



Environmental Fact Sheet

Frequently Asked Questions: Emission Standards for Snowmobiles

In September 2001, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to seek public comment on our plan to propose more stringent emission standards for engines on equipment including forklifts and generators, and vehicles including snowmobiles, off-highway motorcycles and ATVs, and recreational marine boats. This information sheet addresses common questions we have heard from concerned snowmobile owners.

Why is EPA looking at new emission controls for snowmobiles?

Our analysis shows that snowmobiles emit more than 200,000 tons of hydrocarbons (HC) and 531,000 tons of carbon monoxide (CO) each year across the United States. These emissions contribute to ambient concentrations of CO, air toxics, and fine particulate matter which is largely responsible for visibility impairment at our national parks. Emissions from snowmobiles contain toxic compounds such as benzene. Reducing these emissions would benefit our health and environment. The Clean Air Act requires us to set emission standards that address these problems. These impacts are described in more detail in "FAQ: Environmental Impacts of Recreational Vehicles and Other Nonroad Engines" [EPA420-F-01-030].

Must the snowmobile I own meet these regulations?

No. Snowmobile manufacturers must ensure each **new** snowmobile sold meets our regulations. The proposed regulations would apply only to new snowmobiles produced after a specified model year. Anything manufactured before that model year would not be affected and would remain legal to own and operate. We usually allow several years of lead time between publication of a final rule and the effective date of new standards. Thus, new standards for snowmobiles won't affect the snowmobile you bought before this year or any snowmobile you buy for the next several years.

As a snowmobile owner what must I do?

You may **not** disable any emission controls installed on your snowmobile to meet our regulations. Manufacturers will explain in their owner's manual what type of emission controls exist for each model, and may specify some minor maintenance you must have done to keep emission controls working properly over the life of the snowmobile. You may also make adjustments specified by manufacturers in the owner's manual, such as carburetor jetting changes, to account for changing operating conditions.

What kinds of emission controls is EPA considering?

We are proposing standards that manufacturers would meet on an average basis, which will allow them to offer a wide range of technologies to their customers. We expect manufacturers to meet emission standards mainly by improving engine and fuel systems for some models. Some manufacturers will likely use direct fuel injection with some of their two-stroke engines, much like the latest models of personal watercraft and outboard engines. We also expect manufacturers to increase the number of snowmobiles that use four-stroke engines.

How much will these controls cost?

We estimate that the range of costs for meeting the proposed regulations to be about \$50 for a modified two-stroke engine, \$300 for direct-injection technology, and up to \$900 for a four-stroke engine with fuel injection. However, direct-injection and four-stroke technologies reduce fuel and oil consumption, offsetting the expected additional cost of emission controls.

How will these controls affect performance and safety?

We don't expect the controls to harm performance or safety. Manufacturers have made many advancements in snowmobile designs over the last few years and will have several years of lead-time to perfect designs. Engine modifications and fuel system advancements should allow similar or better performance to your current snowmobile. Direct fuel injection could provide improved performance over today's snowmobiles that use a carburetor. Four-stroke engines also have the ability to provide similar performance your current snowmobile with a two-stroke engine. None of the emission controls manufacturers are considering affect safety.

Will these regulations affect where I can ride my snowmobile?

No. The proposed regulations don't restrict your use. They cover only the exhaust emissions from your new snowmobile.

Will there be noise regulations?

We are not proposing any noise regulations. Most snowmobile manufacturers design snowmobiles that already meet voluntary noise standards for snowmobiles. But we do ask for comment on whether we should establish mandatory noise standards.

Where can I get more information?

Keep an eye on the EPA recreational vehicle web page (<http://www.epa.gov/otaq/recveh.htm>) for more information and any developments. You may submit comments on the issues raised in this fact sheet or in the NPRM by sending an email to nranprm@epa.gov.

For further information, please contact Linc Wehrly at:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Transportation and Air Quality
2000 Traverwood Drive
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
(734) 214-4380