

Sled Safety Tips

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Sledding is an activity that can be enjoyed by parents and children alike. You can find equipment ranging from toboggans to snow disks. However, all sledding equipment was designed to be used either lying down or sitting upright. To help keep your snow play safe, follow these simple safety reminders:

- Sledder should wear protective headgear, thick gloves or mittens and protective boots. If you sled downhill head first, you greatly increase the risk of head injury. When an unprotected head hits something solid at 20 miles per hour, you're dead. Period. No options; quoted David Egan, EMT.
- A sledder should ride lying down. Snow disks and plastic sliders are designed for upright use. No one should ever ride while standing up.
- Children age 5 to 9 are the most susceptible to sledding injuries; parents of young children should not let them sled alone.
- Make sure the sledding path does not cross traffic and is free of hazards, such as trees, fences, rocks, wire or bare spots. Check to see that the incline is not too steep or icy and that there is a level run-off at the end so that the sled can come to a safe halt. Teach children to check for hazards.
- Do not sled on or around frozen lakes, streams or ponds. The best place to sled is on a hill in a park.
- And lastly, NEVER hitch sledding equipment behind a moving vehicle. The results can be deadly.

For additional information, contact your local Outreach and Extension Center, or the MU Extension Rural Safety and Health Program at 1.800.995.8503.

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