



## Falls Creek Alpine Resort

# Oversnow Vehicle Manual 2016

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# 1. Introduction

The Falls Creek Oversnow Vehicle Manual has been developed by the Falls Creek Resort Management Board (FCRM).

The aim of this manual is to improve safety relating to the operation of oversnow vehicles at Falls Creek. In particular, the very high danger created by the close interaction of oversnow vehicles, skiers/snowboarders and pedestrians all sharing the same roads within the village area. This document is informed by the FCRM Board Policy 3.9 Oversnow Vehicles (Policy) which sets out the framework for use of oversnow vehicles in accordance with Victorian legislative requirements.

**Falls Creek Resort Management determines the areas of permitted operation of all oversnow vehicles, and Oversnow Vehicle Permits are issued based only on a justifiable needs basis.**

**Being permitted to operate an oversnow vehicle at Falls Creek is a privilege, not a right.**

## 2. Definitions

In accordance with the Policy the following definitions apply:

**Vehicle** – Includes motor vehicles, motor cycles and trailers.

**Oversnow Vehicle** – A vehicle specifically designed for use on or over snow. Vehicles modified or adjusted allowing travel on or over snow are considered to be an oversnow vehicle.

## 3. Rules for Operating Oversnow Vehicles

You must adhere to the following rules when operating an oversnow vehicle at Falls Creek. Any non-compliance to these Oversnow Vehicle Rules could result in an infringement notice, loss of your Oversnow Vehicle License, loss of your Oversnow Vehicle Permit, impounding of your oversnow vehicle, or referral to Victoria Police.

### 3.1 Oversnow vehicle requirements

Each oversnow vehicle must:

1. be registered in the State of Victoria and have registration plates attached to the vehicle, and
2. display a current Oversnow Vehicle Permit Sticker issued by FCRM. Oversnow Vehicle Permit Stickers are issued annually for each snow season.

All oversnow vehicles must be in a mechanical operating condition suitable for the intended purpose. All safety features of the vehicle must be fully operational. **Do not operate a vehicle if you doubt that it is in a 100% safe condition to do so.**

In addition all oversnow vehicles must comply with the relevant emissions, noise, electromagnetic interference and road worthy Government Acts, Regulations and/or Standards.

Refer to the Policy for further details.

### 3.2 Individual operator requirements

Each individual oversnow vehicle operator requires:

1. a current drivers licence, and
2. a current permit card issued in their name by FCRM. Permit cards are issued on an annual basis for the duration of the current snow season.

**The drivers licence and permit card must be carried by the operator at all times the vehicle is in use.**

Refer to the Policy for further details.

### 3.3 Operator training

Employers must ensure they comply with the Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 with respect to the duty of care to all employees. This means ensuring they are sufficiently trained for the duties of their respective employment, including use of oversnow vehicles.

**All new users of snowmobiles must have mandatory training prior to use.** A permit card will not be issued for any new users until such training has been satisfactorily completed. The Board will provide 'free of charge' operator training for snowmobiles run by the Ski Patrol. It is strongly recommended that all operators of snowmobiles undertake this training to ensure they are familiar with safe operation of these vehicles.

### 3.4 Areas of use

**Oversnow vehicle permits have restricted areas of use.** The areas that you are allowed to operate an oversnow vehicle in is determined by the type of permit sticker issued by FCRM to that snowmobile, as follows:

- **YELLOW permit (issued to most Commercial Operators)**  
The vehicle can only be operated within the Falls Creek Village Area and only on the following FCRM endorsed local roads:
  - Snowgums Lane
  - Slalom Street (excluding the parking area at the start of Slalom Street just off Bogong High Plains Road)
  - Arlberg Street
  - Parallel Street
  - Schuss Street
  - Telemark Street
  - Christie Street
  - Falls Creek Road

Oversnow vehicles are not permitted to be operated on any other area within the Falls Creek Village Area including:

- Diana Trail;

- The access track commonly known as “Heart Attack Hill” located beyond the end of Schuss Street and down to the Village Bowl; and
- Areas between buildings throughout the village other than designated vehicle driveways.

