



National Ski Patrol  
Central Division  
Senior Program Manual

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## Document Revision Record

Revision	Description	Date	Author
Initial Release	Initial Release	4/18/2021	James Roell A. Sean Bennett Jeff Jurcak

## Purpose

The purpose of the Central Division Senior Manual is to provide the patrollers in Central Division (from Senior Program candidates to Senior Program administrators) a common document to refer to regarding the National Ski Patrol Senior Program. The basic content of this manual was derived from the National Ski Patrol Skills Development Program found in Appendix G of the current National Ski Patrol Policies and Procedures and the Ski Patroller’s Manual, 14th edition. Both of these documents are available at [nsp.org](http://nsp.org).

This document is subject to change through the proposal procedure with final approval by the National Ski Patrol Central Division Board of Directors.

## National Education Program Mission

The Senior Program is a national education program providing an opportunity for participants to enhance their patrolling skills in a nonthreatening and supportive environment.



## Central Division Senior Program Mission

The Senior Program is governed by the National Ski Patrol, administered by the Central Division, and implemented by the regions.

The mission of the Central Division Senior Program is to provide guidance to the regions in the administration of the NSP Senior Program. The primary goal of the Central Division Senior Manual is to provide a resource to be used to maintain the integrity and consistency of the Senior Program across all regions in the division. The division encourages cross-boundary exchanges between the regions, the sharing of ideas and resources, and striving for continuous improvement of the Senior Program.

## Why Become a Senior

A Senior Candidate is a Patroller, Alpine Patroller or Nordic/Backcountry Patroller looking to grow and advance their skills both on and off the hill. This section explores some of the many benefits of the Senior Patroller Program.

The training and skills you will learn on your journey to becoming a Senior will increase your confidence at incident scenes, in transporting patients (for those pursuing Senior Alpine or Senior Nordic/Backcountry), and in all situations that you may be presented with on or off of the Mountain. Leadership and scene management skills that you gain through the Senior Program will help you with many aspects of your patrolling career and beyond. NSP leadership opportunities exist at resorts, region, division and national levels. While not all leadership positions (at the local level) require you to be a Senior, you will learn valuable skills during the Program that will help prepare you for the positions at the region, division and national levels. Many awards require you to be a Senior, see the awards section of the National website for further detail.

This program can be an important part of your personal journey of growth as a Ski Patroller and lifelong learner. To learn more about the program, contact your local/region Senior Program Administrator.

## Senior Program Candidate Guide \*\*\*START HERE\*\*\*

This document is provided to help guide you through the Senior Program. **You are in charge of your training and progress through the Senior Program.**

- **Read through the Senior Program Manual in its entirety. In addition, read through the manuals for your chosen pathway as shown in this manual. These documents can be found on the Central Division Website at [nspcentral.org](http://nspcentral.org)**
- Tell your local patrol director/representative about your intention to join the Senior Program.
- Communicate with your patrol director/representative or your region's Senior Program coordinator to help you find a mentor/coach. See the Senior Candidate Coaching section for more information.
- **Determine your region's requirements and deadlines for your Senior application. The Senior application is found on the Central Division website at [nspcentral.org](http://nspcentral.org).**
- Review Senior Program - Core and Elective Components in the National Ski Patrol Policies and Procedures, Appendix G. The National P&P is found at the National Ski Patrol website at [nsp.org](http://nsp.org).
- Establish goals for completing the electives required for your selected pathway.
- Review the schedule for elective training opportunities on your region's calendar.
- Determine your timeline for completing the program. It is recommended to make every attempt to complete the program within three years.
- Attend both the OEC and Senior snowsports workshops/pre-clinics prior to attending the evaluation.
- Determine the dates for each of the evaluations and prepare to succeed.
- Train for the OEC module evaluation.
- Train for the Aid Room Module (if applicable for your chosen pathway).
- Train for the Alpine, Nordic/Backcountry, Snowboard, or Telemark Ski evaluation.
- Train for the Alpine or Nordic/Backcountry Toboggan evaluation.
- Visit the area where the evaluation will be held and become familiar with the area and its terrain.
- Attend your region's evaluations—remember, this is a journey; enjoy the learning experience and personal growth.

