



TO District Foresters
Division Chiefs
Penn Nursery

FROM Jason M. Hall
Chief, Recreation Section

DATE December 28, 2016

RE Reducing the Minimum Age Requirement for Online Snowmobile Safety Training.

The DCNR-Bureau of Forestry currently offers classroom Snowmobile Safety Training for youth operators between the ages of 10-15 years of age. Classes are typically set up by an instructor or by a group of instructors and conducts the one day training. After successfully completing the course, the youth are then provided with their Snowmobile Safety Certificate that is required for them to be able to operate a snowmobile on public lands. In 2012, the Bureau of Forestry started to provide online Snowmobile safety training as an option for individuals 16 years of age or older.

As with most states, Pennsylvania currently does not require a “hands-on” riding component with the snowmobile safety class as is required as part of the ATV safety training. Presently, the online training was reserved for individuals that were 16 years of age or older. This is because DCNR’s snowmobile safety instructors were only permitted to instructor youth operators. Chapter 77 of the PA Vehicle Code allows DCNR to accept snowmobile safety certificates received from other states. Many of these trainings are provided through an online training or in a classroom similar to Pennsylvania. However, the majority of the states that offer online training allow youth operators to take the training online. Sometimes Pennsylvania residents can find it difficult to locate a snowmobile safety class that is conveniently located to them or to find an available class at all. Hence, the online training is seen as a means to improve access to the safety training. Since Pennsylvania’s current snowmobile training only requires a classroom type training, it is felt that opening the online training to youth operators as young as 10 would improve the access to the required trainings while still providing them with an acceptable level of training.

Therefore, the DCNR, Bureau of Forestry has decided there is a benefit to the public by reducing the minimum age individuals are able to complete the Snowmobile Safety Training online and the age should be reduced from 16 years of age to 10 years of age. The Recreation Section has made contact with Kalkomey Enterprises, LLC (host of the online training site) and has requested the change to be made. The Bureau of Forestry expects the change to be officially in effect by January 1, 2017.