

Aftermarket Headlights



Riders often ask me about upgrading headlight bulbs for their sleds. While I don't pretend to know much about the technical aspects of lighting, I do know that the stock bulbs in some sleds don't seem to provide as much light as I'd like at night. On low beam, the light can appear diffuse with limited range; on high beam, I can see farther ahead, but not that clearly and not as well to the sides or closer in front. Of course, the first thing to check is that your beams are properly aimed and on an older sled, good enough to do the job. Even during the day, I've noticed that some head lights look brighter than others in my rear view mirror, making it easier to keep track of those riding behind.

Curious about what difference it would make, I tried a pair of Sylvania SilverStar Ultra's last winter. First, their light was consistently easier to spot in my rear view mirror during the day. Second, their beam throw at night seemed longer or at least brighter, so I could see with greater clarity everywhere in front of me in most conditions. I'd say they also provided greater contrast to my forward sightline and better visibility to the sides of the trail.

That being said, we're not talking about a massive improvement over stock bulbs, just a noticeably different light that my eyes preferred. So if you're doing a lot of night riding, investing in Sylvania SilverStar Ultra's may be worth trying. And they're certainly a strong contender when it comes time to replace your stock headlight bulbs (if your sled has dual bulbs, replace both at the same time even if only one is burnt out). Check out SilverStar Ultra's at www.sylvania.com

One Handed Tie Downs

Anyone who trailers their sleds has experience with tie down straps required by law to properly secure your machines to the trailer bed while in transit. I've used everything from heavy-duty bungees to ratchets to clip straps with varying degrees of success. Some are difficult to use or release. Others require two hands or even two people to fasten or release. And some corrode easily so parts jam or come loose too readily.



That's why I was impressed after trying Tie Boss tie downs last winter. These 3m (10'), 3/8" rope tie downs have no moving parts. The 124kg (275lb) max load rope runs through a patented, serrated jam cleat and either locks securely into place or releases easily with one hand. This jam cleat has similarities to a belay device with assisted braking used by mountain climbers on their ropes.

Rather than reefing down on a tie down as I have in the past, I found it easiest just to sit on the back on each sled, affix the Tie Boss coated hooks to trailer bed and jam cleat, lock the rope into place, and then stand up to let gravity do the tightening for me. Best of all, with Tie Boss Tie Downs, there's nothing to scratch your sled. Just one reminder: tie a knot in the loose end of the rope running through the jam cleat so it doesn't inadvertently slip all the way through and out of place. Check it out at www.tieboss.com

Gotta-Have Skin Protection

If it's a gotta-have for NFL players in cold temperature games like last year's Super Bowl, odds are that it will work for snowmobilers too. Even the most macho riders can suffer from cracked, dry skin or mild frostbite. That's why NFL players, mountain climbers, ski patrollers, letter carriers and even polar explorers protect their flesh with Warm Skin®. Warm Skin All Weather Guard is a heavy-duty, non-greasy barrier cream and moisturizer from a Minnesota based company called Aurora Naturally.

While on tour last winter, I used the Warm Skin All Weather Guard formula each morning on hands and face as a protective layer. Then I replenished these areas with it again at each day's end. The result? While my hide is still the same ugly one I've always had, it never chapped, cracked, wind-burned, sunburned or itched despite the constant extremes of long days on the snow. And it even helps keep my skin feel warm – no wonder NFL players apply it to their bare arms and hands before the big game! Type "CNN Warm Skin" into You Tube search to see the Gotta-Have video and check out Warm Skin at www.warmskin.net