## Pathways of the Senior Program

There are four pathways that can be followed for the Senior Program: Senior Patroller, Senior Nordic/Backcountry Patroller, Senior Bike Patroller, and Senior Alpine Patroller. While the details for each of these pathways can be found in the subsequent sections of this manual and supplemented by documents located on the division website at [nspcentral.org](http://nspcentral.org), the following outlines the core components that must be completed for each.

### Senior Patroller Pathway

- OEC MSP
- Aid Room Management module
- 4 required electives

### Senior Alpine Patroller Pathway

- OEC MSP
- Alpine module
- 3 required electives

### Senior Nordic/Backcountry Patroller Pathway

- OEC MSP
- Nordic/Backcountry module
- 3 required electives

### Senior Bike Patroller Pathway (This section is TBD)

- OEC MSP
- Bike module
- 3 required electives

## Senior Patroller Pathway

The objective of this pathway is to enhance the OEC skills of the patroller in alignment with the Senior Patroller Program.

### Skill Requirements and Electives

Core components required for Senior Patroller Status are:

- OEC module of the Senior Program (see the OEC MSP manual located at [nspcentral.org](http://nspcentral.org))
- Aid Room Management module (see the OEC MSP located at [nspcentral.org](http://nspcentral.org))
- 4 electives (See NSP National Policies and Procedures, Appendix G, located on the Central Division website at [nspcentral.org](http://nspcentral.org))

All core components only need to be completed one time. There is no mandatory time constraint regarding when each core component must be completed. Any candidate who completed the Patroller Enrichment Seminar in the past does not need to complete the Aid Room Management component. It is highly recommended that all core skill requirements be completed within three years.

### Senior Patroller Candidate Skill Development

#### Outdoor Emergency Care Module of the Senior Program Evaluation.

This evaluation is required for Senior Patrollers and Senior Alpine Patrollers.

The Senior Patroller candidate is responsible for their own training and for abiding by any guidelines that may be established by the region outdoor emergency care (OEC) administrator or region director. Emphasis should be on developing the leadership, decision-making, and problem management skills of scene management. It is recommended that the Senior Patroller candidate complete the OEC Module of the Senior Program component prior to the Aid Room Management component.

#### Aid Room Management Evaluation

This evaluation is required for Senior Patroller status only.

When a Senior Patroller candidate is prepared to participate in the Aid Room Management component, the lead area OEC advisor or patrol director/representative must contact the regional OEC administrator.

### Continuing Education

The Senior Patroller is not required to attend any extra continuing education programs to maintain classification. A Senior Patroller who has completed the requirements to obtain the

classification of Patroller need not repeat the OEC Module of the Senior Program component when attempting to achieve Senior Nordic/Backcountry or Senior Alpine Patroller status.

### **Taking Skills to the Next Level:**

New senior patrollers that show the desire and capabilities should be encouraged to expand their ski/ride skills by attending ski/ride enhancement seminars (SES) and/or toboggan enhancement seminars (TES) throughout their region and the division. They should also consider putting in an application the following year for their region's Senior Alpine Ski/Ride and Toboggan evaluation.



## Senior Alpine Pathway

### Skill Requirements and Electives

Core components of the Senior Alpine pathway are:

- Alpine module (see the Alpine Module of the Senior Program manual located at [nspcentral.org](http://nspcentral.org))
  - Alpine Toboggan Handling component
  - Alpine Skills—Skiing/Riding component
- OEC Module of the Senior Program (see the OEC MSP manual located at [nspcentral.org](http://nspcentral.org))
- 3 electives (See NSP National Policies and Procedures, Appendix G, located on the Central Division website at [nspcentral.org](http://nspcentral.org))

The candidate is strongly encouraged to continue to participate in clinics during the time they are attempting to successfully complete the core components. Each core component is evaluated and graded separately. Once a candidate passes each component, they need not take that component again. Though there is no mandatory time constraint regarding when each core component must be completed, it is encouraged to complete all components within three years.

