



SHERIFF KOOTENAI COUNTY



SHERIFF **BEN WOLFINGER**

UNDERSHERIFF **DAN MATTOS**

MEDIA RELEASE DECEMBER 10, 2014

Even though there is very little snow accumulation in low areas of Kootenai County, there is upwards of a foot or more in the higher elevations. The Kootenai County Sheriff's Office reminds all recreational users to take necessary precautions when traveling in the mountainous areas to ensure their safe return. Depending on elevation and temperature these roads can turn to ice very quickly resulting in reduced traction. In recent weeks there have been several traffic accidents on the forest roads. Some of these have involved serious injuries to the occupants.

When users decide to venture out into the woods they need to take some steps to help with their safety. Some of those steps are as simple as letting a relative or friend know where you are going, what route you will be taking and what time you will return. Equally important is for the users to follow their described route. In addition, when you decide to go into the woods, you should take some basic survival gear with you. This gear includes; food, water, extra warm clothing, fire starting materials and something to build a shelter. You may also want to consider having a flashlight and extra batteries.

Another way to ensure your safe return is to know your limitations. Do not venture into an area you are not familiar with, know what you are capable of doing and don't over-extend the ability of your vehicle when traveling through the snow and ice. When traveling on the icy forest roads it is recommended that you have tire chains and install them before you get into trouble.

The Kootenai County Sheriff's Office would also like to advise the public of a recent ordinance modification approved by the Board of County Commissioners. It involves the use of wheeled ATVs on groomed snowmobile trails. The ordinance now prohibits the use of wheeled ATVs on groomed snowmobile trails; however ATVs and UTVs (OHVs) under 2000 pounds and under 74 inches in width are now allowed on the groomed trails as long as the OHV is equipped with tracks to go over snow. As before the vehicle must display a snowmobile registration and groomer sticker. If you have any question please call the Kootenai County Sheriff's Recreation Safety Section at 446-2250.

The Kootenai County Sheriff's Office wants everyone to enjoy the backcountry and all the recreational activities it provides, but we also want everyone to have a safe return.

Sheriff Ben Wolfinger
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