

WILLAMETTE PASS SKI PATROL

Information for Prospective Patrol Candidates

Willamette Pass Ski Patrol delivers safety-oriented and first aid services to skiers and boarders, and summer bicyclists, at Willamette Pass Resort -- with an emphasis on our winter activities. Patrolling at the Pass is a lot of fun, and also a lot of work. We are largely a volunteer patrol with some paid (weekday) members who are also employees of the Willamette Pass Resort (WPR). We take a lot of pride in our performance and work hard to maintain the high standards expected of us by area management, the skiing public, and most importantly, ourselves. We appreciate your interest in becoming a member of our Patrol and hope the following information will help you understand what we are looking for in our candidates.

The Process of Becoming A Member

If you believe you are qualified for membership and are willing to make the substantial commitment of time and energy to patrolling, please complete the accompanying application form. Based upon anticipated needs, some or all of the applicants will be invited to a ski/board test (see below for details) held during March in most years. Those who pass the on-hill test will be scheduled for interviews with a small panel of patrollers, to determine compatibility with the patrol in terms of goals and interests. A pool of candidates-to-be will be selected from the interviewees, and depending upon the patrol's personnel needs, will be invited to begin training in the fall.

The Ski Test

There are three identified goals for the test:

- Determine if a skier/boarder has sufficient skills to instill confidence in the skiing public when seen on any terrain and in any conditions at Willamette Pass, while wearing a Patrol parka.
- Determine if skier/boarder has edge control and balance that is good enough to successfully learn how to run a rescue toboggan.
- Give participants every chance to succeed.

The test will begin with a short orientation to the patrol and to the test itself. This orientation will take place in the Patrol Room beginning at noon. You will need to be ready to ski, with your ski key activated and with enough calories and hydration in you to get through the test. We will then move to the ski hill, where we will ride the lift together, move to a groomed and then begin the actual test. Judges will be looking for good edge control and carved turns. Though this first run will not be officially scored, judges will be looking for that good first impression. We will then move to a moderately steep slope and each prospective candidate will have an opportunity to demonstrate "falling leaf" sideslips facing each direction and snow plow turns and a stop in the snowplow. These are skills used in sled handling, and are mandatory before training with a toboggan begins.

As you probably are aware, Willamette Pass offers some rather challenging runs in terms of bumps, steeps, and difficult snow (e.g. crud). We will find something to challenge everyone, including our judges, on more difficult terrain with three or more runs. If it is reasonable, we will do one or more runs on RTS. At some point, we will take a run formally demonstrating carving and edge control as well.

We will try to keep things as relaxed as we can, realizing that any test can be nerve-wracking. Also, at various times during the course of the test, the judges will put their heads together, and some prospective candidates may be excused from the test. This will occur only if all the judges have become convinced that the individual(s) asked to leave may be in danger by continuing and/or have no chance of passing the test.

Remember: we are looking for control, stability and confidence in all conditions and terrain.

Candidate Training

Candidate training will include the following:

1. An Outdoor Emergency Care (OEC) course, required by the National Ski Patrol system. Depending upon which nearby patrol (ourselves, Willamette Backcountry, or Santiam) is presenting the class, it will likely be held in summer or fall. There are years when the class is not taught, since none of the patrols has a pressing need for new patrollers. It is challenging and time-consuming. It is taught at approximately the EMT-Basic level, with emphasis on outdoor injuries and medical situations. CPR level C is required of all patrollers and is often taught as part of this course or is offered separately by Willamette Pass Ski Patrol.
2. Candidate on-hill training will begin with the start of the ski season at Willamette Pass, and will cover all aspects of Patrol operations: first aid in the field under winter conditions, toboggan handling, safety, communications, history, chair lift evacuation, map and compass, orientation to the ski, avalanche control, and search and rescue (and probably some additional topics as well). Training will be at the ski area.
3. Candidates will be required to complete the Basic Avalanche course as part of their training, though it is often not done in the first year. This is a National Ski Patrol system course taught by local or regional instructors. We try to hold it at Willamette Pass once each season.
4. All patrollers participate in annual ongoing training including OEC, On-Hill, and CPR (level C) refreshers.

Costs

Candidate expenses in the first year will include a one-time fee of approximately \$125.00 to cover OEC books, Ski Patroller's Manual and OEC registration fees. In addition, all patrollers must pay annual National/Division/Regional dues, currently about \$75.00. Uniform parkas are provided on a cost-sharing basis for patrollers upon completion of training. Further, radio harnesses and first aid packs or vests must be purchased and initially stocked at patroller expense. Ski Patrolling is not a way to ski for free.

All patrollers are required to have personal medical insurance.

Duties

Upon successful completion of required training, patrollers will be assigned duty days. Volunteer patrollers generally serve two weekend days out of every three weekends. The requirement will total about 15 duty days spread over a normal season. Patrol days start before 8 a.m. and continue until release by the Hill Chief at day's end, usually about 5 p.m. All patrollers are required to remain on duty in the event of a search and rescue mission unless excused by the Hill Chief. Paid (weekday) patrollers are scheduled work days by WPR.

All candidates and patrollers are invited to attend in-town patrol meetings during the season and expected to participate in other off-hill activities and Patrol administrative functions.

A minimum of 10 hours service is required at the annual Ski Swap, which is a primary fund raising event. The Swap is ordinarily Thursday through Sunday of the last weekend in October.

Notwithstanding the personal demands and initial costs, ski patrolling at Willamette Pass is fun and rewarding. We will do our best to see that your experience with the Patrol is both. Questions regarding this application or duties should be directed to Joe Mosley, (541) 465-9568, or recruiter@wpsp.org.