

# BIG SKY RESORT VOLUNTEER SKI PATROL MANUAL

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## I. Introduction

All Big Sky Ski Patrollers are accountable to the Big Sky Team Member Handbook. The purpose of this manual is to complement the Team Member Handbook with information specific to the Ski Patrol Department. This plan is not all-inclusive and a close working relationship with your supervisors and the volunteer coordinators is necessary. You are urged to take the time necessary to read, review, and become completely familiar with all of the materials in both documents. This is a living document being updated regularly as our procedures evolve. This document supersedes any previous document of this title.

Big Sky retains the sole right in its business judgement to modify, suspend, interpret, or cancel in whole or in part, at any time, with or without notice, the published or unpublished policies, practices, or procedures. Likewise, this plan is not a contract, express or implied, and should not be construed as one. Whenever a question arises, you are urged to talk your supervisors and/or the volunteer coordinators.

## II. Culture

As members of Big Sky Ski Patrol, we are part of the greater Big Sky Resort and Boyne Resorts team. We are committed to Boyne's Core Values: Long Term Thinking, Excellence in Execution, Attitude is Everything, and Develop Great People, and our Resort's Mission to *Consistently Create Exceptional Experiences for our Guests*.

In addition to being guided by these principles, Big Sky Ski Patrol is committed to cultivating a positive workplace culture. We believe in the values of Teamwork, Humility, and Accountability. Our culture is directly shaped by our behaviors, and our alignment with these values is directly reflected through the body of our work.

## III. Qualifications

The Big Sky Ski Patrol is a guest-oriented team that works on the mountain upholding the highest levels of guest service and safety. Volunteer patrollers shall have and maintain a current Montana EMT or higher license as well as National Registry EMT certification and American Heart Association Health Care Provider CPR certification. Every patroller undergoes an annual refresher training as well as continuous on-the-job training throughout each season in all aspects of patrol work.

Ski Patrolling is a physically demanding job. All patrollers must possess the following abilities:

- Ability to ski/walk/sit for hours each day
- Ability to work long hours
- Ability to hike with skis and a backpack
- Ability to lift up to 50 lbs.
- Ability to carry up to 40 lbs.

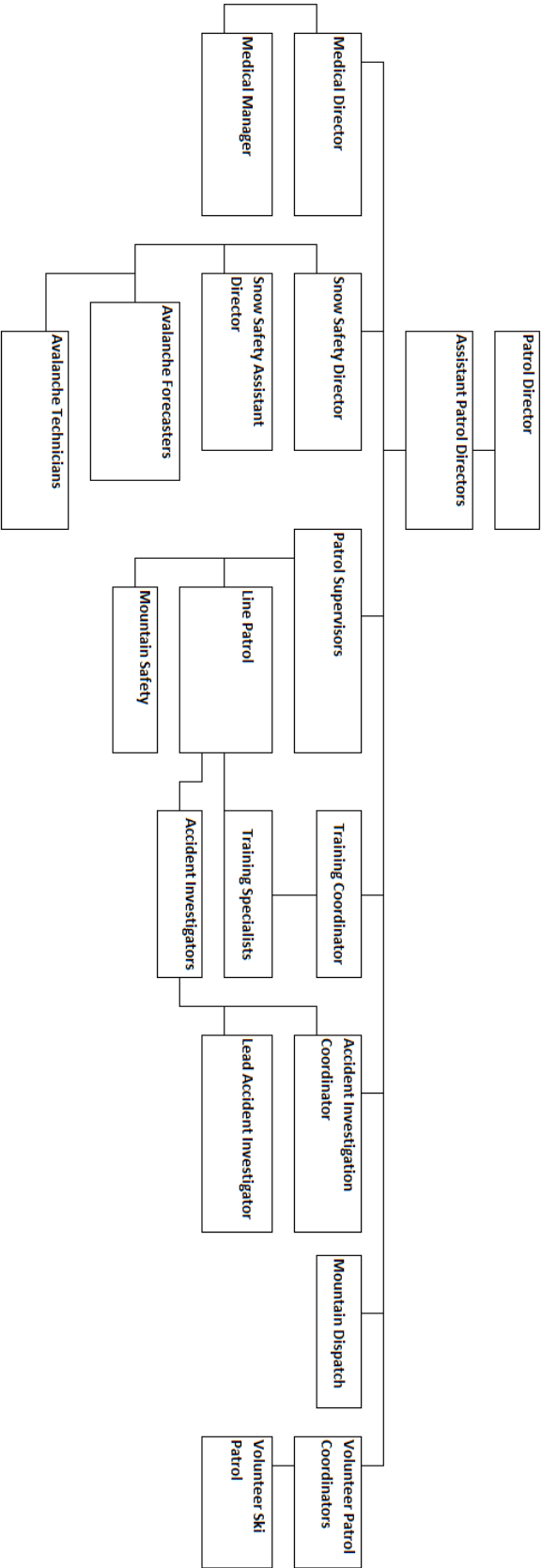
Satisfactory skiing ability is required of all patrollers. The Big Sky Ski Patrol management team or their proxy shall be the sole judge of such ability.

Patrollers must have a positive attitude, a strong work ethic, the ability to work on a team, and the willingness and ability to learn new job-related skills.

Other skills such as teaching ability, snow science background, foreign language, mountaineering and climbing ability, computer literacy, and paramedic training are just some of the desirable expanded skills.

## IV. Ski Patrol Department Job Descriptions

A. Ski Patrol Organizational Chart



Ski Patrol Organizational Chart

## B. Ski Patrol Director

**Job Description:** The Ski Patrol Director will oversee the day-to-day administration and supervision of the Ski Patrol operation and personnel. The Ski Patrol Director works closely with the VP of Mountain Operations and other members of the Boyne leadership team to set goals and assure alignment with the overall objectives of Boyne USA. The Ski Patrol Director will manage and monitor short and long term strategies and plans to positively impact guest service, safety, and cost controls. The Ski Patrol Director oversees all aspects of daily ski patrol operations, including but not necessarily limited to terrain openings and closures, avalanche mitigation, licensing and policies, communication with other Mountain Operations departments, Big Sky Volunteer Ski Patrol, training, mountain signage, accident investigations, and guest safety.

### **Responsibilities:**

- Ensure a safe working environment that is free of harassment and provides equal opportunity for all patrollers
- Model professionalism and team-oriented approach within the patrol and in interdepartmental communication
- Respond to conflicts between employees and/or between guests and resort employees with a professional demeanor
- Ensure that all job descriptions are up-to-date and that ski patrol functions are performed according to job descriptions and the Mountain Operations Plan
- Conduct daily morning briefings for the patrol
- Supervise hiring, disciplinary action, employee evaluations, and other departmental functions for Ski Patrol Departments
- Provide accountability for adherence to the Big Sky Resort Team Member Handbook and the Big Sky Ski Patrol Manual
- Communication with Big Sky's leadership team, Department Heads, and Supervisors
- Attend weekly Mountain Operations Meeting and other interdepartmental staff meetings
- Develop and administer annual ski patrol budget
- Provide for the proper training of ski patrol responsibilities including preseason training, continuing education, and specialized training/certifications
- Participate in professional development and develop relationships within the industry to stay up-to-date with relevant ski patrolling best practices
- Inventory, storage, ordering, and maintenance of all ski patrol gear, equipment, materials, and on-mountain signage
- Oversee Accident Investigation program. Compose a weekly executive summary of open Accident Investigations and distribute to the appropriate individuals
- Oversee the Big Sky Volunteer Ski Patrol and Volunteer Bike Patrol programs
- Oversee Snow Safety Program including Avalanche Hazard Reduction, Avalanche Hazard Forecasting, BATFE compliance, and summer efforts of attempting to locate and destroy all explosive duds from prior ski season
- Oversee ski patrol information programs including weather/snow reporting, web cams, daily trail information, and electronic information signs
- Enforce the Skier's Responsibility Code and Big Sky Resort's safe skiing and riding policies
- Coordinate and implement Special Events infrastructure and safety plans
- Coordinate with local mutual aid entities such as local fire departments and law enforcement, neighboring resorts, and search and rescue

- Maintain current licensing for EMS and BATFE
- At the end of each season, remove, store, and inventory all appropriate ski patrol materials
- Identify Summer Work Projects and implement a budget and plan to prioritize summer projects to improve future winter operations
- Other duties as assigned

This job description is an overview of the scope of responsibilities for this job and is not an inclusive list of job tasks and expectations. This individual must be prepared to accept new responsibilities and transfer others.

