from modern customer service concepts. The goal here is to provide Trail Patrol members with a process to effectively interact with riders as valued customers.

At the heart of an effective Trail Patrol program is an understanding not only of the key aspects of snowmobiling but an understanding of “Rider



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At the heart of an effective Trail Patrol program is an understanding not only of the key aspects of snowmobiling but an understanding of “Rider Care” developed from modern customer service concepts. The goal here is to provide Trail Patrol members with a process to effectively interact with riders as valued customers.

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	<h3>The G.U.E.S.T approach to Rider Care and Improving Rider Experiences</h3>
<h1>G</h1>	<p>Greet ... <i>the Snowmobiler as a Valued Customer</i></p> <p>Start positively with a warm, sincere greeting; “Good Morning”, “Welcome”, “Thanks for stopping by” are all simple and familiar. Introduce yourself and briefly explain your role as a Trail Patrol Member. Remember to smile – this will help the customer to feel at ease and you’ll come across as friendly and approachable, setting the scene for a more positive interaction.</p>
<h1>U</h1>	<p>Understand ... <i>their Interests, Needs, and Concerns</i></p> <p>After asking “<i>how can I help make your ride better today</i>”, listen carefully to determine exactly what is wanted or needed. Summarize what you’ve heard and ask clarifying questions to make sure you understand fully. Some customers will be irate, others will be full of questions, and still others will just be chatty. It’s important not only to understand what a customer says, but how a customer feels. Think about being in the customer’s position. How would you feel – and want to be treated?</p>
<h1>E</h1>	<p>Explain/Execute ... <i>how you may be able to Help</i></p> <p>In most cases, you will be able to help the snowmobiler - tell the rider what it is you are able/prepared to do and get their agreement before proceeding. However some situations may be outside your control or authority to act. None-the-less, you need to speak in an upbeat, positive and professional tone. Strive to remain calm, even when your customer is not. Patience and self-control will keep you from getting upset and saying something inappropriate.</p>
<h1>S</h1>	<p>Suggest ... <i>ways to have an even Better Trail Experience</i></p> <p>Once you’ve dealt with the rider’s needs to the best of your ability, you may then have an opportunity to point out additional opportunities that may make their experience even better. Information on scenic stops, special events, and interesting trail options are almost always welcomed. You may also take the opportunity to address safety or riding concerns in a positive and friendly manner.</p>
<h1>T</h1>	<p>Thank ... <i>the snowmobiler as a Valued Customer</i></p> <p>Do your best to conclude every interaction as positively as possible. A good way to do that is to sincerely thank the snowmobiler for taking part in an activity you both enjoy and wish to be as safe and fun as it possibly can be. If appropriate, invite the snowmobiler to a club meeting or event. Focus on having fun and meeting others who also enjoy snowmobiling.</p>



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Are you Ready, Willing and Able to be a Trail Patrol Member?

Being a Trail Patrol member requires personal commitment and a customer service attitude.

While there will be ongoing training and communications opportunities provided by your club, Trail Patrol members should use their own good judgement as to whether their personal attitude and perspective will be a good fit with the program.

To be effective and to enjoy the Trail Patrol role, members should:

- Be upbeat, outgoing, and friendly
- Enjoy helping people
- Handle people well
- Care for riders as customers
- Give fair and equal treatment to all
- Be understanding of people with special needs

If this describes you, then we are confident that becoming a volunteer Trail Patrol member will be a rewarding experience for you, and a great benefit to your club, your community, and organized snowmobiling in Ontario.

