



PROFESSIONAL SKI PATROL ASSOCIATION

EXAM CRITERIA

UPDATED OCTOBER 2011

SKI AND SNOWBOARD EXAM

The PSPA candidate will be required to perform the following:

- 1) Free Run
- 2) Snowplow Course
- 3) Side Slip Course
- 4) Bump Run
- 5) Crud / Tree / Steep Run
- 6) Work Run / Morning Sweep / Equipment Carry

All courses will be long enough to challenge the candidates in both skill and endurance.

FREE RUN

The free run is intended to give the candidates the opportunity to warm up. This event will take place on varying terrain (steep, moderate, groomed or ungroomed) and may be held in the moguls. Candidates will be scored on how well they adapt to changing terrain, their stability during the run and their ability to demonstrate multiple styles (small radius turns through large radius turns). This event is meant to simulate a "day off" run.

SNOWPLOW COURSE

The snowplow course will be set up in a control course using bamboo. The snowplow course will be set through moguls on steep terrain. The course will consist of several right and left turns using the available terrain to challenge the candidate.

Skiers: The skier is expected to maintain a snowplow and navigate through the course around the bamboo. Ski poles should be held in a manner that prevents them from touching the ground. The skier will be scored on their ability to control their descent, maintain consistent speed and use the snow and/or terrain to their advantage; not necessarily how technically perfect they perform the snowplow.

Snowboarders: The snowboarder is expected to make a transition "heel to toe" or "toe to heel" at each gate and maintain that orientation until the next gate. The candidate will be scored on their ability to control their descent, maintain consistent speed and how well they use the snow and/or terrain to their advantage.

There will be a transition corridor set somewhere in the course. The objective of this corridor will be for the candidate to perform as many "quality" transitions as possible for both skiers and snowboarders. Again there will be a focus on maintaining a consistent speed.

SIDE SLIP COURSE

The sideslip course will be set up in a control course using bamboo. The sideslip course will be set through moguls on steep terrain. Gates may be set in or across the fall line and be wide or narrow. Candidates will be scored on how well they maneuver through the course while demonstrating control. There will be at least two direction changes in the course requiring the candidate to perform kick turns. The stability of the candidate when

performing the kick turn will be evaluated in scoring. The candidate will perform the kick turn between the designated gates. A snowboarder will be expected to reverse direction from a stopped position while maintaining control, without placing a hand on the snow and without moving up or downhill appreciably.

BUMP RUN

The bump run will be held on moguled terrain. Candidates will be evaluated on their ability to maneuver through the bumps, adapt to changing fall lines and the overall stability they demonstrate during their run.

CRUD / TREE/ STEEP RUN

The candidate will be evaluated in varying conditions. The terrain may range from crud, trees or steeps depending on the terrain available for the exam. Candidates will be evaluated on their stability and control in the varying conditions/terrain.

WORK RUN / MORNING SWEEP / EQUIPMENT CARRY

This run will require the candidate to transport patrol equipment to a specific location on a trail. Each candidate will be scored on the stability of their run while carrying patrol equipment. Candidates will also be scored on trail safety including navigating crowded slopes and trail merges. The run will take place in bumps, on moderate terrain or a combination of both. The size and amount of equipment to be carried will be determined by the difficulty of the terrain.

TOBOGGAN EXAM

The PSPA candidate will be required to perform the following:

- 1) Empty Toboggan
- 2) Loaded Toboggan
- 3) Loaded Skills

Any separation from the sled that endangers the patient or creates a dangerous situation will result in a failing score for that run.

EMPTY TOBOGGAN

The candidate will be expected to drive an empty toboggan to an obvious simulated incident scene. Each candidate will be scored on how well they control the empty toboggan to the scene and their approach to and from the simulated incident. Although it is important that the candidate expeditiously reach the scene, safety and control rather than speed are the most important criteria. In addition to their approach to the scene, candidates will be scored on how well they handle trail merges, pitch changes, other obstacles and the skiing public. This run is apt to be from the top of the mountain to the bottom and may include a section with moguls.

LOADED TOBOGGAN

Each candidate will be expected to drive a loaded toboggan down a steep moguled trail. Route selection, control and the consistency of speed will determine the candidates score. The sled's rider will have a simulated painful tib-fib injury. The simulated injury will help the examiners gauge the smoothness of the run. The simulated patient will ride on their stomachs facing head downhill and should refrain from any "coaching" with the driver.

LOADED SKILLS

This section of the exam will take place on a steep terrain through a course set with bamboo and may or may not be set in the moguls. It is meant to simulate marginal conditions on a trail requiring the candidate to traverse several times to stay on the "best" route. Although speed is important, the safest, smoothest ride possible for the patient are the primary concerns. The simulated patient will ride on their stomachs facing head downhill and should refrain from any "coaching" with the driver.

FIRST AID EXAM

The first aid exam consists of two components. One section is a one hundred question written exam. The questions on the written exam will be based on the current edition of National Ski Patrol's "*Outdoor Emergency Care*" manual. A passing grade for the exam is 85%. The second section is a practical exam consisting of several stations that will be set up on the hill or in a "clinic" environment. Each candidate can expect to go to some stations with a partner and some alone. **Each pair of candidates will need one sled with the first aid equipment necessary for treating patients at each of the stations. If a candidate does not have a partner then one will be assigned to the candidate at the exam. This candidate must still bring a sled and appropriate equipment.** PSPA reserves the right to disallow any questionable device. Discussion about the stations between candidates during the exam will constitute an unquestionable failure. Bystanders and/or examiners can be instructed to assist in non-critical maneuvers. The examiners at each station will be observing the candidates professionalism, confidence, scene management, first aid, patient loading and transport. Notification by a hypothetical radio to the appropriate authority should be made as soon as it is realized that a patient requires care by a patroller. Information about the incident will be gathered through questions asked of the patient or bystander(s).

The stations may include, but are not limited to: long board, long bone fracture, patient assessment, airway management, upper/lower extremity injuries and internal injuries. The stations may include scenarios with multiple injuries and/or multiple patients.

INTERVIEW EXAM

The interview will test the candidate's knowledge of overall patrol functions and duties and to evaluate their knowledge of ski patrol operations as known by an experienced patroller. The candidate's response to questions of various safety, legal or customer related situations will be evaluated.

Subject areas may include, but are not limited to the following:

HILL SAFETY

- + morning trail checking procedures
- + hazards
- + open or close a trail and why
- + trail junctions
- + obstacles
- + grooming and snowmaking equipment
- + lift evacuation
- + lift operations and maintenance
- + risk management
- + incident investigation
- + terrain park operations
- + serious injuries
- + afternoon trail checking procedures

PATROL POLICIES

- + opening and closing times
- + chain of command
- + marking tickets
- + alcohol use and guest behavior
- + managing guests with unsafe equipment
- + search and rescue
- + guests encountered on closed trails
- + aid belt/pack contents
- + sled contents
- + first aid room contents
- + level of care, activation of local EMS and ACLS
- + patrol communications
- + patrol image – conduct, appearance and expectations
- + CPR on the hill
- + missing person