### C. Ski Patrol Assistant Director

**Job Description:** The Ski Patrol Assistant Directors work under the direction of the Patrol Director. The primary function of the Assistant Directors is to assist the Patrol Director in all responsibilities listed above. Additional responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Human resource functions within the Ski Patrol department including, hiring, scheduling, disciplinary actions, employee evaluations, Worker’s Compensation investigations, and closing weekly payroll
- Ensure ski patrol departments are performing their jobs according to their individual job descriptions and the Mountain Operations Plan
- Supervise all ski patrol departments to ensure that they are receiving proper training for their respective responsibilities
- Educate and train all ski patrol employees to the value of guest service
- Coordinate on-mountain events
- Oversee Mountain Operations Dispatch
- Radio inventory and ordering
- Oversee lift evacuation training, gear, and equipment
- Coordinate snowmobile maintenance
- Managing pro-purchasing accounts
- Uniform inventory and orders
- Annual supply orders
- Oversee Accident Investigation program
- Oversee training programs
- In the absence of the Ski Patrol director, ensure the smooth operation of the ski patrol and provide the necessary leadership role required of the Patrol Director’s job description.
- Other duties as assigned

This job description is an overview of the scope and responsibilities for this job and is not an inclusive list of job tasks and expectations. This individual must be prepared to accept new responsibilities and transfers others.

## D. Patrol Supervisor

**Job Description:** Patrol Supervisors work under the direction of the Patrol Director and Assistant Directors. The primary function of Patrol Supervisors is to supervise daily patrol operations for designated posting areas.

### **Required Skills and Qualifications:**

- Strong verbal communication skills
- Interpersonal skills: professional, kind demeanor, team-oriented mindset, and conflict de-escalation
- Problem-solving and decision-making skills
- Effective delegation and managing skill

### **Responsibilities:**

- Ensure a safe working environment that is free of harassment and provides equal opportunity for all patrollers
- Provide for a safe guest skiing experience including posting appropriate trail markings/signage, risk management, and making decisions regarding terrain openings/closures based on non-avalanche hazard evaluation
- Model professionalism and a team-oriented approach within the Patrol and in interdepartmental communication
- Work closely with Snow Safety personnel to open and close avalanche terrain
- Provide accountability for the completion of patrol duties and projects including, lift and terrain openings/closures, appropriate hazard marking, medical response and rescues, posting station staffing, wind and temperature evaluation, and condition of Ski Patrol buildings
- Work with the Training Supervisor and Training Specialists to ensure on-the-job training for all patrollers
- Communicate with other Mountain Operations departments to coordinate lift and terrain openings and closings (Lift Operations, Lift Maintenance, Grooming, Terrain Parks, etc.)
- Communicate with other Patrol Supervisors returning from days off to provide continuity in managing daily operations
- Administer patrol Performance Evaluations
- Respond to conflicts between employees and/or between guests and resort employees with professional demeanor
- Inspect new Terrain Park features as a member of the Terrain Park Opening Committee
- Communicate the needs of the patrol to the Patrol Director and Assistant Directors
- Other duties as assigned by the Patrol Director and Assistant Directors

## E. Volunteer Ski Patrol Coordinators

**Job Description:** The Volunteer Ski Patrol Coordinators work under the direction of the Ski Patrol Director and are responsible for coordinating all aspects of the Volunteer Ski Patrol program including recruitment, hiring, scheduling, training, communication, and record-keeping.

### **Required Skills and Qualifications:**

- Interest in the continual development of the Volunteer Ski Patrol
- Knowledge of ski patrol duties
- Experience leading and/or instructing in a training setting
- Ability to prioritize and manage multiple tasks at once



- Professional and kind demeanor
- Team-oriented mindset
- Experience with computerized administrative functions

**Responsibilities:**

- Perform the duties of Volunteer Ski Patrol while maintaining an obvious and continuous presence as the Volunteer Ski Patrol Coordinator
- Maintain up-to-date and accurate attendance records
- Ensure consistent training delivery across the Volunteer Ski Patrol
- In collaboration with the Training Coordinator, plan and schedule training activities to meet the needs of the Volunteer Ski Patrol
- Maintain up-to-date training documentation
- Evaluate patroller performance and gauge where skills need improvement.
- Timely and effective communication with the Patrol Director's Office, Supervisors, and Patrol
- Develop and implement a comprehensive training program for all first year patrollers
- Conduct surveys to judge how programs are received and if changes are needed
- Keep up-to-date with developments in ski patrol standards and training
- Coordinate Volunteer Ski Patrol benefits and perks

## F. Volunteer Ski Patrol

**Job Description:** The Volunteer Ski Patrol works under the direction of the Patrol Supervisors and the Patrol Director's Office to uphold the highest levels of safety and guest service and to promote Big Sky Resort's safety policies and procedures. This position will focus on the daily operations of the resort as it relates to guest safety, emergency medical response, and terrain openings and closures. Duties include guest service, morning trail checks, patrolling assigned areas, mountain maintenance, rescuing injured skiers, providing first aid, performing search and rescue, and closing the mountain at the end of the day.

**Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:**

- Adhere to the Big Sky Resort Employee Handbook and the Big Sky Volunteer Ski Patrol Manual
- Assist with BSR's mission to *Consistently Create Exceptional Experiences for Our Guests*
- Patrol assigned areas and provide patrol presence on the mountain including enforcing safe skiing policies
- Assist with terrain openings and closures
- Slope maintenance including, but not limited to, marking hazards, maintaining boundaries and signage, picking rocks, and establishing or maintaining snow fences
- Provide guest service by answering questions regarding terrain and providing information about lift openings and closures in a polite and friendly manner
- Promote safe skiing and riding
- Enforce the Skier Responsibility Code and Resort policies with guests and employees
- Respond to injured or distressed skiers and riders
- Maintain mountain awareness and communication with guests and other departments
- Participate in ongoing on-the-job training
- Report snow and weather conditions
- Maintain trail safety measures such as rope lines, hazard markings, signage, and ski area boundaries
- Conduct or assist with the evacuation of aerial lifts
- Keep patrol facilities neat, clean, and orderly
- Complete other duties as assigned in a safe and timely manner

**Required Skills and Qualifications:**

- Current Montana EMT license and NREMT certification (or higher)
- Current Healthcare Provider CPR certification
- Advanced skiing ability
- Ability to ski/walk/sit for hours each day
- Ability to work long hours (shifts generally run 10 hours/day, 4 days/week)
- Ability to hike with skis and a backpack
- Ability to lift up to 50 lbs.
- Ability to carry up to 40 lbs.

## V. Additional Ski Patrol Responsibilities and Duties

### A. Volunteer First Aid Duty

First Aid is a duty assignment. When performing the role of First Aider, a patroller is working under the supervision of the Medical Director. The First Aider plays a vital role in the daily operations of the Ski Patrol.

