



PROFESSIONAL
SKI PATROL
ASSOCIATION

EXAM INFORMATION

Ski / Snowboard Exam

The PSPA candidate will be required to perform the following:

- 1) Free Ski / Board
- 2) Skills Course (Snowplow)
- 3) Side Slip
- 4) Bump Ski / Board
- 5) Work Run / Morning Sweep

Free Ski / Board - The free ski / board event is intended to be the first event of the day that will give the candidates the opportunity to warm up. This event will take place on steep terrain 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 of skiing (small radius turn vs. large radius turns).

Skills Course - The snowplow event will be set up in a control course, through moguls (when available) on steep terrain using bamboo. 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, holding poles across the body with both hands, and navigate through the course around the bamboo. The skier will be scored on the ability of the candidate to control their descent, maintain consistent speed and use the snow 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 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 boarders. Again there will be a focus on maintain consistent speed.

Side Slip - The sideslip event will also be set up in a control course using bamboo. The sideslip course will be set through moguls (when available) on steep terrain and will force the candidate to sideslip over or around the bumps while maintaining as constant a speed as possible. 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 maintaining consistent speed. 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.

Bump Ski / Board - The bump ski / board run will be held on moguled terrain. The candidate's objective is to show their stability in maneuvering through the bumps. Candidates will be scored on how well they adapt to changing fall lines and the stability they demonstrate during their run.

Work Run / Morning Sweep - The work run / morning sweep 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. There will be an emphasis placed on the amount of time required to accomplish the task.

Toboggan Exam

The PSPA candidate will be required to perform the following:

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

Empty Toboggan - The candidate will be expected to drive an empty toboggan to an **obvious** simulated accident 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 accident. Although it is important that the candidate expeditiously reach the scene, safety and control rather than speed are the most important concerns. In addition to their approach to the scene, candidates will be scored on how well they deal with trail merges, pitch changes, other natural and man-made obstacles and the skiing public. This run is apt to be from the top of the mountain to the bottom.

Loaded Toboggan- Each candidate will be expected to drive a loaded toboggan down a 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. Each candidate may be expected to drive the sled from the top of the mountain to the bottom.

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 the speed that this is accomplished is important, the safest, smoothest ride possible for the patient is the primary concern.

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 "*Emergency Medical Treatment*" by Nancy L. Caroline, M.D. , NSP "*Outdoor Emergency Care*", and the "OEC " 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 victim(s) at each of the stations. If you are by yourself, bring a sled and equipment and a partner will be provided.** 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 your 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 you have a patient that requires definitive care. Information about the incident will be gathered through questions asked of the victim or bystander (examiner).

The stations include, but are not limited to: long board, long bone fracture, patient assessment, airway management, upper and lower extremity injuries, internal injuries and an interview.

The long board station will test the candidate's ability to determine the need and ability to effectively use a long board. Critical maneuvers will be: your exam, maintaining cervical traction throughout (if necessary), application of the cervical collar (if necessary), moving the patient as a unit on the board and securing the patient to the board without aggravating the injury.

The long bone fracture management station will test the candidate's ability to properly assess and manage a suspected femur fracture. Distal circulation, motor and sensory responses will be checked before and after the application of a splint. In line traction (if applicable) will be maintained throughout. The patient will be asked by the examiners after completion if traction was consistent and of the proper magnitude. The extremity should be supported proximal and distal to the injury when being loaded into the sled.

The patient assessment station will test the candidate's ability to efficiently and effectively assess and care for a critical patient. This station may be on the hill or in a "clinic" environment. This station is designed to allow you to demonstrate your skills in taking vital signs, managing an airway, interviewing patients and your ability to utilize the mountain resources as well as those of the local EMS and hospital. You are not expected to know local protocols for the site of the exam, but will be expected to speak about local protocols at your home mountain. You must also demonstrate the ability to improvise and devise a means for transporting your patient to definitive care.

The upper and lower extremity station will test the candidate's ability to secure the scene, determine the injury(s) through your patient assessment(s), prioritize treatment, apply a proper splint and position your patient(s) for transport.

An internal injuries station will test the candidate's ability at securing the scene and responding appropriately to patient assessment yielding signs of an internal injury.

Interview Exam

The interview will test the candidate's knowledge of overall patrol functions and duties and to evaluate his or her knowledge of ski patrol operations as known by an experienced patroller. Scenarios of various safety, legal or customer related situations will be presented and your response will be reviewed. Subjects may include, but are not limited to the following:

Hill safety

- ✦ morning sweep – hazards
- ✦ open or close a trail and why
- ✦ trail junctions
- ✦ obstacles
- ✦ grooming and snowmaking equipment
- ✦ lift evacuation outline
- ✦ protocol with lift maintenance
- ✦ risk management - criteria for accident investigation; terrain park operations, serious injuries
- ✦ afternoon sweep

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 and activation of local EMS
- ✦ patrol communications
- ✦ patrol image – conduct, appearance and expectations
- ✦ CPR on the hill