Please refer to the Attachment highlighting the permitted area of use.

- RED permit (issued to Falls Creek Ski Lifts and limited Commercial Skifield Operators)  
The vehicle can only be operated within the Falls Creek Village Area and the Ski Field Area.
- BLUE permit (issued only to FCRM, Victoria Police, CFA, Ambulance Victoria, SES, Parks Victoria and AGL)  
The vehicle can be operated within the Falls Creek Village Area, within FCRM’s resort area boundary including the Ski Field Area, and throughout the Bogong High Plains. Note that FCRM, Ambulance Victoria and SES oversnow vehicles can only be operated on the Bogong High Plains beyond FCRM’s resort area boundary during search & rescue call-outs, training sessions and special events (only when approved by Parks Victoria).

### 3.5 Alcohol and drugs

You must not operate an oversnow vehicle if you are affected by alcohol or illicit drugs over the legal limit in accordance with Victorian State Law.

### 3.6 Speed limits and Other Users

**The speed limit for snowmobiles is 15 km/hr within the Village Area and 40 km/hr within the Ski Lift Area.** Please adhere to these speed limits which have been determined to help increase the safety of pedestrian and skier/snowboarder traffic, especially for children who are often less observant of vehicles and more unpredictable in their movements.

**When travelling near pedestrians reduce your speed to walking pace.**

**Operators of any Oversnow vehicle MUST give way to all skiers, snowboarders and pedestrians within the village.**

**All downhill Oversnow vehicles MUST give way to uphill traffic within the village**

**All Oversnow traffic MUST keep to the left side of the road.**

All operators are reminded that the village roads are a shared roadway throughout the year.

### 3.7 Helmets

Operators and passengers of all oversnow vehicles without ROPS and seatbelts fitted must wear an approved ski helmet or a protective vehicle helmet. Ski helmets must comply with the CEN 1077 standard (or equivalent) and protective vehicle helmets must comply with AS1698:2006 or UN/ECE 22.05. The only exception is the Ski Patrol, Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria and SES, who may transport members of the public without a helmet as a passenger on a snowmobile when responding to an incident.

### 3.8 Protective equipment

In addition to wearing helmets, it is recommended that operators and passengers of oversnow vehicles also wear:

- Eye protection – either goggles or sunglasses, depending on weather conditions.
- Gloves.
- Clothing appropriate for the weather conditions.
- Footwear appropriate for walking on snow.

### 3.9 Oversnow vehicle accidents

**If you are involved in an accident you must:**

- Stop immediately.
- Move your vehicle to a safe location if appropriate, and turn off the engine and apply the park brake.
- Protect the area to make sure that another accident does not occur. E.g. ask any bystanders to stop traffic from entering the scene of the accident.
- Give help to any injured person.
- Remove all debris from the area.
- Provide your name, address, registration number, and vehicle owner's name to others involved in the crash, or their representative, and to the police (if they are there).
- If anyone is injured and the police are not at the crash, you must report the crash to the nearest open police station.
- If there is any property damage and the owner (or police) is not there, you must report the crash to the nearest open police station.
- **Call 000 to contact any Emergency Services (Police, Ambulance, Fire) that may be required.**

## 4. Oversnow Vehicle Safety

You are responsible for the safe operation of your oversnow vehicle. Remember there may be noticeable handling differences from one oversnow vehicle to the next and rapid changes in snow conditions. You must follow the designated oversnow vehicle routes, speed limits and all operational guidelines. This is CRITICAL to ensure the safe operation of an oversnow vehicle.

Oversnow vehicles are relatively simple to operate but like any vehicles they can be hazardous if you are reckless, thoughtless or inattentive. The key to safe operation is YOUR knowledge of the oversnow vehicle, recognising and accepting it as a machine, respecting its capabilities and limitations, adjusting your driving speed and techniques according to varying operating conditions, knowledge of safety rules and good judgment. Recognising and respecting your own capabilities and limitations is also a very important factor for the safe operation of an oversnow vehicle. A slight miscalculation in your machine handling ability can dramatically increase the risk of a serious accident.