**Responsibilities:**

- Maintaining a clean and professional First Aid Room
- Daily medical equipment checks
- Care to walk-in patients
- Restock gear and prepare gear to go out on the mountain
- Respond to sick or injured guests in the Base Area
- Assist patrollers with completing necessary Incident Report documentation
- Other duties as assigned by the Medical Director

## VI. Ski Patrol Practices and Procedures

### A. Uniforms

At the beginning of each season, each volunteer patroller will be issued a uniform consisting of a shell jacket. On the patroller's last day of work, the patroller must return their uniform to a Volunteer Coordinator or Patrol Director, noting any repair needs. Per the Big Sky Resort Team Member Handbook, failure to return uniforms upon separation may result in prosecution for theft.

On-duty patrollers are required to wear the provided uniform at all times while on duty, and ONLY while on duty. The uniform jacket shall be worn as an outermost layer with the nametag and crosses clearly visible. Layering jackets or vests must be worn underneath the uniform jacket.

It is each patroller's responsibility to care for their uniform and maintain a neat appearance. If a uniform requires cleaning or repair, please notify a Volunteer Coordinator or the Director's Office. Replacement uniforms will be issued as availability allows. When heavy or dirty work is required, an alternate patrol uniform may be issued and used only during those hours.

## B. Required Gear and Equipment

The following list describes the required and suggested gear and equipment for all volunteer ski patrollers. Required gear should be carried at all times by patrollers on duty. It is the patroller's responsibility to maintain their personal equipment.

### Provided by Big Sky Resort

First aid supplies	Earplugs
Uniform shell jacket	Safety glasses
Helmet (if requested)	Other PPE

### Provided by the Patroller

Required Gear	Other Suggested Gear
<b>Ski Equipment &amp; Clothing</b>	Extra gloves
Black ski pants	Extra goggles
Helmet	Buff
Goggles	Safety whistle
Wool or synthetic layers	Multi-tool and/or tool kit with T15-T25 bits
Skis	Titan strap/ski strap (multiple can be handy)
Boots	Extra webbing, 20'
Poles	Headlamp
Gloves	Trail map
<b>Medical</b>	Water
Pocket mask	Sunscreen
Trauma Shears	Small section bumblebee for splicing rope lines
<b>Snow Safety</b>	Hi-vis flagging
Avalanche beacon (< 5 years old)	Sewing kit
Metal avalanche shovel	Lighter
Avalanche probe (at least 3 m)	Tourniquet
Water resistant backpack	
<b>General Supplies</b>	
Pencil	
Sharpie	
Notepad	

### C. Appearance

Patrollers must adhere to the company's appearance and grooming policies as stated in the Big Sky Team Member Handbook.

### D. Scheduling

Volunteer patrollers are able to self-schedule their duty days based on the availability of open shifts in the Homebase App. In addition to the required training days, volunteer patrollers are required to complete a minimum of 16 duty days per season.

Once a patroller is scheduled for a duty day, they are committed to patrol that day. If a scheduling conflict arises during the season, the patroller must arrange a trade or coverage for the missed shift. This may be done by swapping shifts with another patroller or by finding someone to cover the shift without a swap. These requests can be made using the Homebase App. Traded shifts will not count towards the minimum commitment for duty days and must be made up.

If a patroller is unable to make their shift due to unexpected illness, injury, or family emergency, they should email the Patrol Director's Office (all three emails) by 6:30 am: [rayres@bigskyresort.com](mailto:rayres@bigskyresort.com), [dbenes@bigskyresort.com](mailto:dbenes@bigskyresort.com), [nancy.sheil@bigskyresort.com](mailto:nancy.sheil@bigskyresort.com).

Failure to complete the minimum number of duty days may result in dismissal from the Volunteer Ski Patrol. No shows for scheduled shifts are unacceptable and may result in dismissal from the Volunteer Ski Patrol.

### E. Hours and Timekeeping

Each day will begin with a morning briefing at 7:30 a.m. Upon arrival, patrollers should clock into their shift on the Homebase App. Patrollers are expected to have boots on, and ready to go out the door by the start of the morning briefing. Attendance to the morning briefing is mandatory unless otherwise authorized by a Volunteer Coordinator.

Patrol Supervisors will coordinate the end-of-day Locker Room procedures. Upon dismissal, patrollers are expected to promptly gear down and clock out.

Clocking errors (failure to clock in and out) can result in disciplinary action and can result in lack of coverage under the Company's workers compensation insurance. Clocking in or out for another patroller, or any other employee, is strictly forbidden and may result in disciplinary action.

### F. Worker's Compensation

Volunteer patrollers are covered by Worker's Compensation only when they are on-duty and properly signed-in. Injuries must be reported immediately (same day) to the Patrol Director's Office. The injured patroller is responsible for completing a formal Worker's Compensation Claim through the Big Sky Resort Human Resources Department within 1-2 days of the incident.

### G. Dismissal

Although it rarely happens, there are unfortunate circumstances that lead to dismissal from the Volunteer Ski Patrol. There is a significant amount of time invested in recruiting and training our ski patrollers and we want everyone to be successful, productive, and happy. Situations that may result in dismissal include (but are not limited to),

- Consistent poor attitude and/or lack of maturity and professionalism

- Use of and/or under the influence of drugs or alcohol while on duty
- Skiing out of bounds
- Excessive tardiness or unexcused absences from assigned duty days
- Failure to maintain medical certifications and licensure
- Consistently failing to perform on-hill duties and responsibilities as a ski patroller
- Consistent lack of cooperation with ski patrol leadership
- Selling patrol vouchers or loaning of season pass to others
- Cutting lift lines or not adhering to lift line policies
- Lack of physical endurance to perform assigned tasks
- General disrespectful behavior

Disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to suspension, probation, and/or termination from the patrol. Any patroller who is under disciplinary review or action forfeits all benefits offered as a member in good standing with the patrol.

If a patroller is having problems or would like to make a complaint, they should address problems first by talking with the Patrol Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator, and then, if necessary go to the Patrol Director's Office.

#### H. Preseason Training

Attendance and successful completion of Preseason Training is mandatory for all patrollers. In general, training typically takes place over two weeks beginning two weeks prior to Opening Day. Volunteer patrollers can expect to begin their regular duty day schedule on the week before Christmas. Additional preseason skill enhancement training may be available between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Participation in the Preseason Training Program is a condition of employment with Big Sky Ski Patrol. Absence from the preseason training may disqualify you as a volunteer candidate.

In addition to the regular Preseason Training Program, all first-year patrollers are required to participate in an intensive training program at the beginning of the season to learn the skills and practices used at Big Sky Resort. This training is typically scheduled between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

#### I. Training

Ongoing on-the-job training is an essential part of knowledge and skill development for ski patrollers. The Training Program follows an apprenticeship model of career progression. The Ski Patrol Training Program is designed to support the development of adaptability by teaching and learning within the complex and highly variable contexts of daily operations.

The Training Program is divided into five major disciplines:

1. Toboggan Handling
2. Medical Response
3. Risk Management, Operations, and Guest Service
4. Snow Safety and Avalanche Rescue
5. Lift Evacuation and Technical Rescue

Big Sky Ski Patrol utilizes a Learning Management System to administer ongoing and required training. It is the patroller's responsibility to participate in and log their training using this system.

## J. Locker Room Expectations

The locker room is a shared space. The following rules are designed with respect for the space and each other in mind.

### **Dressing**

Patrollers should not dress down beyond long base layers. Use the private bathrooms if you need to change in or out of your long base layers.

### **Cleanliness**

It is everyone's responsibility to help maintain and clean work environment. Each season, a Locker Room cleaning schedule and assignments will be posted. Failure to complete the assigned Locker Room cleaning duty may result in disciplinary action.

