

## What's the right sled for you?

There are four different brands of snowmachines on the market. For the past few years, Ski-doo has been the #1 manufacturer on the market, for several reasons beginning with the revolutionary new Rev platform that Ski-doo unveiled in 2003. Super clean burning direct injected two stroke engines, the new generation 4 stroke engines, and unmatched power to weight ratios are just a few other reasons that consumers have been flocking to Ski-doo showrooms across the country.

*There are currently well over 40 different Ski-Doo models to choose from, and picking the right machine for you and your style of riding is very important. It's nice to make a good selection the first time around, and with the right sled you'll be embarking on an exciting life sport that you, your friends, and your entire family can enjoy for many years to come.*

### How you ride

There are not a lot of groomed trails in Alaska, and even less in the interior. One of the advantages to riding in the interior is the almost unlimited access, without regulation, limits, permits, etc. as you see almost everywhere else in the US snow belt. Fortunately, the ride quality of these new Ski-doo's have become so good, that a full day of riding no longer requires hours in a hot tub for recovery. But determining your own riding style is critical in deciding which new model to select. Trail riding, deep powder mountain riding, river running, hunting, cargo hauling, racing... there are multiple models that fit each category. These factors and more are important in making a choice because no one machine will do it all, and one designed for a certain set of conditions will vastly outperform another which is not. Here are some of the design factors that will affect your choice.

### Track Length & Depth

Short track or long track? Full-size Ski-Doo snowmachines are built using tracks from 121" long to 159" long with a new, wider standard width of 16" on many models. The longer (and wider) a track the bigger footprint it has on the snow and the more weight it will carry without bogging down or sinking in the snow. Short tracks with shallow lugs turn more quickly and will reach a higher top speed because they create less drag. You'll find short tracks on most high performance "bump" sleds designed for trail or track use. "Powder" or "mountain" sleds have long tracks with deep lugs to pull a huge amount of snow through the system and provide higher flotation in deep conditions. Utility or touring sleds designed to carry more than one person all have long tracks. Most of our WT (widetrack) models now use a 154" long by 20" wide track, with track 1.25" track lugs for better bite and pulling power. Track lug depths start at about .75" and go to 2" or more. The deeper the lugs the more snow the track will move as long as the machine has enough power to do it. But there are compromises here. Deep lugs work well in powder when you get off packed trails, but in hard conditions the lugs will flex and affect handling when pushed hard. They also cause drag and

cut down on the top speed of a machine. If pure speed and maneuverability is your goal, stick with a modest track depth. You can even have us change the stock track on almost any machine we sell depending on your specific use.

## **What's under the hood?**

All Ski-Doos are powered by the best engine in the business, the world-renowned Rotax engines in either 2-stroke, 2-stroke Semi-Direct Injection (SDI), the revolutionary new E-tec fully direct injected engines, or a pair of impressive, super efficient 4-stroke models. These engines range in size from a 277cc single cylinder to a 1200cc twin. You don't need a huge engine or spend a ton of money to get up and go. Even a modest 500cc fan-cooled engine will propel most riders to 70MPH on level terrain and get outstanding fuel economy doing it. Big liquid-cooled motors produce a higher top end speed if geared properly, and provide a larger margin of power when needed. For a highly skilled rider, lots of power is a wonderful thing, but too much can get novices in trouble.

## **Type of Suspensions**

Do not assume that you want a suspension set up extra softy and cushy for the best ride. These new high tech suspensions are almost all fully adjustable, and primarily determined by both driver weight and even more important, riding style. What you want is a suspension with components that deliver a comfortable and competent ride at the velocities you normally travel. A racing type suspension may work well at high speeds, it's probably going to be stiff and hard if you spend most of your time at moderate speeds. Some of the newest equipment has intelligent "variable rate" shocks that you can fine tune both the rebound and dampening effect with a simple "click" on the shock body. These models give you a great ride over an even broader range of riding speeds and terrain.

## **The front end choices**

Ski stance is a measure of how wide the front end of the machine is. The wider the stance the more stable the sled is (less inclined to tip from side to side when turning). Wide is good for most trail riding in fairly flat country. The narrower the stance the more dynamic the sled is (less stable laterally) and easier to roll on its side. This is great for maneuvering in powder where you want to be able to use your weight to pull the sled to one side or the other to carve turns or side-hill on one ski along a steep incline. That rubber hand strap you see between the handlebars on most of our models is called a "side-hiller strap". It allows the rider to hang off the uphill side of the sled, using their body weight as leverage to manipulate the sled and better maneuver it when sidehilling. Narrow is also good if you need to maneuver between trees that are close together, or if you are trapping in areas with extremely narrow trails. (They'll narrow for a reason!) Most utility and mountain sleds (Tundra, Skandics, and Summits) have narrow ski stances.

