

Joining the Canadian Ski Patrol – Calgary Zone Frequently Asked Questions

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PARTICIPANT REQUIRMENTS

What requirements are needed to join the patrol?

- 18 years of age
- Complete CSP Volunteer Form
- Complete a one-time police information check
- Be an intermediate/advanced to expert skier (alpine, telemark or Nordic) or snowboarder
- Be willing to learn and practice a new skill
- Provide your own skiing/snowboarding equipment (uniforms – jacket and pack are provided for patrollers who choose to patrol at a ski area in the Calgary Zone)

Is it mandatory to attend the Open House?

No, but it is strongly encouraged. Joining is a big commitment and it is important you have all the information you need to make the decision to join. The open house provides an informative presentation that will answer a lot of questions about joining. There will also be patrollers from all ski areas present for you to talk with. Information about the open house can found on our website www.cspcalgary.ca

Is it mandatory to attend an Experience Patrol Day or a Shadow Day prior to joining?

No. These events provide you the opportunity to get firsthand experience of what we do, our expectations, and information on how to join. We can also provide some feedback on your skiing/snowboarding ability. They are recommended if you are unsure about joining. Joining the CSP and completing the training is a significant commitment on both the new patroller and the CSP volunteers; we want to ensure that this is the right fit for you.

I have no previous first aid experience – can I still join?

Yes! We provide all the training for you to join us. Many of the people who join the CSP have little or no first aid experience. After taking the course – which gives you an advanced level of first aid training – and with practice, most people become very competent first aiders.

FIRST AID TRAINING

I have previous first aid training and/or a medical background (e.g. wilderness first aid, EMR, nurse, doctor, etc.) - does this qualify as a substitute for New Patroller training?

No. All new patrollers must successfully complete the CSP New patroller course. This ensures that we all understand each other's level of training, and for our insurance purposes.

I patrolled a while ago with CSP – do I still have to take the new patroller course?

If you completed the course more than two years ago without completing the CSP annual recertification, then you must complete the New Patroller Course again.

What happens if I am unsuccessful with my first aid exams?

You are allowed to take a re-test of the exams; however, the passing mark is increased. The training can be overwhelming and if you put in the effort to learn the material and study, the instructors will assist you. All new patrollers must successfully pass their first aid exams (CPR/AED, Skills, Written, and Diagnostic) prior to the on-snow training. We do not offer refunds for unsuccessful participants.

What are the First Aid exams like?

There are four components to the first aid exams. All of these exams must be successfully completed before proceeding to the on-snow training.

1. ***CPR/AED Exam:*** The pass mark is 80 per cent on a multiple choice exam.
2. ***Skills Exams:*** Five practical exams for you to demonstrate your assessment/bandage/splint/backboard/miscellaneous treatment skills.
3. ***Written Exam:*** A 100 question, multiple choice, exam on the CSP First Aid manual content. A written exam review sheet will be provided beforehand. The pass mark is 80 per cent after which you will be required to correct your exam to 100% using the manual. Should you achieve a score of less than 80 per cent, you will be asked to re-write the same exam, the pass mark will be increased to 85 per cent.
4. ***Diagnostic Exam:*** This is a real-time evaluation of your patient assessment skills, diagnosis of the problem and how you would treat the patient. A minimum of 80 per cent is required for the Diagnostic exam. A single re-test is available and are examined by two instructors with a different scenario

I cannot make some in-classroom sessions – what are my options?

We understand that we are all volunteers, we have busy schedules and circumstances happen. Absence from the classroom sessions are evaluated on a case by case basis and require approval from the Calgary Zone VP Education (education@cspcalgary.ca). Please send an email outlining the dates you will not be able to attend for approval.

I cannot make the CPR course – what are my options?

You can register yourself through another certified provider (e.g. Red Cross) for a CPR course that fits your schedule; however you will be responsible to cover this cost. Please ensure that you take the HCP Level and that the certificate is valid until May of the upcoming ski season. You must also provide a copy of your certificate to the VP of education (education@cspcalgary.ca)

I already have CPR Certification, do I have attend this session?