### **Security**

The Locker Room code should not be shared with anyone outside of Big Sky Ski Patrol. During times of high use such as the beginning and end of each day, the Locker Room doors may remain unlocked. At all other times, the last person leaving the Locker Room should lock both doors. Storing skis and other personal equipment in the Locker Room is at your own risk.

### **Visitors**

Any visitor to the Locker Room must abide by the same expectations described here.

## K. Skiing at Work

### **Safe Skiing**

It is the responsibility of the patroller to have and know how to use their own ski equipment. Ski equipment should be maintained in good working order.

It is also the responsibility of the patroller to ski safely and well within their ability while on duty and in a manner that minimizes injury potential. Skiing above skill level or in an aggressive or inappropriate manner is not permitted and may be cause for written or other disciplinary action.

### **Helmet and Restraint Bar**

Per the Big Sky Team Member Handbook, all team members and volunteers, when on duty and representing Boyne Resorts, are required to wear a snow sports helmet at all times when skiing at Big Sky Resort. Further, the use of the restraint bar is required when riding a chairlift equipped with such while on duty at Big Sky Resort. The restraint bar should be lowered as soon as possible after loading the chairlift and remain in the lowered position until just prior to unloading the chairlift. Refer to the Big Sky Team Member Handbook for more information about the Helmet Policy and Restraint Bar Policy.

### **Authorized Personnel Only (APO) Line**

All patrollers are required to use the Authorized Personnel Only (APO) line for loading lifts while on duty. Patrollers are required to carry and use their season pass for lift ques equipped with RFID scanners. Exceptions will be made for patrollers loading with toboggans or other equipment.

As a function of Ski Patrol's responsibility to provide guest service, patrollers are expected and encouraged to share chairlift rides with guests whenever possible.

## L. Skiing in Closed Areas

A patroller must have permission from a Patrol Supervisor or Patrol Director to ski in a closed area. Skiing in a closed area without prior approval may result in disciplinary action.

## M. Performance Reviews

All patrollers will receive an annual performance evaluation. The purpose of these evaluations is to generate conversation, provide constructive feedback, and set goals with improvement in mind.

## N. Social Media Policy

Refer to the Big Sky Resort Team Member Handbook for the Social Media Policy. As a reminder, all private and confidential company information should not be shared in any electronic form or format including personal social media accounts and websites. Such information includes content related to training activities and activities related to responding to injured guests.

## O. Workplace Safety

It is the responsibility of the patroller to know the job description and the Job Hazard Assessments (JHA) pertinent to Ski Patrol employment. JHA's will be reviewed and available to all patrollers at the Preseason Training as well as throughout the season.

It is the responsibility of all patrollers to contribute to a safe work environment by maintaining an acute awareness of situational factors and responding appropriately. Workplace safety concerns should be brought to the Ski Patrol Management Team immediately.

## P. Guest Service

The function of the Big Sky Ski Patrol is to provide our guests with an exceptional experience. Medical care and terrain availability are the obvious contributions the patrol makes to the guest experience. Additionally, slope maintenance, signage, hazard marking, patrol presence, and safe skiing enforcement are proactive ways to enhance the guest experience and prevent injuries.

Professional and positive communications and interaction with our guests are critical. This above all initiates a positive attitude towards our resort and our employees. Guest service is key to fulfilling our goal of enhancing the guest experience beyond expectations.

## VII. Volunteer Benefits

The Volunteer Ski Patrol perks and benefits are reviewed and finalized on an annual basis. Benefits offered during the current season may be subject to changes in future years.

### A. Season Passes and Lift Tickets

First year volunteer patrollers will receive an Employee Pass for themselves, and 5 "free" ticket vouchers plus 5 "discounted" ticket vouchers.

Volunteer patrollers entering their 2<sup>nd</sup> or greater season will receive an Employee Pass for themselves, 5 discounted ticket vouchers, and *either*

- 20 "free" ticket vouchers, OR
- A spouse and dependent (up to 2 under the age of 18) passes

Volunteer patrollers entering their 10<sup>th</sup> or greater season will receive an Employee Pass for themselves, 5 discounted ticket vouchers, and *either*

- 25 “free” ticket vouchers, OR
- A spouse and dependent (up to 2 under the age of 18) passes

## B. Pro Deal Participation

All volunteer patrollers are eligible to receive pro form discounts from a wide range of manufacturers on ExpertVoice and Outdoor Prolink. Directions for participation in these programs will be provided at the beginning of the season.

## C. Summer Ski Order

All returning volunteer patrollers in good standing and entering their 3<sup>rd</sup> or greater season are eligible to participate in the Big Sky Resort Summer Ski Order. This perk is for the volunteer only, and cannot be used to purchase equipment for friends or family. Abuse of this privilege may result in dismissal from the patrol.

# VIII. Daily Operations

## A. Posting Stations

Ski patrol utilizes several on-mountain posting stations within the three major operational complexes: Andesite Complex, Lone Mountain Complex, and Northside Complex. Specific duties may vary between posting stations, however the following guidelines outline daily operations for all patrol posting areas.

- All patrol posting areas have a log book for daily activities such as terrain openings, closures, equipment checks, and trail checks. ALL patrol activities should be recorded in the Daily Log.
- Daily medical and equipment checks should be performed and documented upon arrival in the morning.
- Daily equipment checks include checking the toboggans within the posting zone. When checking toboggans, sled boxes should be clear of snow and the bottom of the toboggans should be cleared of rime, snow, and/or ice.
- Morning trail checks are to be performed and documented daily with attention for new hazards, proper hazard marking, presence and maintenance of remote toboggans, correct status of gates and signs, etc.
- Patrol Supervisors may assign specific work projects to be completed during the day. Contact supervisors to make requests for needed materials.
- All patrol facilities should be kept clean and tidy, both indoors and out. It is everyone’s responsibility to help maintain a clean work environment, including cleaning up after oneself, taking out the garbage, general cleaning, and light maintenance.
- Terrain closures (TCPs) are performed daily for all open terrain. Patrol Supervisors will assign this duty. Specific instructions for Terrain Closing Procedures can be found at each posting station.

## B. Medical Response

The Big Sky Ski Patrol is licensed as a paramedic non-transport service by the State of Montana. Medical direction is provided by the Gallatin County Medical Director and the Big Sky Ski Patrol Medical Director. The prime directive of the medical program is the efficient assessment, stabilization, and transportation of persons who request our assistance. The Patrol Director or their delegate will make policy decisions and critical incident decisions as needed.

The general guidelines of the medical program are as follows:



- Personal safety in medical response is the top priority.
- Patrollers are responsible for maintaining their own National Registry certification and Montana State EMT license. Big Sky Ski Patrol offers several training opportunities throughout the season to help meet continuing education requirements.
- Patrollers are responsible for knowing and adhering to all state and local EMS protocols. Copies of these protocols are available for review online and in print at the posting stations.
- Patrollers are responsible for collecting and completing the appropriate documentation for all medical responses. Documentation includes but is not limited to Incident Reports (both paper copy and digital format) and Accident Investigation supplemental reports.
- The preferred transportation method for injured guests on the mountain is by toboggan. Injured guests may not be transported on a snowmobile.
- Critical patients may be transferred directly to the ambulance service. Incident reports should be completed as soon as feasible.
- All rental equipment from the Big Sky Resort-owned shops that is involved in an accident should be brought to the attention of the rental shop for possible testing.
- The ski patrol will provide courtesy rides for equipment malfunctions or per guest request.
- Guests with equipment malfunctions or who do not have the ski/ride ability may request to download on the Ramcharger 8 lift only. Guests will be provided downloading instructions by the Lift Operations team.
- Downloading of sick or injured guests must be approved by the Patrol Director's Office or Patrol Medical Director

### **Radio Communication**

When Dispatch receives a report of an injured or distressed guest, they will make an announcement of the location, age, gender, and nature of injury/illness on Channel 1. When the first patroller arrives on scene, they will call over the radio to notify Dispatch of their arrival on scene as well as confirm their location. Once the patroller has completed a patient assessment, they will communicate their findings, as well as request any equipment or additional staff needed. The patient report should include patient age, gender, chief complaint, mental status (AVPU scale), pulse rate, respiratory rate, treatment and transport plan.