The Alpine Senior candidate must complete a minimum of three electives. For the accepted list of electives, refer to the current NSP National Policies and Procedures, Appendix G, located on the Central Division website at [nspcentral.org](http://nspcentral.org). Additional electives acceptable for the Central Division can be found at the same link.

### Alpine Candidate Skill Development

The Senior candidate is responsible for their own training and for abiding by any guidelines established by the region Senior Program coordinator. Tracking skill development during training is critical for success in the Alpine program. The Senior Alpine Skills sign-off document, located at [nspcentral.org](http://nspcentral.org), can be utilized to track training progress and must be completed in order to participate in the Senior Alpine evaluation. The Alpine Skiing/Riding skills must be signed off on by a current senior ski/ride evaluator. The Alpine Toboggan skills must be signed off on by a current senior toboggan evaluator. Completed skills sign-off sheets must be presented to the region administration in accordance with region-specific protocol.

A region is encouraged to use a pre-evaluation clinic prior to the final evaluation. The pre-evaluation clinic helps to prepare both candidates and examiners for the final evaluation. If possible, the clinic should be held at the same location as the final evaluation to expose the participants to the terrain used at the evaluation. If it is not possible to hold the clinic at the final evaluation location, the terrain used should be as close as possible to the terrain at the final evaluation location. The pre-evaluation clinic is NOT an evaluation and should be modeled as a teaching environment.

The object of the pre-evaluation clinic is to introduce the candidate to the evaluation format and

provide them with constructive feedback. The constructive feedback should be in both verbal and written form to aid them in refining their skills. The use of scorecards is encouraged for feedback and as a teaching tool. Scorecards can be found on the division website at [nspcentral.org](https://nspcentral.org). The pre-evaluation clinic should be held far enough in advance so the candidate has time to utilize their feedback in preparation for the final evaluation.

Candidate preparation for the Senior evaluation may also be done under the guidance of a mentor or "candidate coach." The candidate coach must be familiar with the Senior Program content and evaluation format. The candidate coach is a skills coach and provides emotional support for the candidate. The candidate coach may be an examiner at the Senior evaluation but will not evaluate their designated candidate(s). Information regarding mentoring a candidate can be found in the candidate coaching section of this document.

## Continuing Education

Upon achieving senior status, the patroller needs to work to maintain that skill level. There are multiple options for ski/ride and toboggan skill enhancement clinics and workshops offered during the ski season, as well as the annual on-the-hill refresher. These are not pass/fail evaluations but are there for the patroller to hone and sharpen their skills.

### Taking Skills to the Next Level:

New senior alpine patrollers who show the desire and capabilities should be encouraged to expand their ski/ride capabilities by attending SES/TES throughout their region and the division as well as to enhance their OEC skills through instructing. At this point, they should consider reaching out to a certified patroller in their region or to the region's certified advisor to inquire about the Certified Program. They should also consider looking into participating as an OEC helper or toboggan rider at the Central Division Certified exam. After observing the Certified exam and becoming comfortable with the format, they should consider filling out an application to join the program.

## Senior Nordic/Backcountry Pathway

As described below, the Senior Nordic/Backcountry Pathway Manual is in a beta version (work in progress). It will be finalized as the National Nordic/Backcountry Program finishes its work on the new Nordic/Backcountry Manual.

Beta version 54, from March 2016, is located on the national website at [nsp.org](http://nsp.org), under the “Programs” heading and the “Nordic/Backcountry” section.

The Central Division Senior Manual will be updated when it is finalized.