### Safety tips for operating an oversnow vehicle:

We are constantly trying to improve the skiing and snowboarding product for our guests, so please keep the following key points in mind when operating an oversnow vehicle:

- **Always ride with safety as your priority.**
- DO NOT exceed the designated speed limits. **The speed limit for oversnow vehicles in the village is 15 km/hr and 40 km/hr within the ski area.**
- **Try to limit oversnow vehicle travel to essential day use only.** Walk or ski where possible. Reducing your oversnow vehicle use will reduce the risk of an incident with another vehicle, pedestrian or skier/snowboarder. Many guests also view oversnow vehicles as a noisy and smelly nuisances which detracts from their alpine experience.
- **Do not operate an oversnow vehicle in the Village Area at night unless for critical work or emergency response related matters.**
- Ensure the snowmobile that you are operating has a working headlight and tail light. Use extra caution riding at night since there is likely to be more activity that is hard to see in and around village streets. Quite often at night when the village is full of snow, kids will be out tobogganing and playing out around the village.
- Complete a thorough pre-start check before operating the oversnow vehicle.
- Wear appropriate clothing. Loose clothing may catch on stationary objects or in the oversnow vehicle's moving parts.
- Any rope/bungy cords should be securely fastened.

- Follow designated oversnow vehicle routes when traveling around the village. The only exemption is the Ski Patrol or emergency services organisations when responding to an incident.
- Be aware of any oncoming vehicles and skiers/snowboarders riding down the road to help reduce the chance of a collision. Always drive on the left side of the road within the village.
- **All pedestrians, skiers and snowboarders have right-of-way at all times.** When approaching guests throughout the village, slow down, watch them carefully, try and make eye contact to ensure that they've seen you. A friendly wave tells them that you see them. Do not try and anticipate a skier/snowboarder's line of travel, particularly with children. If unsure of their actions, STOP!
- Give way to other oversnow traffic travelling uphill. Causing uphill traffic to stop results in a more difficult re-start position and can cause other safety hazards.
- Use caution when carrying passengers. **When operating a snowmobile, do not carry more than 1 adult passenger seated behind the driver, or 1 adult passenger seated behind the driver + 1 small child passenger seated in front of the driver.**
- When transporting goods ensure that they are secured safely to the oversnow vehicle and will not interfere with your ability to safely operate the machine.
- **Exercise extreme caution when conditions are icy.**
- Where it is necessary to ride/drive on a ski run, keep to the very edge to avoid guests and grooming.
- **Minimising use of oversnow vehicles on ski runs is a key priority to ensure skier safety.** It is an FCRM requirement that use of oversnow vehicles on ski runs is to be minimised, in particular crossing of Wombats Ramble. Failure to abide by this requirement may result in your permit being revoked.
- Be aware of hazards such as rope lines, partially buried objects, snow drifts near fences and stockpiles of snow.
- Stay clear of fresh snowmaking and snowmaking equipment. Try to avoid operating an oversnow vehicle on freshly groomed or soft snow, since ruts created in fresh grooming or soft snow can freeze to become a safety hazard and reduce the visual impact of a well-groomed slope.
- When moving off:
  - Gradual acceleration will reduce track/wheel spin and belt wear (on snowmobiles).
  - Avoid starting off uphill especially when loaded or carrying a passenger.
- When parking:
  - Park out of skier/snowboarder traffic.
  - Always park the oversnow vehicle in forward gear.