On more serious injuries/illnesses it may be appropriate to assign one of the responding patrollers to the role of communications. All other patrollers should turn their radios down and focus on patient care at that time.

### **Advanced Life Support (ALS) Providers**

ALS providers work under the medical direction of the Gallatin County Medical Director and the Big Sky Ski Patrol Medical Director. ALS providers are paid professional patrollers who are also paramedics or have other recognized ALS certification. It is a goal of the program to have a minimum of 2 ALS providers on staff each day during the winter season.

Requests for ALS providers should be made through Dispatch and should include a brief description of the incident or rationale for the request. The meeting location for ALS rendezvous will depend on the location of the incident and the location of the ALS provider at the time of the call. In many cases the meeting point may be FAR. The decision to wait for ALS arrival before transporting should take into consideration estimated transport times and the potential risk vs. benefit of delaying transport.

### **First Aid Room**

The Ski Patrol Southside First Aid Room (FAR) is the end point of most patient transports and is the primary pick up location for ambulance calls. At the FAR, the patient can be re-evaluated in a warm and dry environment. Further treatment and transport options should also be discussed. The transporting patroller is responsible for the completion of the Incident Report and should obtain all patient information before releasing the patient or transferring care. Prolonged stays in the FAR after the case has been completed are detrimental to the efficiency of the FAR operation. Patients can be helped back to their lodging or to a good waiting place.

If the patient arrived to the FAR with equipment, the transporting patroller should make certain that all of the patient's equipment is accounted for. Any of the patient's equipment left at the FAR after the patient has left should be collected and tagged with the patient's last name and date of the incident.

### **Releasing from Care**

When a patient requires no further EMT level treatment, the patient should be advised of their further treatment options. Locally, these options include ambulance or private vehicle transport to Big Sky Medical Center Emergency Room or walk in to B2 Urgent Care clinic. Often, a patient may choose to return to their home or lodging.

#### **Return to Home or Lodging**

At times, an injured guest may want to go home, to local lodging, or to a doctor outside the area. When appropriate, and after a release from care has been obtained, Ski Patrol will generally try to facilitate helping a guest return to Big Sky Resort Lodging or getting the guest into their private vehicle.

If the guest does not have a vehicle, the Ski Patrol Suburban can be used to assist guests who need a ride to their hotel, lodging, or vehicle. If the Ski Patrol Suburban is unavailable and the guest is staying in Big Sky Resort Lodging, a bellman from the hotel may be able to assist. All requests for bellman transports must be approved by the Patrol Director.

#### **B2 Urgent Care**

The B2 Urgent Care is a private clinic that offers medical services to the general public. All patients are expected to pay for services at the time that they are rendered. If a patient requests to be seen at the clinic, the patient should first be released from Big Sky Ski Patrol care. B2 Urgent Care personnel are not to render medical care in the Ski Patrol FAR unless authorized by the Patrol Director. Likewise, patrollers are not to be involved in medical care after the patient is released from Ski Patrol care.

Ski Patrol has a strong working relationship with the staff of the B2 Urgent Care Clinic. When appropriate, Ski Patrol may request that Dispatch notify B2 of an incoming patient. Such times include certain injuries that may require prioritization or if it is early or late in the day.

#### **Local Ambulance**

Local ambulance service is provided by Big Sky Fire Department. Ambulance requests should be made through Dispatch. Dispatch will call 911. Requests for an ambulance should include patient's age, gender, chief complaint, and pick up location. Ski Patrol will provide the initial transportation to the ambulance. Patients are responsible for the cost of the ambulance service.

American Medical Response (AMR) is a private ambulance service based in Bozeman and will provide service in Big Sky if Big Sky Fire Department is unavailable or for ALS continuity. The response time for AMR is in the range of one hour and should be considered as a backup option only.

**Air Ambulance**

If a patient meets the Montana Air Medical Activation Guidelines, an air ambulance may be requested. Approval for air ambulance must come from the Patrol Director. Any time an air ambulance is requested, a wheeled ambulance should also be called.

Often, patrol is able to transport the patient to an ambulance pick up before an air ambulance arrives. Due to many external factors including uncertainties about weather conducive to flying and air ambulance availability, the preferred practice is to transport the patient to a wheeled ambulance pick up location whenever possible. The goal is to continue to move the patient toward definitive medical care.

Air ambulance calls fall into one of the two situations: scene flights and non-scene flights. A scene flight is one in which the helicopter will land on Big Sky Resort property. Scene flights are coordinated by Big Sky Ski Patrol. Non-scene flights will land at another predetermined landing zone and are coordinated by Big Sky Fire Department.

MOST COMMON - NON-SCENE FLIGHTS		LESS COMMON - SCENE FLIGHT
<i>Scenario 1</i>	<i>Scenario 2</i>	<i>Scenario 3</i>
Air ambulance will pick up the patient off property (likely BSMC).	Air ambulance requested <b><u>AFTER</u></b> a wheeled ambulance has already been called.	Air ambulance will land on Big Sky Resort Property (likely a remote location).
Call 911 to request both wheeled and air ambulance.  Provide pertinent patient update and request that BSFD coordinate flight logistics.  Call BSFD Command phone to provide patient updates.	Do NOT call 911.  Call BSFD Command phone to provide patient updates and advise that patient meets Air Medical Activation Criteria.	Call 911 to request both wheeled and air ambulance.  Request a wheeled ambulance to the closest pick up location.  Request an air ambulance to coordinates of LZ.  Call BSFD Command phone to provide patient updates.  A landing zone site commander should be assigned to ensure scene safety and to assist with air to ground radio communication on TAN (Channel 16).

**Refusals**

A competent person can refuse any aspect of medical care, treatment, or transportation. It is our duty to recommend and offer to perform the type of care outlined in the Gallatin County Prehospital Protocols and Montana Emergency Medical Protocols. These documents are available online and in all posting stations. If a sick or injured person does not want something done that has been carefully explained to them, we will venture to perform the best care we can based on what the patient will permit us to do. It is important to document any treatment(s) or transportation that was refused.

Contact a Patrol Supervisor for any of the following situations related to refusals:

- Serious injury
- Altered mental status
- Person unable to make a sound decision based on injuries, or is lacking in proper judgement

### C. Ski Patrol Equipment

All patrollers are expected to regularly check and help maintain all ski patrol gear and equipment including, but not limited to First Aid Equipment, Toboggans, Technical Rescue and Lift Evacuation Gear, Snowmobiles, Vehicles, and Tools. Training will be provided for the use of all Ski Patrol gear and equipment. It is the patroller's responsibility to know the proper use of the equipment as well as their own limits when using this equipment.

#### **First Aid Equipment**

Medical equipment checks (Med checks) are to be performed daily during the operating season. This includes equipment at remote locations such as toboggans and AED's. If you observe missing or broken gear, it is your responsibility to obtain or repair it in a timely manner. If the item is unable to be repaired or replaced, report the issue to the Patrol Supervisor and take the item out of service.

#### **Toboggans**

Toboggans are the primary tool for transporting sick or injured guests and courtesy rides on the mountain. We primarily use the Cascade Rescue Toboggan Model 100 "The Legend". Additionally, we have a few specialty toboggans including the Cascade Rescue Model 350 "The Extreme" (aka Akia), the Cascade Rescue Trauma One, and the Cascade Rescue Litter.