If you already have a valid Level HCP CPR certification that is valid until the end of the upcoming ski season, you can provide a copy to the VP of education (education@cspcalgary.ca) and not attend this session as part of the New Patroller Course. Note that it is an expectation that patrollers recertify their CPR annually (meaning if you have a CPR certificate that is valid for 3 years, CSP Calgary zone will expect that you re-certify this annually during our returning weekends).

ON SNOW TRAINING

What is the On-Snow ski/snowboard test like?

Qualified On-Snow instructors evaluate your alpine skiing/snowboarding level for low land competency and provide toboggan handling exercises and training. All new patrollers must complete the Calgary Zone low-land On-Snow first, regardless of where they want to patrol. The location for the lowland on-snow will vary on the year: it can be held at COP, Nakiska, or Lake Louise, and will be determined in the Fall.

What is the on-snow requirement for Nordic Patrol?

If you are planning to do Nordic patrol only, you are not required to attend the alpine low land on-snow evaluation/test. Patrollers choosing Nordic should be in good physical condition, and be comfortable on skis over uphill, downhill and flat terrain, and you will be required to demonstrate a heightened level of competency of your Nordic skiing skills with one or more of the senior Nordic patrollers. Your opportunity to join the Nordic Patrol will be partially dependent upon your Nordic skiing skill.

Knowledge of backcountry skills and self-sufficiency are an asset. A willingness to learn, share skills, and improve is required. As Nordic Patrollers will work closely with the staff at Kananaskis Parks, Nordic Patrollers must carry out a full day of training on site (orientation), which will include input from Conservation Officers.

What happens after I am successful with the on-snow exams?

Additional ski tests for ski areas with more demanding and challenging terrain (Lake Louise, Nakiska, and Norquay) are required for new patrollers wanting to patrol at those ski areas. New patrollers are examined to ensure they can ski/snowboard competently, comfortably, and confidently along with the handling of toboggans on all terrain types at the ski area that they decide to patrol.

You must successful complete the low land on-snow first prior to completing a ski test at the other ski areas. This also applies to any new patroller who may have participated in an experience patrol or shadow day.

What happens if I am unsuccessful with my On-Snow exams?

We offer weekly ski improvement courses in the evening at COP starting in December and/January and ending in March. If you put in the effort to improve your skiing/snowboarding our Instructors will help you obtain and achieve the required skill level required. We do not offer any refunds for participants who are unsuccessful in demonstrating the required skiing/snowboarding skill set, and toboggan handling skills. The weekly ski improvement courses

at COP are free (no fee for the coaching and the lift ticket is provided) for patrollers who have successfully completed their first aid exams. The weekly ski improvement is also open to ski patrollers who have passed their on-snow exams and looking for additional feedback for improvement. This is also open to snowboarders.

If you are unsuccessful with your On-Snow evaluation and training, you are still a certified first aider and can patrol at off-snow special events (i.e. marathons, races, etc.)

I cannot make the On-Snow training – what are my options?

Please do your best to accommodate these sessions, as it can be difficult to reschedule (we are all volunteers as well). However, exceptions can be made. Please note that these dates are also weather dependent and have been changed in the past to accommodate more suitable weather and snow conditions. We need suitable snow conditions to be able to carry out these sessions. This training and evaluation can be held at COP, Nakiska, or Lake Louise – the location will be confirmed in the Fall when the New Patroller course begins.

FUNDRAISING

I am unavailable to my ski sale shifts as part of my fundraising commitments – what can I do?

Please try your best to complete your fundraising commitments. Our training is heavily subsidized due to our fundraising efforts, and volunteers are required for the overall execution of the ski sale. However, we understand that it is within a specific timeframe, and may not align with some people's schedule. You can have someone complete your ski sale shifts for you (make sure they identify that when signing up) or you can volunteer at one of our casinos throughout the year. The annual fundraising commitment is 2 ski shifts (4 hours each) or 1 casino shift (8 hours).

