



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2005 Wisconsin Act 210
[2005 Assembly Bill 566]

Snowmobile Noise Limits

Prior law required that snowmobiles manufactured after July 1, 1972 and sold in Wisconsin meet the following total vehicle noise limits, as measured by Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) standards:

- For snowmobiles manufactured between July 1, 1972 and July 1, 1975, no more than 82 decibels of A sound pressure at 50 feet.
- For snowmobiles manufactured after July 1, 1975, no more than 78 decibels of A sound pressure.

Prior law also specified that no snowmobile shall be modified by any person in a manner that increases total noise emission above that emitted by the snowmobile as originally constructed, regardless of the date of manufacture. Also, all snowmobiles manufactured, sold, or operated in Wisconsin must have a muffler in good working order that prevents excessive or unusual noise.

These noise standards did not apply to snowmobiles competing in a sanctioned race or derby or to snowmobiles being tested by manufacturers, distributors, or dealers on lands under their control.

2005 Wisconsin Act 210 results in the following noise standards and muffler requirements for snowmobiles:

Total Vehicle Noise Standards for New Snowmobiles

- Every snowmobile manufactured on or after July 2, 1975 that is sold in Wisconsin as a new snowmobile must be manufactured so as to limit total vehicle noise to not more than 78 decibels of A sound pressure, as measured by SAE standards.

This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents at the Legislature's Web site at: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/>.

- No snowmobile may be modified by any person in a manner that increases total vehicle noise above that emitted by the snowmobile as originally manufactured, regardless of the date of manufacture.

Exhaust and Engine Noise Level Standards for Operating Snowmobiles

- For a snowmobile manufactured after July 1, 1972 and before July 2, 1975, the exhaust and engine noise level standard is 90 decibels, as measured by the specified SAE standard for measuring exhaust sound levels of stationary snowmobiles.
- For a snowmobile manufactured on or after July 2, 1975, the exhaust and engine noise level standard is 88 decibels, as measured by the specified SAE standard for measuring exhaust sound levels of stationary snowmobiles. After May 1, 2008, the Department of Natural Resources may modify this noise level standard by rule, after consulting with the Snowmobile Recreational Council.

Muffler Requirements

- No snowmobile may be manufactured, sold, or operated in Wisconsin unless it is equipped with a muffler in good working order.
- For snowmobiles manufactured after July 1, 1972, a muffler is in “good working order” if it prevents exhaust and engine noise that exceeds the applicable exhaust and engine noise level standards described above.

Exemption

- All of the noise standards and muffler requirements described above do not apply to snowmobiles competing in a sanctioned race or derby or to snowmobiles being tested by manufacturers, distributors, or dealers on lands under their control.

In testimony before the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Transportation, staff from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) indicated that the department’s wardens will use the SAE stationary snowmobile noise level test specified in the Act to determine whether a snowmobile being operated in the field is violating the applicable exhaust and engine noise level standard identified above.

Effective Date: In general, Act 210 takes effect on April 11, 2006. The delayed authority for DNR to modify the exhaust and engine noise level standard for newer snowmobiles takes effect on May 1, 2008.

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