Patrollers should conduct daily inspection of toboggans to ensure serviceability. Toboggan inspections should include cleaning snow and ice off of the toboggan, as well as inspecting the fiberglass shell for cracks, the handles and handle bolts, handle locks, chain brake, straps, and fins. Any maintenance issues should be promptly reported to the Patrol Supervisor and the toboggan should be taken out of service until the repairs can be made.

Toboggans should not be dropped or dragged over anything but snow.

After a toboggan has been used, the contents of the sled pack should be brought inside to be cleaned and dried. The toboggan should be neatly stored in front of the FAR. Many times, the First Aider will repack the toboggan and return it to its location after hours with a snowmobile.

In the case where it is necessary to transport a toboggan back to its location using a chairlift, patrollers are advised to request the assistance of a second patroller to avoid injury due to lifting an awkward and heavy load.

When it is not feasible to perform a snowmobile tow of an injured guest who is ambulatory, chairlifts may be used to facilitate transport. The use of chairlifts with injured guests requires authorization from the Patrol Director's Office or Patrol Medical Director.

### **Technical Rescue and Lift Evacuation Gear**

Inspection of technical rescue and lift evacuation gear should be done weekly. All ropes must be inspected monthly, typically on the first Monday of the month. Specific instructions for gear inspection can be found in the Lift Evacuation Manual and in the technical notices for each piece of gear. Broken, missing, or worn gear should be noted in the inspection log, taken out of service, and reported to the Patrol Supervisor.

After use of technical rescue or lift evacuation gear, dry the gear completely before returning it to storage.

### **Snowmobiles**

Volunteer patrollers are not authorized to operate a snowmobile while working at Big Sky Resort. Volunteer patrollers are expected to be familiar with the snowmobiles and snowmobile routes used at Big Sky Resort as it relates to patient transport on the mountain.

Snowmobiles are often used to assist with patient transports to FAR. Snowmobile assists are appropriate for transports that require a lengthy flat or uphill travel such as Skittles Road. Requests for a snowmobile assist should be made through Dispatch and should include the rendezvous location. Snowmobiles should not be used to transport non-employee passengers. This includes courtesy rides and injured guests. When using a snowmobile to assist with a toboggan transport, the transporting patroller will remain in the handles so that they can control the toboggan. Toboggans specifically designed for tow-behind use do not require a toboggan handler.

### **Snow Cats**

Under special circumstances and with the approval of the Patrol Director, authorized patrollers may operate a snow cat. However, it is preferred to make all requests for work that require snow cat assistance by following the chain of command beginning with the Patrol Supervisors. The following are examples of situations in which a snow cat may be requested:

- Lift evacuation
- Guests and/or employees stranded at the bottom of a down lift
- Serious injury evacuation
- Extrication from a difficult location
- Search and rescue
- Transportation of personnel

## **D. Mountain Safety Initiatives**

One of the primary functions of Big Sky Ski Patrol is to perform as ambassadors of guest and employee safety by upholding Big Sky's Mountain Safety Initiatives. All patrollers are responsible for promoting the

highest levels of safety, enforcing the Skier Responsibility Code and carrying out Big Sky Resort's safety policies and procedures.

Mountain Safety Initiatives include, but are not limited to, slope maintenance, trail signage, patrol presence on the mountain, enforcement of SLOW ski zones, safe skiing education and outreach, and other rule enforcement. Big Sky's safe skiing philosophy is based on the Skier Responsibility Code and the concept of "Speed and Space."

## E. Rule Enforcement

The Ski Patrol scope of operations revolves around the safety of guests and employees on the mountain. To this end, the patrol is empowered to stop, warn, and/or take any necessary and prudent action to prevent injuries or promote safety. In doing so, it is important to remember that we work in guest service and it is unacceptable at any time to yell or talk down to a guest. It is our responsibility to improve their experience. We will be professional and greet our guests with respect.

When responding to potential rule violations, the patroller should collect as much information as possible about the situation including the status of gates, signs, and boundaries. This will often require assistance or investigation from other patrollers. If it is determined that a legitimate violation has occurred, patrollers shall notify a Patrol Supervisor and/or Patrol Director's Office and follow the Rule Enforcement and Ticket Revocation Guidelines.

Often times, guests may have unknowingly violated the ski area rules. For example, a closed sign may have blown down, rope lines may be buried, a gate may have blown open, or other types of miscommunication. In these situations the following guidelines will help facilitate a positive interaction:

- Remove your goggles or sunglasses, make eye contact, and smile
- Greet the guest by introducing yourself. Show them you care and they are important. Body language goes a long way.
- Ask them how their day is going. They will probably admit that they are lost or unsure of where they are.
- Offer your assistance. Typically, if they are lost, even if you give them great directions, they will continue to feel lost. Whenever possible, don't just send them on their way with directions.
- Let your supervisor know that you are assisting a guest to their destination
- Continue to engage in conversation. This is an opportunity for education.
- Thank the guest for visiting. Do not pass them off if they are still confused or unsure. Stay with the guest until they are aware and satisfied of their current situation.
- Afterwards, let your supervisor or the Director's Office know the details of the interaction and analyze the situation to help prevent another guest from entering this type of situation.

If a guest becomes confrontational, contact Dispatch. Dispatch will contact a Patrol Supervisor, Patrol Director, or Mountain Operations Management. Under no circumstances should force be used to remove the guest's lift ticket. This is a situation for a law enforcement officer.

Employees who are skiing while on duty and commit a violation will be disciplined pursuant to the Employee Handbook.

## F. Cold Weather Guidelines

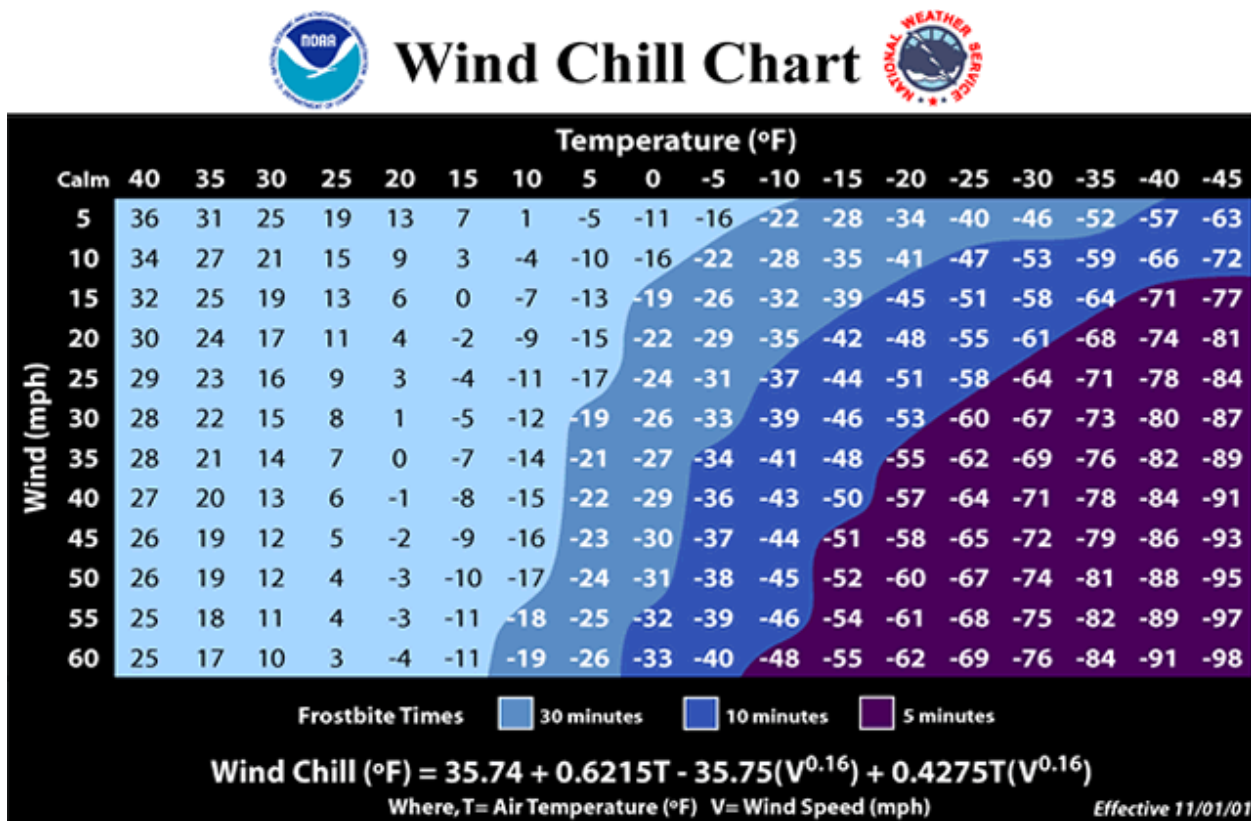
The purpose of these cold weather guidelines is to provide guidance for decision-making related to