## Number of Riders

One-up, two-up seats? We even have some three-seaters available. If you plan to carry someone else on the machine, you need a place for them to sit comfortably and safely. Touring and Skandic models have two-up seats. Most others can be retrofitted if desired, though a long track suspension supports two riders better than a short track. If you're going to ride two-up most of the time, get a machine designed for that purpose. Our GTX models feature a rear innovate "convertible seat" The passenger portion of the seat can be removed in 2 seconds, and an action packer fits perfectly in its space. This is great when you want to go ice fishing, hunting, or those times when you will not be taking a passenger along.

## Riding areas/Riding Clubs

If you're going to spend a lot of time riding in a group it's a good idea to choose a similar type of machine to what the others ride. If they're all on short tracks, you're getting a Summit will probably put you at a disadvantage. Likewise if they all ride long tracks and you pick a bump sled, you might have trouble keeping up off the trail. If you're just starting out, pick your power wisely. It's good to have enough so you can keep up and you won't outgrow it right away, but bigger is not always better. Around Fairbanks, there are a lot of different types of riding areas. For the novice riders, local trails and rivers (once frozen) are excellent choices. (Never ride alone in a new area.) If you are not into high speed, and want to experience a beautiful, well maintained local trail with excellent scenery, try the new Compeau trail at 30 miles Chena Hot Springs road. You can even stay at the Colorado creek cabin for a nominal fee (\$10 a night). Check with State Parks for availability or to reserve the cabin. Two of the most popular areas that are only a couple hours by vehicle away from Fairbanks are the Cantwell area down the Parks Highway, and the Summit Lake area on the Richardson Highway. The Fairbanks SnoTravelers ([www.snowtravelers.org](http://www.snowtravelers.org)) meet monthly in the winter and generally organize at least 2-3 group rides a month, depending on snow conditions and temperature.

## Accessories

Most of our Ski-doo models are well-equipped machines right out of the crate, and you really don't need to hot-rod them to achieve a very high level of performance. Common accessory items include cover, luggage rack, skid plate for belly pan protection, electric start, and perhaps special skis or ski skins. We even have a heated dash bag, a hot dogger, which is a small container that is heated by your muffler for hot food on the go, and lots more. We also handle several types of cargo sleds for pulling freight and fuel behind your machine, including our ultra tough, Trapper Sled. This 100% UHMW cargo sled is one we build ourselves, and has been our best seller. See your salesman or friendly parts consultant for ideas, and ask for our new FREE Ski-doo parts and accessories catalogue.

## **Maintenance**

Compeau's has been doing business in Fairbanks since 1945 and has a highly competent staff of factory-trained technicians to help you keep your sled in top running order. Our three most senior technicians have a combined 75 years of snow machine technical service experience. When you need the best, most experienced troubleshooters in the business, you don't need to look any further than right here.

There are also things you can and should do to help your machine run better and last longer. Pay attention to how it's running. If something doesn't sound or feel right, check it out. Don't continue to operate it for a long period of time with something obviously wrong or going wrong. Read your owner's manual. Never let the injection oil get low or run out. Keep the moving parts greased. For liquid cooled models, ensure there is adequate coolant at all times. Keep the machine clean, treat it well, and it will serve you with distinction for a long time.

## **Courtesy and Safety**

Snowmachining tends to be a visible sport. As quiet and "invisible" our new sleds have become, there are some who don't appreciate you and your machine's presence. Do your best to be considerate of others and present yourself in the best light by respecting private property. Don't break the law. Do what you can to advance the sport in the eyes of all who observe you riding. One bad apple can ruin it for the rest of us. And please consider joining and attending the Fairbanks SnoTravelers ([www.snowtravelers.org](http://www.snowtravelers.org)) to stay up on current events, trail access meetings, and other local trail concerns.

Snowmachines are large and powerful, and improperly operated can be dangerous if not operated with respect and common sense. Don't let that happen. Be alert; think ahead; don't ride faster than conditions permit; and always give yourself enough space to maneuver out of harm's way if necessary. Always wear a helmet, eye protection, and proper clothing to keep you warm and dry. Remember, Alaska is the kind of place in which it doesn't take much to create a real survival situation. Be prepared and you'll have a lot more fun. We here at Compeau's are fully stocked with ultra warm and comfortable Ski-doo snowmachine gear to keep you warm and comfortable while you are enjoying this fun and exciting sport.

-Thanks and enjoy your new Ski-doo. See you on the trail!