SKI AREAS & PATROLLING

Can I pick which ski area I want to patrol at?

Yes. We encourage all new patrollers to go to the ski around days to learn about the different ski areas. Each ski area has its own uniqueness and benefits, and it is important you select one that works the best for you. Patrol Leaders will also present on their ski areas during the New Patroller Course to give you an idea of what it is like to patrol at that hill. Calgary Zone ski areas include: Nakiska, Norquay, Lake Louise, and Nordic.

I would like to patrol at a ski area outside of the Calgary Zone (e.g. Fernie, Kickinghorse), can I still sign up through the Calgary Zone?

Yes. We are a national organization, and you can transfer zones. Please note that if you sign up through the Calgary Zone, you must complete the Calgary Zone requirements. This includes your annual fundraising commitments, and annual recertification. Patrollers who patrol at a ski area outside of the Calgary Zone do not receive a patrol jacket and patrol pack as part of their fee.

What if I cannot make my monthly commitments?

Monthly commitments are generally 2-3 weekend days (Saturday and Sunday) per month. We understand that as volunteers we have busy schedules. New patrollers are strongly encouraged to do 3 days month to for training purposes. It takes time and experience to learn hill protocols,

accident response, radio communication, and three days a month allows the information and training to be fresh and current. Please speak with the Patrol Leader if you cannot make your monthly commitments.

How do I schedule my patrol days?

An online scheduling roster system is used. You sign up for the days you are available to patrol. Note that it is important to sign up early to ensure you meet your commitments as there is a maximum number of patrol shifts available for the day.

Can I patrol on weekdays?

Ski areas may allow you to patrol on weekdays; however, these days do not count towards your monthly commitment - unless you have approval from the Patrol Leader.

Do I get to ski for free?

Each ski area has different benefits – in general for each day you patrol, you receive a “credit day”. These credit days can be exchanged for day lift tickets or saved up to purchase a pass for the following winter season. There are also a variety of different benefits through the national organization and directly through the ski area you patrol at. Ski area benefits are presented during the New Patroller Course when Patrol Leaders present on what it is like to present at the hill.

While on a patrol shift, yes you do get to ski without purchasing a lift ticket.

Can I patrol during the summer?

Yes. We have a special events patrol that provides first aid services for events throughout the summer (off-snow). All patrollers from the Calgary Zone regardless of where they patrol during the winter are invited to be part of the special events patrol.

EQUIPMENT

Do I need to buy my own equipment?

A patrol jack, patrol pack, and basic first aid supplies are provided for new patrollers choosing to patrol at a ski area within the Calgary zone. New patrollers need to supply black snow pants and their own ski/snowboard equipment. Additional equipment may be required at ski areas (e.g. helmet, shovel, probe, avalanche beacon etc.)

Where and when do I pick up my jacket and pack?

After you have completed the On-Snow training and have successfully completed the ski test at the ski area you wish to patrol at, new patrollers will be provided a patrol jacket and pack (if you are patrolling at a ski area in the Calgary Zone). Details of how you will receive your uniform will be provided during the New Patroller Course and/or through your Patrol Leader.

MORE INFO!

I am undecided if this is really for me – what are my options?

Joining is a big commitment, and we want to ensure you have all the information you need to make the decision to become part of the CSP. We encourage you to come out to one of Experience Patrol Days throughout the season. This day will give you an idea about what we do, expectations, and how to join. We can also provide some feedback on skiing/snowboarding ability. You can also make contact with a ski area directly and set up a shadow day – this is similar to our Experience Patrol days, and you will be one on one with a patroller for the day. Information about these opportunities will be available on our website during the ski season.

I still need more information – who do I contact?

Please check out website and our detailed brochure about joining. If you have additional questions about joining, please email join@cspcalgary.ca