The following excerpt is taken from its first page:

*This Guide to Nordic/ Backcountry Senior is a work in progress. Our goal is to put it into the hands of the NSP Nordic & Backcountry community for real world use and evaluation prior to putting it into our new Manual. There will be content, format, and spelling changes. There will be discussion and debate. There will be evolution. Thank you for being part of the process. We primarily want to focus on content. This is meant to be used Nationally, to create a standard for all of our Nordic/Backcountry Senior Programs and exams. While all of the exam criteria may not apply to your specific Division, Region, or Patrol please use this as the minimum standard. To Patrollers seeking their Nordic or Backcountry Senior Certification, I hope this document helps with your success. Good luck! Please email questions, or thoughtful, constructive feedback to either your Division Nordic Supervisor or me at [nsp@shandler.net](mailto:nsp@shandler.net)*

*Thank you,*

*Rick Shandler, National Nordic Program Director*

*Beta version 54, March 2*

## Senior Bike Pathway

This section is a placeholder to be filled in when the Senior Bike Pathway guidelines are completed.

## Senior Program General Information for All Disciplines

### Senior Candidate Coaching

Each region is encouraged to establish a coaching program for their Senior candidates. Many Senior candidates have had excellent results when paired up with a coach. Effective coaching is:

- A service that will assist the candidate in achieving their objective of passing the OEC-MSP, Senior Ski/Ride, and Toboggan evaluations.
- Structured so that the candidate takes ownership of the tasks that need to be done to accomplish the objectives.
- A helpful guide as to which programs for enhancing skills are available.
- Conversations to follow up with the candidate and check the status of tasks assigned.
- A means to force reflection when a candidate does not do it on their own.
- A supportive relationship to diminish a candidate's sense that they are alone.
- Not a replacement for candidate participation in the region clinics and other enhancement programs.

### Qualifications of a Candidate Coach

The coach should be:

- A senior or certified patroller.
- Someone who is familiar with the content of the region's current training and evaluation programs.
- Someone who is willing to spend the necessary time
  - To listen to the concerns of the candidate.
  - To encourage the candidate when they become discouraged.
  - To follow up with the candidate and other trainers who may be working with the candidate to determine skills improvement progress.
  - To be knowledgeable of the region's skills enhancement clinics and other patrols' skills enhancement programs.
  - To organize a team of qualified instructors/trainers to support the goals of the candidate.

### Example of an Effective Coaching Program

- A candidate requests the services of a coach by contacting their region's proficiency advisor or local Ski Patrol director.
- The coach contacts the candidate.
- The coach and the candidate discuss the areas where the candidate thinks they need improvement. The candidate and coach develop a plan to address these needs. This requires the coach to have a good grasp of the resources available to the candidate (e.g., region

clinics, qualified local instructors who are willing to work with candidates, other hill training schedules and their availability).

- The coach and candidate agree to meet on a regular basis to discuss progress. These meetings could include face-to-face on-hill instruction, but this is not required.
- The coach attends the evaluation if at all possible.

## Risk Management

Participation in the Senior Program may involve maneuvers with an enhanced level of difficulty. All attempts must be made to mitigate exposure to any unnecessary risk. The individual participating in the program is responsible for recognizing any risks and communicating their concerns to the examiners or program administrators. All participants, including candidates, instructors, examiners, and support staff, will sign a release of liability form.

All events must comply with the Central Division Policies and Procedures. A description of the Central Division risk management protocol can be found in the Central Division Policy and Procedures, Chapter 7. The Central Division P&P can be found at [nspcentral.org](http://nspcentral.org). The release of liability form can be found on the national website at [nsp.org](http://nsp.org).

## Program Administration

The Senior Program is a National Ski Patrol education program administered by the region under the guidance of the Central Division. The format of the evaluations and content will be maintained in a manner that is consistent across all regions in Central Division. Regions may adopt specific administrative protocols and training programs that meet their standard of operation. Order of completion of the core components and electives is at the discretion of the region administration.

Senior candidates may cross regional boundaries to take a Senior evaluation. A candidate that elects to travel across regional boundaries to take an evaluation is required to obtain the approval of both region directors or their delegates. The candidate must submit written documentation to the director of each region communicating that both regions have granted approval.