1. Opening base area lifts
2. Performing avalanche hazard mitigation routes, and
3. Opening Managed Access and hike-to terrain in extreme cold temperatures.

### Weather Data

Weather data from the Summit weather station will be used to assess Wind Chill values for the Summit; the Jack Creek weather station will be used to assess the Headwaters/A-Z terrain. The most recent hourly temperature and average wind speed will be used to estimate the Wind Chill in each location.

The following chart from the National Weather Service will serve as the reference for Wind Chill values.



### Avalanche Hazard Mitigation

When Wind Chill values approach -30°F, the Snow Safety Director will notify the Patrol Director’s Office. Snow Safety and the Director’s Office will discuss the current situational factors such as operational plans, weather forecast, and safety concerns to make a decision about when and where to send routes. Ultimately, the decision will lie with the Patrol Director’s Office.

### Opening Managed Access and Hike-To Terrain

Managed Access and Hike-To Terrain will remain closed to public at temperatures ≤ 0°F. At temperatures >0°F terrain closures due to Wind Chill should be made in coordination with the Patrol Director’s Office.

## G. Incident Investigations

The Ski Patrol is responsible for conducting Incident Investigations (II). An II may be initiated when the incident involves a collision with a manmade object or another person, a lift-related injury, terrain park injuries requiring ambulance transportation, accidents requiring air ambulance transportation, and any other life-altering injury. In some circumstances, an II may be initiated without fitting the above criteria. Such requests may be made by the Patrol Director's Office or other Mountain Operations Management.

All patrollers are responsible for knowing the situations that trigger an Incident Investigation and communicating the need for investigation to Dispatch. When responding to injured guests, the primary focus of Ski Patrol is medical response - a patroller should never delay patient care to initiate an investigation.

Once patient care has been adequately attended to, secondary responders have the responsibility of assisting in the initiation of the Incident Investigation. This may include facilitating exchange of information in collisions, taking witness statements, taking photos of the scene, and completing supplemental patroller statements. Whenever possible, collisions should include an exchange of information of both guests involved. It is important that all documentation include only the facts of the case. A patroller should never put their opinions in an Incident Investigation report.

When an Incident Investigation involves equipment from Big Sky Resort-owned shops patrol should notify the appropriate shop so that they can conduct an investigation of the equipment.

All Incident Investigations and Incident Reports must be kept confidential in accordance with HIPPA laws. No reports may be shared or copied without the permission of the Patrol Director.

## H. Rope Lines, Gates, Closures, Signs, and Ski Area Boundaries

Maintenance of rope lines, gates, closures, and signs are essential to managing terrain and the goal of guest safety. All patrollers are responsible for assisting with installing, inspecting, and maintaining rope lines, gates, closures, and signs.

### **Rope Lines**

Rope lines are used to create boundaries. Rope lines and gates should be installed such that the rope or gate is approximately waist high. Rope slices should be neatly made and all rope lines should include high visibility flagging spaced at intervals of approximately 10 feet. Rope lines that cross the fall line should include a breakaway between fixed points to reduce the risk of injury in case of a collision.

### **Gates**

Gates should be constructed out of high visibility (high vis) tape. Gates should be installed such that the gate does not touch the ground and is approximately waist high when closed. When gates are open, the high vis should be neatly coiled or spooled so that it does not flap in the wind.

### **Closures**

Rope lines, gates, and signs and any combination of such can be used to create closures. Patrol Supervisors will indicate which style of closure is appropriate for the terrain or situation.

When terrain is closed due to avalanche hazard, the preferred closure includes a gate and an "Avalanche Area Closed" sign.

When terrain is closed because a rescue would be unfeasible (such as early or late season), the preferred closure includes both a rope line and "Area Closed" signs.



## **Signs**

Big Sky Resort uses a variety of signs to mark hazards and warn guests of potentially hazardous conditions. It is the patroller's responsibility to become familiar with the different types of signs and the appropriate use of each.

## **Ski Area Boundaries**

Ski area boundaries are marked with "Ski Area Boundary" signs, both on the mountain and on the trail map. The Big Sky Ski Patrol is capable of dealing with an emergency within the ski area boundary in an expedient manner. Designated backcountry gates provide access to public land adjacent to the ski area boundary. These areas are not patrolled by Big Sky Ski Patrol. The Ski Patrol may offer limited search and rescue assistance out of the area in accordance with our mutual aid agreements with authorization from the Patrol Director's Office.

Within the ski area boundary, Ski Patrol manages access to designated areas. Managed Access areas are identified on the trail map. The policy of Big Sky is that guests speak directly to Ski Patrol for permission to ski and ride these areas.

## **I. Lift Operations Policies**

### **Downloading**

Because of lift design, chair lifts have different downloading capacities. In order to maximize the overall efficiency of uphill transportation of guests, we use downloading only when absolutely necessary. Lift downloading capacities can be found at Dispatch and in Lift Operator's log books. The preferred method for getting guests who are unable to ski or ride down the mountain is to give them a courtesy ride in a toboggan. The exception to this is the Lone Peak Tram, Ramcharger 8, and Swift Current 6 where downloading is part of normal operations.

### **Transportation of Equipment**

Garbage and propane will only be transported outside of normal operating hours – before lifts are open or at the end of the day after last chair has arrived. These packages must be secure. Both top and bottom terminals must be notified that there will be a package up/downloaded, and the chair number. Equipment transportation must follow the guidelines in the Lift Operations Manual.

### **Foot Passengers**

Foot passengers are allowed to board Ramcharger 8 and the Lone Peak Tram. Foot passengers are not allowed on any other lifts. An exception will be made for business purposes, such as Lift Maintenance and VIPs.

### **Loading of Small Children**

Under no circumstances do we allow children in packs during winter operations.

### **General Closures**

When a lift goes down for an undetermined amount of time and it is possible that guests could be sitting on, or stuck at the bottom of the lift, the following steps should be taken:

- Be polite and as helpful as possible to our guests at all times
- For dead end-lifts, advise guests to stay put at the bottom of lift and await further instructions from a Patrol Supervisor

- Do not make any promises to guests concerning refunds or vouchers until management has stated otherwise.