- Never park and leave an oversnow vehicle in reverse, since this is very dangerous for the next person operating it.
  - Apply the park brake and switch off the motor.
  - If parking on a slope, always park across the slope and never with the machine pointing uphill or downhill, because you should never rely totally on the park brake.
  - Do not park your oversnow vehicle in No Standing areas, or in front of garbage sheds or fire hydrants. Infringements will apply for incorrect parking.
- Ensure that your oversnow vehicle is kept in good mechanical order. Be aware of unusual noises and changes in the machines behavior. Expensive repairs can often be avoided if your mechanic is notified early of a potential problem with your oversnow vehicle.

## 5. Snowmobile Specific Operating Tips

This section includes some suggestions on how to best operate and maintain a snowmobile.

### 5.1 Pre-Start Checks

Always complete a pre-start inspection before you turn on the ignition. The pre-start inspection should include:

- **Emergency stop switch** – Ensure that the emergency stop switch (kill button) is clear of ice and operates freely.
- **Throttle** – Operate the throttle 2 or 3 times before you turn on the ignition. Check it returns freely to the normal position.
- **Brake** – Operate the brake 2 or 3 times before you turn on the ignition. Check it returns freely to the normal position.
- **Lights** – Check that all lights operate correctly.
- **Fuel and oil** – Check fuel and oils levels are at the correct operating level. Also ensure that your fuel and oil are appropriately stored.
- **Steering** – Inspect the skis at the front of the snowmobile and move them manually from side to side to ensure the skis and the steering components are clear of ice.
- **Track** – Ensure that the track is free of a build-up of snow and/or ice. Check the track for wear and damage. Make sure there is nothing obstructing the track, and that it is not frozen to the snow. Rocking the snowmobile from side to side while standing on the running boards will help to break any ice connection between the track and the snow, and between the track and snowmobile's running gear.
- **Running boards** – Clear any snow and/or ice from the running boards so that your feet can be placed firmly on the running boards.
- **Visual inspection** – Inspect the entire snowmobile for loose or worn parts. Make certain the bonnet is fastened correctly. Remove any snow and ice built up on the seat, lights, windshield and running boards.

Snowmobile engine covers are fragile. Care must be taken whenever the engine cover is opened, especially on windy days. Face the snowmobile into the breeze before opening the engine cover and always secure all engine cover straps after closing.

### 5.2 Starting a snowmobile

Before you start the snowmobile ensure that no one is standing in front of or behind the snowmobile.

Be aware that upon starting a snowmobile it may instantly accelerate due to the throttle sticking from ice. On snowmobiles with safety leashes, it is recommended to hold this leash while starting. For snowmobiles without safety leashes, keep your hand over the emergency stop switch and use it if necessary.

Steps to start a snowmobile:

- Reset the emergency stop switch and connect the tether switch.
- Turn the ignition key to the 'ON' position.
- Check that the gearbox is in neutral or the forward position.
- For snowmobiles without an automatic choke – engage the choke or press the primer only if the engine is cold.
- For snowmobiles with electric ignition – turn the ignition key to engage the starter motor.
- For snowmobiles with a pull-starter – pull the starter handle slowly until you feel resistance and then briskly and smoothly pull the starter handle to start.
- As the engine starts, release the ignition key OR allow the starter handle rope to retract into its carrier.

While the engine is warming up, check the headlights, tail lights and brake lights are working, and press the emergency stop switch (kill button) to be certain it will stop the engine.

Restart your engine and check the park brake is off.

Allow the engine to warm up for 1 minute before moving and 5 minutes before operating under heavy load.

Each snowmobile has its own starting traits. After a little experience, you will learn how different snowmobiles react to priming (if required), choking (if required) and to throttle pressure when the engine is cold or warm.

When a snowmobile is left out in the weather it may require driving the machine forward and backwards short distances to clear the driving mechanism of snow/ice before moving off.

### **5.3 Riding a snowmobile**

Your riding position and your balance are the two basic elements of making a snowmobile go where you want. When turning on uneven terrain or on the side of a hill, you need to be ready to shift your weight to help the machine go in the direction you want it to go. Only experience will teach you how much lean to put into turns at different speeds, and how much you will have to lean into a slope to maintain proper balance.

