

# Snowmobile Tips: 10 Point Pre-Season Check

Is your sled ready for snowmobile season? If you're not sure, run your snowmobile through this 10 point pre-season snowmobile maintenance check to ensure when you hit the snow that you get a full day's ride, not a trailer ride back to the shop.

When you're finished the checklist you'll know what to pick up at your snowmobile parts store, and have a list of maintenance to do. Or, you may decide to take your machine to your local snowmobile service centre to get some things checked out further.

## Visual Outer Inspection

So you've reached your snowmobile at the back of the garage, and dug it out. The first thing you'll likely notice is a thick coat of summer dust over everything. If you have a neighbourhood carwash you may want to run the snowmobile through a wash and rinse cycle before you begin. If you're just using the garden hose you will likely need a bucket of soapy water as well.

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#1 — Once it's cleaned and dried, you can begin your visual inspection of the exterior of your sled. Start with the hood, checking for peeling decals, small cracks, cracked or deteriorated appearing hood latches and windshield fasteners.



Decals may sometimes be re-glued if they're not damaged or torn in any way. Use a product such as an emblem adhesive, following the instructions provided. Hood cracks in high-stress areas, such as where the hood latch holds it closed, should be repaired so that they don't run and make the hood unusable. Products are available for this at an autobody or auto parts store. In order to get the correct repair kit you must determine the type of material your hood is made of. If you are unsure contact your local snowmobile dealer and he should be able to provide you with the information. Follow the directions in your kit.

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#2 — Examine the seat cover for nicks or tears, and any area no longer correctly mounted. Read this [article with full directions](#) on how to recover your snowmobile seat.



Slightly damaged seat covers may be repaired by gluing a similar type fabric underneath, using contact cement, or a similar product. Repairs are not as likely to hold in a corner or high stress area. If the damage is severe replace the seat cover before the seat foam deteriorates. You may order a cover from your snowmobile dealership or take the seat to an upholstery shop. If you have loose fasteners or portions of the seat cover no longer anchored, remove the seat and re-anchor.

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#3 — Lift your sled onto a stand to do your visual inspection of the track and rear suspension. Check your sliders or hyfax for wear or deterioration. Check all suspension parts for obvious damage. Make sure all required idlers are present.

Worn sliders should be replaced. Order the appropriate ones from your snowmobile retailer or have your dealer perform the replacement. Bent or broken suspension parts should be straightened, repaired, or replaced. Missing parts, such as idlers, must be purchased and installed.

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#4 — Check track for tears, missing lugs, or missing track clips.

Track tears are not fixable—the track should be replaced. If you continue to drive a torn track it will eventually leave you on the trail. Missing lugs on a track can possibly be replaced at a track repair service centre, if available in your area. Any missing track clips must be replaced to avoid track damage. These can be replaced by purchasing a track-clip tool available through your snowmobile retailer, or by having your dealer perform the service.

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#5 — Either move the stand to the front of the sled, or tip the sled on its side, to do your visual inspection of the skis and runners. If you are using steel skis ensure there are no holes worn through and not bent out of shape. With plastic skis ensure they are not cut or gouged anywhere. On either steel or plastic skis, the runners must be checked for excessive wear and straightness.



Replace worn skis and/or runners. A runner in good shape that is just bent may be straightened using a vice and a hammer.

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## **Visual Under-the-Hood Inspection**

#6 — Begin your under-hood inspection with the sled's drive belt. Ensure that it isn't cracked, frayed, or worn. Also make sure that you still have a spare belt and didn't use it



last season.

Replace worn or damaged drive belts to avoid having them fail on the trails, as they may cause other damage to your sled at that time, plus leave you looking for a ride home.

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#7 — Your sled may have a fan or water-pump belt as part of its cooling system. Use your owner's manual to determine that the tension is correct. Check for cracks in the belts and glazing, or that the belt is shiny from slipping.



Replace worn, glazed, or cracked belts. Tighten loose belts or have your dealer perform the service.

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#8 — Locate your throttle and oil cables. Your visual inspection should determine if they are frayed or damaged. Check for any cable ties that have been broken or lost. Move to the brake cables or hydraulic lines, whichever you have on your sled. Look for frayed or damaged cables or lines.



Cables or lines not held securely in their correct routing positions should have missing fasteners replaced. All frayed, damaged, or broken cables must be replaced.

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#9 — Next, check all of your fluid levels: injection oil, coolant, brake fluid (if you have hydraulic brakes) and chaincase oil. Coolant should be full to the cold mark. Follow the instruction manual for your snowmobile for the correct procedure for checking your chaincase oil. On hydraulic brakes also check the fluid level in the master cylinder. Normally this is just a visual inspection of the clear reservoir in the master cylinder.



Fill your oil tank with an appropriate injection oil. If any fluid levels are low, you should investigate the reason to avoid serious problems with your snowmobile.

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#10 – Check exhaust springs and mounts, to make sure they are all present and tight.



Replace any springs or mounts that are worn or missing.

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## **Annual Fall Maintenance**

The number one cause of engine failure in first-season rides is a dirty carburetor. It is always recommended to clean your carbs at the start of the season. In order to clean your carbs you will require normal hand tools and a can of carb cleaner.

### Cleaning Carbs:

1. Remove the airbox using handtools if required.
2. Turn off fuel or crimp fuel lines.



3. Remove throttle and possibly choke cables, depending on your model.
4. Remove fuel, and possible primer lines, depending on your model.
5. Loosen carburetor mounts and remove carbs, remembering on multi-carburetored engines that sometimes PTO and Mag side carbs are different, so you must mark them.



6. As most modern snowmobile carbs are a float-bowl style, remove the float bowl.
7. Inspect inside the float bowl for residue.



8. Inspect the pilot and main jets, located in the carb main body, by holding them up to the light and trying to look through them.
9. Any carb pieces that are not residue-free should be soaked in carb cleaner, washed, and then blown dry. Re-inspect to make sure they are completely clean.
- 10.** Re-install the carbs reversing the original procedure.

Your snowmobile should also be greased each fall before beginning the new season. Follow your owner's manual directions to find all of the grease zerks. You'll require a grease gun and low temperature grease. Make sure you don't miss any points!



Well, you should be ready to hit the trails! Keep your fingers crossed for snow!