If a lift is going to be down for any extended amount of time, the Ski Patrol responsibilities include:

- Close all runs leading to the down lift
- Dispatch will contact Lift Maintenance, Mountain Services, the Patrol Supervisor and Patrol Director
- Dispatch will make an announcement on Channels 1 and 4 regarding the down lift
- After 10 minutes of down time, a patroller will ski the lift line to relay necessary information and answer guest questions. This patroller should also report any guests with special considerations, the number of loaded chairs and guests in each span, and if there are any downloaders.
- Patrol should respond to the top and bottom of the down lift to answer guest questions, relay necessary information, and assist guests as needed.
- Patrollers at the top of the lift should mark passes and advise guests to contact Mountain Services in the Snowcrest building to answer concerns

### **Wind, Temperature, and Lightning Policy**

The purpose of such a policy is to make an organized and accepted policy that Mountain Operations departments have reviewed and approved prior to the winter season. Only the Mountain Operations Manager on Duty or the appointed representatives can make a case-by-case deviation.

Notification of all departments that high winds are probable is the first phase of the policy. If winds increase, off-loading may be warranted and the lift may go on “Wind Hold.”

Dispatch documents lift openings and closures. Re-evaluations will be conducted after the initial closing. Prolonged closures for the remaining operating hours are determined by the Mountain Manager or appointed representative.

Temperature policies are complex and decisions are often based on the experience of ski patrol and Mountain Operations Management. The decision to open or close an area is dictated by specific weather parameters, which can be independent of still air temperatures as well as the actual temperature recorded at the affected areas of the mountain. Time of exposure and distances from public facilities will also help determine openings and closures. There are times when an area or lift will be open to patrollers only due to circumstances.

Lightning holds will be dictated under the premise that thunder heard within the area boundaries is capable of producing a lightning strike anywhere in the ski area. See the Mountain Operations Lift-Related Lightning Guidelines for more information.

### **Mechanical Problems**

Lift operators and the Ski Patrol need to be aware of mechanical problems that can occur with all lifts. Looking and listening closely to become familiar with how each lift operates is important. When a lift has been stopped for 5 minutes, Dispatch should be notified. If the problem remains more than ten minutes, a patroller should ski the line under the lift and inform guests that Lift Maintenance has been called, to remain calm, and stay on the lift. Never allow a guest to jump down from a chair unless fall is imminent and you have a catch tarp with the adequate help.

Dispatch should notify Mountain Services of down lifts so that they can assist in communicating relevant information to guests. If the problem cannot be repaired in a reasonable amount of time, and depending on the temperature and weather conditions, an evacuation may be appropriate.

### **Lift Evacuation Procedures**

The decision to evacuate a lift will be made by the Ski Patrol Director, Mountain Operations Management, and Lift Maintenance Manager. Dispatch will be notified and an announcement will be made for an evacuation team to assemble. Evacuation kits are located in various places on the mountain. More information about the locations and rope lengths of lift evac kits are in the Lift Evacuation Manual.

See the Lift Evacuation Manual for more detailed information about Lift Evacuation Procedures.

## **J. Communications and Dispatching**

Big Sky Mountain Operations has two dispatchers operating from 8:00 a.m. until 5:15 p.m. seven days a week from Thanksgiving until the end of the ski season. One dispatcher is designated for Mountain Operations which includes Lift Maintenance, Lift Operations, Snowmaking, and Grooming. The second dispatcher is assigned to Ski Patrol Dispatch.

Ski Patrol has three assigned radio channels – channels 1, 2, and 3. Channels 1 and 2 are repeated channels. Channel 3 is a direct or line-of-sight channel. In general all regular Ski Patrol Operations will take place on Channel 1 and under normal operations, this is the channel that Dispatch will use and monitor for Ski Patrol radio traffic. Channels 2 and 3 are to be used for longer conversations and for situations in which the volume of radio traffic necessitates multiple radio channels.

Mountain Operations – Lift Operations, Lift Maintenance, Grooming, and Snowmaking – are assigned to operate on Channel 4. Channel 4 is a repeated channel and is monitored by Dispatch.

All radio traffic should be kept to a professional standard. It is best practice to use clear vocabulary such as “affirmative” and “negative” to avoid miscommunication. With a few exceptions, Big Sky Ski Patrol does not use 10-codes or any other coded radio communication. All repeated radio channels are monitored by the FCC (Federal Communications Commission). Federal law prohibits obscene, indecent, and profane content on the radio.

The standard radio communication protocol used by Big Sky Ski Patrol follows the format outlined below:

1. **Initiating Communication** To call another person on the radio, clearly and politely identify the recipient and yourself. Last names are preferred. For example, “Ayres, this is Sheil.”
2. **Response** Often, the person initiating the communication is interested in knowing the location of the person they are calling. Standard practice at Big Sky Ski Patrol is to respond with your location. In the example above, Ryan should respond with his location: “Top of Swift Current.”
3. **Message** Radio communication should be short, concise, and understandable. Deliver messages briefly in consideration of others on the network. If you have a long message, use the word “break” between ideas in case the other person needs to interject. In the example above, Nancy might say, “Please open the Cow Flats gate.”
4. **Confirm** To confirm that you understood the message, repeat back the request or message that was relayed to you. In our example, Ryan could confirm the message by saying, “Copy, opening the Cow Flats gate.”

## K. Trail Closing Procedures (TCPs)

Trail closure procedures are conducted daily in all open terrain. The goal of TCPs is to perform a thorough trail check to clear the trail of guests. Specific TCP protocols are posted in each posting station.

To perform a TCP, the patroller will ski the trail following the TCP route, attempting to visualize the entire area while periodically yelling “Closing!” Suspicious tracks or tracks leaving the ski area boundary should be noted and consideration should be given to relay this information to Dispatch. The patroller performing a TCP should stay behind any guests to ensure they make it down the mountain safely. When the TCP follows a lift line, the patroller should also look up to check that no guests are on the lift.

The “Super” is a TCP assignment in which at least one patroller stays in the posting station in case an injured guest is encountered during TCPs. If a patroller encounters an injured guest during TCPs, it is important to relay all of the anticipated equipment needs to the Super as to not cause delays in treatment or transport of the injured guest.

It is the patroller’s responsibility to learn and become familiar with all of the TCPs in the posting areas where they are working. Extenuating circumstances may cause certain TCPs to be combined. Having a full working knowledge of all TCPs will allow patrollers to adapt when or if these circumstances arise.

Any changes to TCPs must be approved by the Patrol Supervisor and updated in the TCP Manuals.

## L. Avalanche Hazard Reduction

Big Sky Resort has a substantial amount avalanche terrain above and below tree line. The primary reason for Avalanche Hazard Reduction work at Big Sky Resort is to safely open terrain for our guests. Avalanche Hazard Reduction is also performed to protect lifts, employees, guests, buildings/structures, work roads, and equipment. Big Sky Ski Patrol uses a variety of active and passive methods that include the use of explosives and ski cutting for accomplishing these goals.

The Snow Safety Director is responsible for communicating a daily weather and avalanche forecast, creating a daily travel and terrain plan with respect to avalanche hazard, assigning patrollers to avalanche hazard reduction routes, and for the constant monitoring of weather, snowpack, terrain, and human factors related to avalanche work.

While performing avalanche hazard reduction work, all patrollers are required to properly wear and know how to use an avalanche beacon. Avalanche beacons should be less than five years old and in proper working order. It is the patroller’s responsibility to maintain and know how to use their model of beacon.

The use of explosives for Avalanche Hazard Reduction is governed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (BATFE). All patrollers performing work with explosives must submit an Employee Possessor Questionnaire to the BATFE annually.

More information about the specific protocols related to Avalanche Hazard Reduction and the use of explosives at Big Sky can be found in the Big Sky Ski Patrol Avalanche Hazard Reduction Explosives Handling and Use Handbook (aka The Green Book).