When operating a snowmobile over familiar terrain, you should sit on the snowmobile with your body mid-way back on the seat and your feet on the running boards. Knees and hips should remain flexible to absorb bumps.

When operating a snowmobile over uneven terrain, you may need to stand on the running boards, or kneel with one leg on the seat and one on the running board, with knees flexed to absorb the surface bumps. This is an effective position to improve vision and to be able to shift your weight as conditions dictate. Avoid quick stops whilst standing or kneeling on a snowmobile.

Do not turn or accelerate aggressively especially in low or soft snow.

When riding at night always check that all lights are operational.

All snowmobiles are belt driven and in some circumstances the belt will begin to overheat, causing a strong burning rubber smell. This is a warning sign to immediately stop whatever you are doing. A belt will only burn if something is stopping your forward progress. This could be for a number of reasons such as the ski's are iced to the ground, the snowmobile is badly bogged, the track is iced up, or the track is clogged with packed snow or a foreign object. Rectify the problem and try again.

Track components are not designed to hit dirt, rocks, stumps or other hard objects, so take care in fresh snow or poor visibility conditions.

Some snow conditions offer very little traction. Wet spring slush or sheet ice can cause total loss of control, even on gentle slopes. Keep this in mind especially when riding near skiers/snowboarders and take an alternative route if necessary.

Snowmobiles are heavy, especially when stuck in sticky fresh snow. If you bog a snowmobile, don't risk injuring your back by trying to free it by yourself. Call for help to get it unstuck.

**Always apply the handbrake or park across the slope when leaving your machine.**

## 5.4 Uphill Riding

On a direct climb up a hill, accelerate before you start the climb and then reduce acceleration to prevent track slippage. The speed of the snowmobile should be as fast as the incline demands. As you approach a crest, slow down and stand or kneel to improve your visibility.

When climbing steep hills or in warm spring conditions with wet snow, don't use full power. Excessive track spin only makes climbing more difficult and can cause the engine to overheat. If your snowmobile is struggling to climb a slope, back off and find an alternative route.

If having difficulty when climbing a hill another approach to take is at an angle. You may adopt a kneeling position and keep your weight on the uphill side at all times. Maintain a steady, safe speed. Continue as far as you can in this direction, then switch to the opposite hill angle and riding position.

If you cannot make it up the hill, do not spin your track. Turn the engine off, pull the machine around by hand (holding the front skis) to face the skis downhill, restart the engine and ease it out with slow, even throttle pressure. Position yourself to avoid tipping over, and then descend the hill. Call for assistance if necessary.

## 5.5 Downhill Riding

Downhill riding requires that you have full control of the snowmobile at all times. On steeper hills, keep your centre of gravity low and both hands on the handlebars. Maintain slight throttle pressure, and allow the machine to run downhill with the engine operating. If a higher than safe speed is reached, slow down by braking, but apply the brakes with frequent light pressure. Never brake hard or it can lock up the track causing the snowmobile to slide uncontrollably.

## 5.6 Side Hill Riding or Traversing

When crossing a side hill or traversing up or downhill, you and any passengers should lean uphill as required to help improve stability. The best riding position is the kneeling position, with the knee of the downhill leg on the seat and the foot of the uphill leg on the running board. You can then shift your weight quickly as needed.

## 5.7 Turning a Snowmobile

To turn or corner a snowmobile, you need to lean towards the inside of the turn and position your body weight on the inside foot which will create a banking condition beneath the track. By taking this position and positioning yourself as far forward as possible on the snowmobile, weight will be transferred to the inside ski to help the snowmobile turn.

## 5.8 Deep Snow and Spring Snow

In deep snow or wet spring snow, your snowmobile could begin to bog down. If this occurs, turn in as wide an arc as possible and look for a firmer base. If you do get bogged do not spin the track as this makes the snowmobile sink even deeper. Stop, trample the snow around the snowmobile, stand on the running boards and gently rock the snowmobile as you gradually apply the throttle. Do not place any foreign material beneath the track. If this is unsuccessful, call for assistance to lift the rear of the snowmobile onto firmer, trampled snow.

