

Dear Prospective Southern Division Certified Candidate,

The purpose of this letter is to give you insight concerning what you might expect from the Southern Division's Certified Program. My involvement with the Certified Program is often the most valuable professional development experience of my year. It is a great opportunity to share in an exciting endeavor with leading experts in our industry. I hope that the program can provide you with the same benefit. Welcome to the program!

This letter will probably raise as many questions as it answers. I recommend strongly that you discuss it with a member of the certified program.

Below are the program's goals as listed in the last version of the certified program manual (not available on-line)

CERTIFIED PROGRAM GOALS

- Provide performance standards and evaluation on a broad range of patrol skills and knowledge
- Increase patroller's awareness of issues relevant to ski area operations
- Provide a readily identifiable resource of highly skilled, motivated, and knowledgeable patrollers to better serve NSP, ski area management, and the outdoor recreation community through instruction and/or leadership
- Promote interaction and exchange between paid and volunteer patrollers
- Build on, but not duplicate, the Outdoor Emergency Care Program and or the Senior OEC Program by providing a flexible, **self-directed training** program to develop member skills

The "Certified Program" is aptly named. It addresses these goals through the process of certifying patrollers who are highly skilled, motivated and knowledgeable. The program will have a great impact on your "self directed training", but its actual educational components are limited. Becoming certifiable will entail a great deal more than what can be learned from participating in a few clinics and examinations. The certified program is similar to the Uniform CPA Examination, an organization that does not suggest that it directly provides education or experience necessary for being a certified public accountant. They point this out very clearly on their website as quoted below-

The Uniform CPA Examination is one of the "Three Es" - Education, Examination, and Experience - that are required for licensure as a CPA. Consequently, passing the Examination is not, in itself, sufficient to meet requirements for licensure.

The program will serve an educational service by establishing a high performance standard on a broad range of patrol skills and knowledge and then provide motivation to achieve this performance level in order to be recognized as a certified patroller. The members of the Certified Program will invest a great deal of time and energy into broaden your awareness thus helping you to direct your efforts to amass the knowledge, skills, and experience which make a certified patroller.

Brace yourself for this next section. Attaining this level of performance will involve more than studying and practicing. Considerable experience in a wide variety of things is essential to becoming qualified to run a patrol or take some other management position at a ski area. I am often asked, "What is the easiest way to become a certified patroller?" The following experiences are the easiest way I know to becoming certified. Having several of these **experiences** in your background will make certification achievable with less effort.

OEC

Minimum experiences-

- Senior OEC
- OEC instructor involved in substantial teaching tasks (such as significant involvement with an OEC class) well beyond the refresher
- CPR instructor
- Involvement in running wrecks on a regular basis for a busy ski area.
- Leading in instructing and evaluating at the senior level.

Additional valuable experience-

- ER or flight paramedic, PA, doctor or nurse
- Run on a busy rescue squad

Ski/Board and Toboggan

Minimum experiences-

- Senior Ski and Toboggan
- Seek high level instruction on a regular basis
- Ski and handle toboggans regularly at a ski area with steeps, moguls and other ungroomed conditions.
- Leading instructing and evaluating at the Senior level

Additional valuable experience-

- Push your experience and skills to the point that you prefer and seek "off piste" runs and seek more challenging skiing experiences
- Attend PSIA workshop clinics on a regular basis.

Management

Minimum experience-

- Substantial experience patrolling at several ski areas.
- Experience managing a business
- Experience managing budgets (capital, replacement and operating), staffing schedules and payroll
- Experience with Human Resource Management

Additional valuable experience-

- Experience as a patrol representative or patrol director
- Experience working in ski area management
- Experience working in the commercial recreation industry
- Experience managing areas of ski area operations besides ski patrol

Avalanche

Minimum experience

- Current Avalanche Fundamentals and Rescue course
- Ski back country regularly, requiring travel and rescue knowledge

Additional valuable experience

- Attend an avalanche school out west
- Actually patrol on a ski patrol which trains avalanche skills annually
- Actually do snow analysis and/or control work.
- Avalanche instructor.

Lift Evacuation

Minimum experience

- Annually function in a leadership role for your patrol's lift evacuation refresher
- Participate regularly in an activity where lives depend on your skills and judgment concerning the use of ropes (climbing, rappelling, caving, low or high angle rescue, challenge course work, swift water rescue)

Additional valuable experience

- Be lead at your area for lift evacuation training.
- Lead a real lift evacuation
- Be a rescue squad's low and high angle rescue specialist.
- Be a guide for climbing or caving

Slope Safety

Minimum experience

- Do some grooming
- Make some snow
- Spend a day with lift maintenance
- Prepare the terrain park for opening
- Supervise slope safety efforts before and during ski sessions
- Manage the tubing park for a weekend

Additional valuable experience

- Groom, make snow, and/or do lift maintenance for a season
- Manage one or more of these departments for a season
- Maintain signage, fences, etc. off season

Excellence with a wide variety of these experiences results in your being a certified patroller. Evaluation in that case is just a formality. To achieve the certified level of proficiency with areas with which you have limited experience will require determined effort over time. We look forward to journeying with you as you seek to achieve this level of excellence.

Good luck.

Brandon Deane

Southern Division Certified Advisor