The visiting candidate must be familiar with the region's evaluation format and abide by any region- and local area-specific protocols.

A candidate will be allowed one attempt per season at any core component evaluation. Should a candidate not pass the evaluation, they will forgo any additional attempts until the next season. During this time, the candidate should utilize available training resources to improve any skill deficits. If the candidate is unable to complete the evaluation due to non-skill-related circumstances, the region may reconsider allowing the candidate to participate in another evaluation within the same season. This would be handled by the region administration on a case-by-case basis.

## Candidate Recognition

Upon the completion of the evaluation:

On the same day as the evaluation, the Senior candidates should receive recognition for their hard work and dedication. Prior to announcing any evaluation results to the group at large, evaluators must meet with each of the candidates individually and share the results from their test with them. In addition to the candidate, the candidate's coach and their lead trainer or patrol director/representative should participate in this conversation. Written copies of feedback must be given to the candidate, their lead trainer or patrol director/representative, and the region Senior advisor. This is particularly important for candidates unable to pass the evaluation, and care should be taken to provide objective and constructive feedback, written documentation of their deficiencies, and strong encouragement to continue with the program.

Candidates that have completed all the Senior components must be presented with their Senior Program patch when announced at the end of the event. They have worked hard for this moment and deserve the opportunity to display their new patch proudly.

## Evaluation Feedback

Senior evaluation feedback forms are to be used by the regions as an information-gathering tool for continuous improvement of the Senior evaluation. These forms must be provided to all participants, including the evaluators, completed at the end of the evaluation, and then returned to the region's Senior Program coordinator. Feedback forms for each module of the Senior Program can be found on the Central Division website at [nspcentral.org](http://nspcentral.org).

## Senior Evaluation Quality Assurance Program

The Central Division Senior Program is a result of the concerted effort between the regions and division training staff. It is critical to maintain the standards established by those involved in developing the program.

The use of a Quality Assurance staff member is an important step of the Central Division Senior Program. This step helps ensure that the evaluation is consistent from year to year and from region to region. The division retains a team of individuals who are versed in the Senior Program. They are powerful resources to be utilized as both gatherers and providers of information. These individuals will participate in each of the evaluations with a clear picture of how the Senior evaluation should operate. They will act as observers and will only intervene in the event something should occur (or not occur) that steps well outside the guidelines of the program.

Immediately following the evaluation, the QA staff member will meet with the region staff to review the completed QA form and, if needed, provide any additional suggestions to improve the event. Once the paperwork is completed, a copy will be sent to the region Senior Program administrator, the division Senior Program supervisor, and the region director. This step in the

process is not just an “evaluation of the evaluation” but is a means to give positive feedback toward improving the Senior Program. The intent of the QA process is to build an outstanding program for participants through a collaboration between the QA and the region evaluators and trainers. After the event, the information provided by the QA will be reviewed with region staff members as well as the Division supervisor and staff to help mold the training protocols for upcoming seasons.

## Supporting Documents

There are many documents available to support the Senior Program Manual. Many are listed throughout this manual, and many more are available that are not referenced here but can be helpful in many aspects. All supporting documents for the Senior Program are found on the division website at [nspcentral.org](http://nspcentral.org).

## Acknowledgements

This manual is a culmination of the work of many and we wanted to take a moment to give special thanks to all those who have come before us and laid the foundation for what the manual has become today. We would like to recognize the following people in particular for their efforts of past and present.

Amy Arnold	Larry Abramowski	Linda Barthel
Dave Bramel	Jodie Bramel	Terrie Brandt
Sue Brann	Rob Carpenter	Brian Cobble
Brett Hamlin	Erik Hudson	Daren Lukes
Chuck Martchinke	Chris Moe-Herlich	Linda Murphy-Jacobs
Alan Radke	Kevin Rankey	Chris Sutton
Jay Zedak		

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