## 5.9 Hard Packed Snow

Hard packed snow can be difficult to negotiate, as both the skis and the track do not have much traction. The best approach is to slow down and avoid rapid acceleration, turning or braking.

## 5.10 Icy Conditions

In icy conditions you have virtually no control over a snowmobile and this can be extremely hazardous. If you are concerned about the safety of conditions for riding a snowmobile, ask other more experienced snowmobile operators for guidance regarding mountain conditions. **Do not ride a snowmobile if you have any concerns about putting yourself or any passenger(s) at risk.** If you find yourself in a situation where your snowmobile is sliding sideways, as with motor vehicles, the recommended approach is to counter-steer in the direction you want to go and gently accelerate. Do not brake hard, which will most likely lock up the track and worsen the sliding.

### 5.11 Poor Visibility

Use extreme caution when travelling in poor visibility. In such conditions your reaction time can be significantly reduced. Low light, fog, snow and ice can all make it harder to view objects from a distance. In poor visibility, travel very slowly and watch out for hazards. If you are unsure of your way, do not proceed.

### 5.12 Carrying Passengers

**When operating a snowmobile, do not carry more than 1 adult passenger seated behind the driver, or 1 adult passenger seated behind the driver + 1 small child passenger seated in front of the driver.**

Overloading is dangerous and the machines are not designed for it. Make sure you instruct your passenger to maintain a firm grasp on of the passenger strap or grips and keep their feet on the running boards.

Your passenger has to rely on your careful and safe operation of the snowmobile. Ride at slower speeds. Warn your passenger of side hills, bumps, etc, since visibility ahead of the snowmobile is limited for the passenger. An unseen bump can cause your passenger to be thrown off. Ask your passenger to lean into any turn with you, and to lean uphill if you do so when crossing a slope. Be careful, slow down and check your passenger frequently.

Use extra care and go very slowly with young passengers. Check frequently to make certain the child has a firm grip and is properly positioned with their feet on the running boards. Extra smooth starting and stopping is required. In the case of small children you may decide to ride with the child in front of you for greater safety of the child.

### 5.13 Towing Trailers

**All trailers must have a permit for operation within the resort.**

**All trailers must have a safety strap or chain.** Trailers should be loaded with the lowest possible centre of gravity. Use a rigid tow bar when pulling a trailer behind a snowmobile. The trailer should also have reflective material on both sides and at the rear. Take care when travelling and turning near other people while towing a trailer and ensure that there is plenty of clearance. Do not overload the trailer and have materials hanging out the sides that may strike objects as you travel. Reduce your speed when towing, and be aware that the snowmobile's steering might not be as tight or responsive as normal.

### 5.14 Stopping a snowmobile

Remember that a snowmobile cannot stop quickly. Braking characteristics vary with icy conditions and deep or packed snow. Be aware that the tracks can lock during hard braking and skidding may occur.

How to stop a snowmobile under all conditions:

- Release the throttle and gradually depress on the brake lever until the snowmobile comes to a stop.
- Once stopped, turn the ignition key to the 'OFF' position and apply park brake.

- In an emergency, use the emergency stop switch (kill button) located near the throttle and apply the brake.
- Never leave your snowmobile parked in reverse.

### **5.15 Parking a snowmobile**

When parking a snowmobile ensure that it is visible to operators of other oversnow vehicles, skiers and snowboarders. If stopping on a slope, park the snowmobile across the slope. Turn the ignition key to the 'OFF' position and apply park brake. At night park your snowmobile in a safe location where it cannot be tampered with. It may be necessary to chain and lock your snowmobile if parked in the Village Area.

## **6. Attachments**

- Yellow (Village) Permit Access Zone Map



# FallsCreek VILLAGE SNOWMOBILE PERMIT ZONE

