

Case 482. 65-year-old park ranger died when his JD Gator XUV 625i was struck broadside by a snowmobile while grooming a ski trail.

A 65-year-old male park ranger died when his JD Gator XUV 625i was struck broadside by a snowmobile while grooming a ski trail. The decedent was operating a JD Gator XUV 625i pulling a 6-foot wide by 6-foot long snow drag. Trail A was a ski trail and ran north-south. The decedent was travelling southbound on the 8-foot wide Trail A grooming the trail. A stop sign was posted on both the north and south sides of Trail A. Trail B, a designated snowmobile trail, ran east-west. Snowmobile driver #1 was traveling eastbound on Trail B. At the site of the incident, there was limited view from Trail A to oncoming snowmobile traffic on Trail B and on Trail B, there was approximately one mile of straight snowmobile pathway in both the east and west directions. Trail B had yield signs posted on both the east and west sides of the trail approximately 50 yards from the intersection of Trail A and Trail B. Both trails had wooded areas on each side. The decedent's vehicle was in the intersection of the two trails when the Driver #1 broadsided the decedent's vehicle. Both vehicles became engulfed in flames. A second snowmobiler driver (Driver #2) was trailing Driver #1 by several hundred yards and did not see the collision. When Driver #2 arrived at the scene, the vehicles were on fire. Driver #2 was able to extract Driver #1 from the wreckage, but was unable to extract the decedent. The decedent died in the wreckage on fire before first responders were able to remove him.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division did not issue a citation to the employer at the conclusion of its investigation.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following Safety and Health Recommendation to the employer at the conclusion of its investigation.

Safety and Health Recommendation: An inspection/investigation of your worksite revealed the following condition(s) that may constitute a safety or health hazard to your employee(s).

- Consider providing grooming equipment with additional warning/flashing lights.
- Consider retraining all employees of the existing rail signage, the need to obey signage, and grooming procedures.